

Swami Dayatmananda on Bhagavad Gita Class 58 date 23/03/19
(Lecture is delivered online from Bagaluru India)

Class begins with chanting of slokas and prayers

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ 5॥

Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanooora mardhanam,
Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum ॥ 5

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः । पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥ 4॥

Sarvaopanishadho gaavo dogdhaa Gopala Nandana,
Parthoo vathsa sudheer bhokthaa dugdam Geetamritham mahath ॥ 4 ॥

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्द माधवम् ॥ 8 ॥

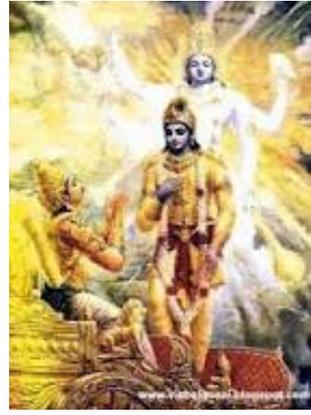
Mookam karothi vaachalam, pankhum lankayathe girim,
Yath krupa thaham vandhe Paramananda madhavam. ॥ 8 ॥

We have been studying the third chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called '*Karma Yoga*'. In our last class, the Lord has been advising Arjuna that Karmayoga is one of the best means suited for candidates like Arjuna. Why? Because his nature is a protective nature – Arjuna was born, brought up, trained as a warrior, as a protector of people. That was the duty of Kshatriyas and he was full of Rajas, and he wanted to evade his duties and take to another person's duty called satva guna samprana's duty, which is more internal and which makes a person more leaning towards Japa, Dhyana, meditation etc.

Everyone has to start from where he is – this is the very natural process of progress. From Tamo guna, to Rajo guna to Sattvo guna. That is the natural process. Great people, they also take to this beautiful idea – Karmayoga may not be necessary to everybody but they also have got a special duty. What is their duty? To become role models, to become exemplars, to set a shining brilliant example. The Lord is clearly explaining the psychological law that people can be divided into 2 categories – the sheep and the shepherd, the led and the leader.

So, O Arjuna, even if you are fit to become a sannyasi, and there are some people who by birth, for example that what's really Brahamana means, they have their own special duties as a Brahamana. But you are born, you are trained and your mind is full of these ideas of protection – war is not an aggressive activity to fulfil, to bloat one's ego, but it is one of the most important duties of every ruler. In order to protect his people, he has to defend himself, his country and his people and that is what Bhagawan Krishna calls "A righteous war".

When everybody understands this fact and then goes on discharging their own duties – not only they do good to themselves, they also do a lot of good to people all around by setting an example and therefore all wise people should work to set an example as well as for the good of the world.



So it is also understood, when a great man, even though he doesn't need any activity, when he acts, all his activities including breathing, only goes for *loka sangraha*, for the welfare of the world. Not only that, there are some people, and the law has been expounded that the sheep always follow the shepherd. If somebody sets an inactivity as an example, it is possible quite a number of people follow without understanding, without reaching his state of progress.

They try to imitate, thereby instead of progressing, they are likely to go down. Even to inspire people, not only to set an example, but to also inspire the third category of people, tamasic people, lazy people, so that it is in their own interests if they discharge their duty with enthusiasm, with understanding as a yoga, as an offering to God. Then there is hope for them to progress in life.

Therefore, another advice Lord Krishna is giving to Arjuna is – “let no wise man unsettle the minds of ignorant people who are attached to action. He should engage them in all actions, himself fulfilling them with devotion”.

Naturally the question that comes is – if a wise man, here wise people means those who know their true nature and unwise people means those who think they are not the Atman but they are the body and mind. For such people, they do not have any distinction. From outside, a wise man also does exactly the same, an ignorant person does also exactly the same. Here we can cite an example – even Sri Ramakrishna had to eat, Swami Vivekananda had to eat, every wise person has to eat, an ignorant person also has to eat. What then is the difference of the eating of the wise person and the ignorant person? And eating is only an example – whether they eat, they breathe, they sleep, they talk, whatever they do – there is an infinite amount of difference between them.

