

Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12, Part 6 dated 20/12/2020 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from India.)



Subjects: C7, V16. C2, V62. Chapter 12, Verses 13,14. C6,V32.

**Who is a true *Bhakta*/devotee? Philosophy of Jainism:
Definition of a True Friend.**

Illustrations: An important teaching of a Rabbi: Analogy of a Mother and her Baby: Swami Vivekananda and His infinite Compassion: Parables of Ramakrishna/The Snake and a Brahmachari: A parable of Shri Ramakrishna - Response of an injured Monk: Raja Bhartrihari: A parable of Shri Ramakrishna - Response of an