What is the difference between the wise man and the ignorant? The enlightened man, the wise man, has no sense of agency. He doesn't think that “I am the doer”.

He says “ *Shokoli tomari ikchha*” Everything is done by You, O Mother!”

Unfortunately, ignorantly, attribute agency to them, and they pay a heavy price in the form of both happiness and unhappiness. You may be surprised to think how can happiness be bondage. In fact, according to wisdom, suffering bring us quicker to God than happiness. The enlightened man doesn't think he is doing, he has always that sense that I am an *nimitha*, I am an instrument whereas an ignorant person thinks I am the Doer, I am the Knower and I am the Enjoyer.

This is the difference in the mental attitude. Whereas physically, externally when we look they may be doing exactly the same thing. A funny example comes into my mind – Swami Vivekananda used to spice his talks with a lot of jokes. So once he delivered such a talk with perhaps a lot of jokes. One of the Western audience got up and said, “Swami – don't you ever become serious?” So he laughingly said, “Yes madam – I do become very serious when my stomach starts aching!”

What does this mean? We can also joke, he can also joke, when he jokes, it is just a joke and it is meant for enjoyment and it is uplifting and it even inspires and lifts

people from the depths of misery, self-pity, inferiority complex, depression etc. But many times when we joke, it is only a kind of pessimism. This is a beautiful psychology – I am not going into it, but many times people become jocular because they are sarcastic and sarcasm is always a deep sign of un-fulfilment, depression. To overcome that, or to show people that I am not such a person, people take refuge in this kind of unwanted, undesirable human.

There is a lot of difference between a buffoon behaving like a buffoon and a jivanmukta talking about the jokes. What is the difference?

For one, every act is a joyous expression of the Divinity. For another person, even meditation and puja is a terribly depressing activity, a painful duty to get over. This is the distinction between a man of knowledge and a man of ignorance. They seem to be doing exactly the same, they seem to be behaving exactly the same but there is a heaven and hell difference, how and why they do it.

The Lord now advises Arjuna that you discharge your duties. There are many ways of discharging duties :-

1. just to do what is absolutely necessary.
2. There is always a motive that a person wants by discharging duties – promotion in this world or he wants to earn what is called punya or he wants to go to swargaloka – some motivation is there.

Whereas a wise person, when he discharges his duty, I'm not talking about people who have realised God, I'm talking about sādhakas (earnest spiritual seekers) – they should discharge with 2 particular attitudes, of which we have discussed in the past :-

- Whatever they do, they must keep in mind “I'm doing it for pleasing the Divine Lord”, and having that,
- Whatever the result, he has to consider it as the *Iswara Prasada*.
- *Iswara arpana buddhi.... Iswara prasada buddhi*.

So Lord Krishna is now advising how he should discharge his duties. He says :-

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निरमो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ 3.30॥
mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannasyādhyātma-chetasā
nirāśhīr niramo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ

[Renouncing all actions in Me (that means offering every action to Me), with the mind centred only on the self, which is God, free from any hope or expectation, and free from egoism, ownership, agency-ship, free from mental fever, you do fight.]

Here, fighting is only an incidental duty. Only for the time of 18 days of this Kurukshetra war, the question of fighting comes. There are some people who misunderstand Arjuna, or Sri Krishna's teachings – that always you fight. Physical, external fighting with an enemy is only a small part of our day to day activities but the real fight is how

to fight with the discrimination so that we can slowly reduce our egotism, get rid of our ignorance and progress towards God.

And that inner fight is there until we realise God. The external fight is only an incidental fight.

A beautiful example but keep in mind whatever activities you are doing, you are doing for Me! And in fact you also have to think you are able to do it because of Me – because I am the Creator of your body, your buddhi, your mind, your memory and your determination and your vasana (desire) - everything belongs to Me!

That is the meaning of renouncing all actions and the mind then should be centred only on the Self. I belong to God and whatever I do is only for the pleasure of God.

Free from hope means I should not be attached to the results of whatever actions. Whatever the Lord ordains, what He thinks is good – that I should accept as the greatest prasada.

Egoism, [I don't own anything], Sri Ramakrishna advised Mother Babu, “ Your whole big estate doesn't belong to you. It belongs to the Divine Mother! But she graciously appointed you as a trustee.”

So, free from hope and egoism, and free from mental fever, *vigata jwaraha*, we all know what is jwara – a physical condition where the body becomes very weak and the person loses all joy in life. He just wants to lie down – sometimes he might want to even die unable to bear this. But this jwara is a mental fever.

What is the mental fever? Ignorance! *Ajnana*! Delusion!

What is the delusion? I am not the Divine, I am the body & mind complex, I am Anatman – a beautiful Sanskrit word. If you can discharge your duties, not only you'll be setting a role model, not only you progress in spiritual life, not only you will be doing the greatest good to this world. In every way, you become a blessing to the whole world.

And then the Lord is telling – this is not nothing where you have an option. Where there is a choice.

The Lord is telling :-

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ 3.31॥
ye me matam idam nityam anutishthanti manavāḥ
śhraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto muchyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ

[Those men, who constantly practice this teaching of Mine, full of faith and without cavil, they too are freed from actions].

We have to very carefully understand this verse – freed from actions means the body and the mind go on functioning – why?

Because it is part of what we call prakruti. It is the nature of the prakruti. Prakruti means energy. Energy means activity, whereas the Atman, it just lends inspiration, the guidance, the light. It is the nature of body-mind to be restless and it is the nature of the Atman to be at complete rest.

So shift your attitude from the identity with the body-mind and abide yourself, thinking I am the Self. And those people, who have faith, those people means those sadhakas who wish to progress in any field of life, constantly there should be no break. Practice this teaching of mine, what is the teaching – that I am doing and discharging all my duties, they are duties because whatever is good for my progress is a duty. I am discharging my duties for the pleasure of God so that I can obtain his grace. Or even better, so that I can be a fit person to receive his Grace.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the grace of God's breeze is always blowing, but if we do not unfurl our sails, we won't be able to avail of this Grace, His help.

Doing everything with the idea – these are all meant for pleasing the Divine Lord, and really I am not doing, it is prakruti which is doing, nature which is doing. Therefore I have nothing to do with the nature, I will do what best I can do, centering myself on the Self. Centering means thinking that I am the Self, I belong to the Self, the Self belongs to me, I am related to the Self etc. And without the least bit of doubt, least bit of delusion and without expecting, and without allowing the feeling that this is me and this mine, discharge your duties!

And those who constantly put this teaching into practice, with full of faith and without cavilling.

Cavilling means losing faith. All the scriptures tells it.

Perhaps they are exaggerating? Maybe a little bit is true, not completely true. Any type of “that attitude” is poison to a spiritual sādḥaka. Such people who full of faith, and without cavilling, practice these teachings, they become free from actions. A beautiful phrase, freedom from actions means they get the result of every action without actually performing the action. That is what earlier also we have seen, you have a right only for acting in the proper way, you do not have any right for the fruits thereof.

Without becoming lazy, without expecting the fruits, you discharge your duties then you get the highest bliss called *brahmananda*, which is the result of any activity, all activities combined.

Here there is no option, there is no choice. Either you do and progress, or you neglect and you go down!

So in the next verse, the Lord is telling, and those who refuse to follow what would be their condition?

Without the least bit of doubt, they will court destruction. In vedantic terminology, there is nothing called destruction. Usually, when we use this word destruction, it means something has gone out of existence. A chair is burnt, it has gone out of existence. Man dies, he has gone out of existence. This is the greatest misnomer anyone can have – there is no destruction, because existence is eternal.

What is destruction? Temporary manifestation with name and form, going back to its causal elements and again manifesting with new name and form. This is called destruction and production...*janma* and *mrityu*.

Mrityu means this body is given up in order to get another body which will serve our purpose in a better way. It is like buying a new dress. Similarly, birth means manifesting the previous mind in a new body with a new form, with a new name so that we get a new engine!

What happens to the people, such people? They are doomed to destruction. What does that mean? It means for a long time, they have to go through this cycle of births and deaths and thence, there could be no greater suffering, dukha, unhappiness than being born, again and again.

Every birth, in that sense, for a discriminative person, is a source of great suffering. That's why, all over the world, every religion, especially Hinduism or Vedanta, emphasizes the only goal of life is moksha.

Dharma, artha and kama are instruments to attain the final beatitude which is called moksha. That is why as we discussed earlier, life is also classified into 4 categories :-

The learning stage		Brahamachari ashrama
The experiential stage		Grihasta ashrama
The withdrawal stage		Vanaprasta ashrama
The stage of complete identification with the Self.		Sanyasa ashrama

Therefore, O Arjuna, if you wish your own good, your own happiness, this teaching is not for my happiness but for your happiness. For your continued existence, for your wisdom, for your progress in life, I am giving you this infallible teaching.

You follow my teaching and the greatness of my teaching is – you have infinite paths. You have got every opportunity to choose that particular path which is most suitable to you and you follow joyfully whatever you love, but with this caveat :-

Ultimately, you have to get rid of your identity with the body-mind. In other words, get rid of identity with egoism.

Beautiful word – ahankara [अहंकार]. Get rid of kara! Not get rid of ahan – because ahan means your real “eye”. Whatever you add to it, that is deviation from your own real nature, that is called kara. Here, kara means body & mind complex.

Having given, either you follow, you attain to the highest bliss called brahmananda. If you neglect, if anyone neglects, then they will have to suffer for a long time. In Vedanta, there is no such thing called eternal hell or eternal suffering. Everybody will be rescued – this is the most optimistic philosophy available in this whole world.

Once Swami Brahmanandaji made a very remarkable statement, he said, “You may not understand me now, therefore you may not believe me now, but listen! Everybody is being drawn by the divine Lord and He is leading everyone to His Lotus feet. Even the murderers, through that particular path!”.

I want to deviate a little here for a moment. Can a murderer attain moksha? Is murdering a way to moksha? Naturally this question pops!

What does that mean? That means a murderer has a choice – either to kill or not to kill. But according to the third pillar of Hinduism – which is called the law of karma – if somebody has to be killed, it is not the killer who kills him, but it is his karma which actually brings about his death.

What about the murderer? If the murderer really thinks “I am just an instrument, I have to do this”, then he won't get any sin! That means he will only progress towards God. This is a very difficult theory to understand and especially to swallow. It looks as though we have to swallow – but this is the truth!

Vedanta discloses through the scriptures – in this world :-

- nobody can kill,
- nobody can give life,
- nobody can give happiness
- nobody can give unhappiness

Recording time 26 minutes.

Patanjali Rishi's philosophy about जाति *Jati*, आयु *Ayuh* and भोगा *Bhoga*.

Whatever we go through, is the direct result of what we did in our past lives. I have also explained this in my previous classes - Patanjali Rishi clarifies by saying that three things *Jati, Ayuh and Bhoga*- are the results of one's past actions.

1. **Jati जाति** :- What is Jati? As a result of our past actions, it is determined in which species we are going to get a body. So, that particular body will be, the absolute right body for expressing and manifesting our *sanskaras* which we ourselves have acquired in our past lives.

2. आयु Aau or Life- span :- How long is this body going to be on the Earth? This is called '*Aau or life span*'. For that also the Divine Lord said: "This is also determined by our past *karmas*." A man cannot live one minute longer and he cannot die one second earlier also. Then the last,
3. भोगा Bhoga :- What is the quantum of either happiness or unhappiness that a person has to go through? That also depends upon our past karma.

This is the most marvellous theory.

Should we not do anything?

This is the most logical next question that arises.

- We have to do actions because by doing so, we may not be doing any good to the other person but we will be doing a lot of good to ourselves.
- That is how we acquire dharma, *punya*, happiness and progress in life.
- Therefore there is no choice for you, we have to discharge our duties. There is no choice there.
- But, there is a choice whether we do our duties meticulously with intelligence and with a spiritual attitude or not.

So, I am advising you to do your duties consciously with complete faith in God and His words, with concentration and with Intelligence. Three conditions are required -

1. with sincerity,
2. with concentration, and
3. with Intelligence.

If you do your actions in this way, then you will progress very quickly and attain Me (God), get rid of this cycle of birth and death and be eternally enjoying.

From devotional point of view, this is what devotees of Vishnu will call attaining वैकुंठ Vaikuntha, Lord Shiva *Bhaktas* will say "I am going to *Kailasa* कैलाशा."

So, that is the ultimate goal.

Summary:

So, if we squeeze whatever I have said so far.

Whether we progress or do not, whether we really manifest our divinity or not, depends upon how we are going to discharge our duties.

Otherwise eventually, we will be forced to come to the same state (of manifestation of our divinity), maybe after millions of births. So, obviously it is better, to get rid of all our duties right now and then enjoy for eternity.

Why do most people choose the wrong path and not the right path?

Next, Lord is telling a most beautiful truth.

A question or doubt may arise within us after hearing all these teachings, that if human beings are capable of understanding and they are capable of taking decisions then they *should* follow (the right path) because they are endowed with this Intelligence.

When compared to animals, human intelligence is far superior - that is why it is said that speciality of human life is the acquisition of Viveka - the facility of Viveka or discrimination or disarmament. It means human beings have the capacity and human beings alone have the capacity to either follow the right path or the wrong path.

Even though this faculty is present and capacity is there, a question then arises - if everybody has that capacity, then why do most people choose only the wrong path and not the right path.

This following verse is such a marvellous verse, let me first chant it then we will discuss it. (Chapter 3 Verse 33)

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि |
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति || 33||

sadriśhaṁ cheṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛiter jñānavān api
prakṛitiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣhyati

Meaning: Even a wise man acts in accordance with his own nature. All beings follow their own nature, what can restraint do, one should be aware of snares of the powerful *Indriyas*.

So here is the answer, **there are several beautiful points.**

Even a wise man also follows his own nature.

Let me illustrate. There are so many saints.

- There are saints who have attained perfection through karma-yoga.
- There are saints who have attained perfection through bhakti yoga.
- There are saints who have attained perfection through meditation or raj-yoga, and
- There are saints who have attained perfection through jyana- yoga.

They have attained the supreme divine and they know who they are. There is no difference between their experience, no difference between their knowledge, no difference between their experience of bliss.

But, (and this is a big but!) if you go to a follower of karma-yoga then he will advise you to follow karma yoga; if you go to a devotee then he will advise you to follow the path of bhakti; if you go to a raj-yogi then he will advise you to follow the path of *raj-yoga* and if you go to a follower of *gyana-marga* then even after attaining the perfection he will advise that this is the best *Marga*.

There is a funny saying in English 'Nothing like a leader.' Interestingly, even a wise saint or God-realised soul cannot teach the other paths because he has never practised the other one. As soon as his mind comes down from the state of smadhi, he is likely to follow and teach the path which he had followed from the very beginning of his time.

That is what the Lord is telling that even the wise people, will only follow their own nature.

What path will Shri Ramakrishna advise?

Very interesting discussion now about Shri Ramakrishna.
Which path will he advise?

He doesn't belong to any of these four paths rather he belongs to every path.

Once, one of his direct disciples had remarked- "When vaishnavas come then they think Shri Ramakrishna is the greatest vaishnava. When shaktas - followers of Shakti come then they think that he is the follower of the Divine Mother. When tantriks come then they think that he is the greatest tantrika. When vedantins come then they are absolutely convinced that he is the greatest Advaita vedantin."

This means, he advocates the path which is suitable for that particular mentality.

Shankaracharya was a realised soul. *Ramanujacharya* was a realised soul.

Madavacharya was also a realised soul.

Then why did they preach so many different things or paths?

Q: A question or rather a doubt might come: if *Ramanuja* and *Madava* really attained the state of *Advaita*, would they have really taught the paths which they have taught?

I have no doubt in my mind that they all were God realised souls, so then why did they teach differently?

First of all, they did not teach. Who taught them? God- taking them, using them as an instrument, taught them a particular path. So that particular path can be taught to a certain segment of suitable spiritual seekers. This is what has happened with the *Ramanujacharya* and *Madavacharya* etc.

Shri Ramakrishna's opinion was to let a wise teacher decide the nature of the student and accordingly advise the right path for them.

Ishta-Devata-Sidhanta ईष्ट-देवता- सिद्धांत - a most beautiful subject

There is a funny story in the Upanishads illustrating this.

A villager approached a great sage and said - "Sir teach me Brahman."

The Sage advised him - "You meditate on Sat-Chit-Ananda, *Satyam jyana Anantam Brahman*"

This villager went away and after few minutes he came back and said - "Sir it is impossible for me to meditate. Your teaching doesn't enter into my head."

The wise teacher understood and asked him - "What is it you love the most?"

The villager said - "I love my buffalo the most in the world."

Sage said - "Think of Brahman as the buffalo and meditate."

This disciple went into a hut where the door was very small. He had to crawl to enter through it but once he entered inside, he could sit and stand comfortably.

Several hours (and days) passed and the Guru went to check on his disciple's progress.

He called out loudly - "My boy, come out."

His disciple said - "Sir I would like to come out but I am unable to."

Teacher said - "Why? What is the problem? You entered quite easily."

Disciple said - "My horns have become so big that they wouldn't fit through the small door!"

This is a beautiful story illustrating that which is called ***Ishta-Devata-Sidhanta***.

Worship of animals as God

There are some people who attribute and worship rats which is the *vahana / vehicle* of Lord Ganesha. Many people are liable to "poo-poo" this idea and say "These are ignorant people and that is why they revere rats."

But, No Sir --- they are not ignorant people: even through this path many people have attained the highest realisation.

There are people who consider animals as gods. For example, in South India there are devotees who worship *Hayagriva*. *Haya* means horse, *griva* means head. Hayagriva means God with a horse head.

God with an elephant head is Lord Ganesha.

So many other things are there and this is a beautiful idea to be explored.

However my point is: no outsider should judge whether a person is right or wrong.

- His Guru will judge.
- God will judge, and
- He himself will judge.

The essence of Shri Ramakrishna's teaching is this - "जतो मत ततो पथ Jato Maat Tato Path".

Important point:

If a person sincerely believes that by meditating upon Lord *Ganesha* or *Kartikeya* or upon a rat or upon a cow, then he will attain that goal. There is only one very important condition which needs to be fulfilled -

He should not think a rat as a rat but as Brahman in the form of a rat. Brahman in the form of an elephant. Brahman in the form of any Ishata-Devata.

Shri Ramakrishna's teaching:

Devotees of Shri Ramakrishna must be aware of this incidence:

"M" once asked Shri Ramakrishna - "Can I meditate upon my own mother as the Divine Mother."

Shri Ramakrishna without a second's hesitation said - "Why not, after all she is the Divine Mother. Whether you know it or not, she is the Divine Mother only. Because you don't have that Intelligence, you think she is not the Divine Mother. Just as you think, you are not the divine."

One's own mother - *Matru Devo Bhava* मातृ देवो भवा - it is our ancient Vedantic teaching.

Anyone who looks upon his or her own mother, father etc as God, and tries to love, serve, and do his best, that is also a path for that person to attain God realisation.

Different teachers teach by different methods

Here is the first thing: different teachers teach by different methods because they have attained perfection in that particular path only. Their authority is in that particular path,

and therefore they can only talk authoritatively about what they themselves have followed and have become experts in.

Raman Maharishi and Shri Ramakrishna

For example, Raman Maharishi, whenever people used to approach him for any problem, he had only one solution "Find out who you are and all problems will be solved."

Was he against bhakti? No! He used to encourage devotees that bhakti is their path. For yogis or meditators, he used to say "Meditate" and for those who follow karma-yoga – he advised them to follow that path. It didn't matter.

He was a great sage and saint. He never discouraged any path just like Shri Ramakrishna. The only difference is that he himself followed only one path whereas Shri Ramakrishna followed, not only all the varieties of paths in Hinduism but even Christianity and Islam. There are many Christians, many Muslims (we should not identify them with modern fanatics) who are extremely sincere because God manifests in every religion. Every religion is a living religion and religion becomes living only when there are umpteen numbers of sincere spiritual seekers following their path.

Shri Ramakrishna has affirmed what Bhagwan Krishna is telling here.

"Even a wise man acts in accordance with his own nature."

Therefore, every human being must follow their own nature. A tiger has to follow a tiger's nature, a deer has to follow a deer's nature, a tree has to follow a tree's nature.

Three categories of human nature

What is our nature?

Our human nature can be divided into three categories:

1. Tamasika dominated
2. Rajasika dominated or
3. Satvika dominated.

Our duties depend upon what type of nature we have.

For an active restless person to ask him to sit, to meditate and to contemplate, would be the most terrible punishment.

For a devotee, to advise him to follow the path that "I am Brahman" the most painful experience, abhorrence will come.

For a jyani - to go and meditate upon a Saguna Brahman or personal God also seems to be like that.

There is nothing wrong in it but each one has to follow their own nature.

Q: Can we restrain? & What is a split-personality?

Here, restrain means- not controlling the mind - restraining means suppressing. Suppressing means - not allowing our nature to come out and this is called split-personality. Inside we are thinking one thing, we are wishing something and outside we are saying something and doing something else.

It is very interesting to reflect upon the definition of Satya or truth as given by Shri Ramakrishna - in Bengali "*man mukh aek karo*" this means make your mind and mouth one. It means, what you think, what you speak and what you do - let it be of one accord and let there be no split in it. That is called truthfulness. One who follows truthfulness becomes a seeker of truth and ultimately he becomes truth. That is when he realises "I am Brahman".

One should be aware of the snares of the powerful इंद्रियाँ Indriyas.

Another reason why we are perverts. First of all is one's nature - we are tamas dominated or rajas dominated or satva dominated. Our tastes, our food, our meditation, our knowledge, our activities - everything is dominated by one of these gunas, and we behave accordingly.

How do we get out of it?

Before we go into it, we have to remember another fact:

Sense organs / Indriyas are very powerful.

Here is a wise man and he was asked not to do certain things but he cannot restrain himself and does it anyway.

For example, when we are eating food we know that our stomach is full but suddenly something very tempting and sweet arrives and we ignore the warnings of the stomach and then we overeat, telling ourselves that this is the only time I am over eating!

So we are all one time eaters!! That means one time after another time after another time, eaters. We know that we should not overeat but our temptations through the sense organs overpower us.

The Lord is saying "Everybody should follow the path which is most suitable for that particular person's nature." But sometimes we do not follow that path.

Why do we fail to follow our nature?

Either we do not understand what our nature is or our sanskaras prevent us from following our nature.

What is meant by that?

- Sansakaras express themselves in the form of desires.
- So, the Lord is warning us!! Many times we know what is right and what is wrong.
- However our external sense objects coupled with our own strong desires which we have accumulated through many many lives, they forcibly as it were, make us deviate from our real path and that is one of the reasons.
- Therefore, in order to follow our true nature, where should we begin?
- We begin with the control of the sense objects -> progress with control of the sense organs -> and further progress into control of the mind itself -> further progress to slowly control our buddhi or determination faculty and -> this buddhi should ultimately be controlled by bhakti - by the ananda - by the Atman.

That is what the Lord is trying to tell us – i.e. "How we can discharge our duties, following our own accumulated nature, not our true nature but our nature of the body and mind."

Here nature means:

Our true nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda and that is our goal.

But, when we say 'me' most often we mean the body-mind-complex and all our accumulated sansakaras / impressions which we have gathered through many many lives.

Lord Krishna is giving a grey warning ⚠️ **"Beware of the snares of the sense organs."** Many times when we are aware over a period of time then our attraction and our slavery to the sense organs will slowly become weaker - one day we will acquire mastery over ourselves.

Sense objects dominate our sense organs

First thing that we need to do is identify the grossed expression of these accumulated habits, (*vasana* means habits, desires).

The Lord is telling us to beware of our sense organs. These sense organs are helpless because sense objects pull us (*our sense organs*) and they (sense objects) dominate us.

For example, our eyes are supposed to look at everything. With the same eye, we see - here is good sight and here is a bad sight, here is an inspiring sight and here is a perspiring sight. However depending on our sanskaras, our eyes stray to that object which we think is going to give us lots of pleasure or happiness.

Let me chant Verse 34

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ |
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ || 34||

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣhau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśham āgachchhet tau hyasya paripanthināu

Meaning: Attachment and aversion for the objects of the senses, abide in the senses, let none come under their sway, for they are the deadliest force for every spiritual aspirant.

This warning is especially given for sincere spiritual seekers.

Scriptural books like the Bhagavat Gita, Imitation of Christ, Buddha's teachings are not really meant for pure worldly people. They are meant for those people who are under the sway of worldliness so far but have an awakened sense of spiritual longing and are trying their level best to control their minds and to progress in spiritual life.

For such people, this beautiful advice is being given and this advice is not only given by the Bhagavat Gita but it is the advice given by practically every saint or sage, by every scripture to their own particular followers.

Now, Patanjali gives a beautiful cycle.

- Our original cause of degradation is अविधा Avidaya or ignorance. Ignorance means to think that I am body-mind.
- Avidaya results in अस्मिता Asmita. अस्मी Asmi means Ahankara or egotism meaning “that is what I am”.
- Egotism leads to various employment of body-mind in various activities.
- Which produces *Raga* and *Dweshha* - attachment and aversion.
- Attachment and aversion ultimately make us identify ourselves completely with the body, because if there is no body then there will be neither be any attachment nor aversion.

This is the beautiful step by step analysis of where we are at the present.

अविधा चक्रा *Avidhaya Chakra* or संसार चक्रा *Sansara Chakra*

Vedanta again is following Bhagavat Gita's teaching.

We can say - this cycle of degeneration or coming down by forgetting our true nature takes place in several steps.

1. First step of course is Avidaya. We call it 'Maya'. Maya results in body-mind identification.

2. That produces *Vasanas* or deep desires.
3. *Vasanas* lead to *Sansakar*s.
4. *Sansakar*s lead to action.
5. Action leads to either *Dharma* or *Adharma* - righteousness or un-righteousness.
6. *Dharma* leads to happiness. *Adharma* leads to unhappiness.
7. Happiness leads to attachment or *Raga*, unhappiness leads to aversion or *Dwesh*a.
and
8. We are running after that which secures us pleasure & happiness and we are running away from unhappiness or *Dukha*.
9. Our activities follow our longing for either happiness or unhappiness --> our activities produce *Sansakar*s in the form of *Punya* and *Papa*.
10. *Dharma* and *Adharma* reinforce the *Sansakar*s --> *Sansakar*s reinforce the *Vasanas* --> *Vasanas* reinforce the ignorance and this is the beautiful अविद्या चक्रा *Avidhya Chakra* or संसार चक्रा *Sansara Chakra*. We are caught in this chakra.
11. The weakest link in this is action. Actions always follow these two categories either attachment or aversion. That is where our controlling habit should start.

We will discuss this in our next class.

Class ends with these beautiful teachings and Slokas. To be cont'd

**Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanoora mardhanam,
Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum.**

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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With kind regards

Hari Sundaresan & Mamta Misra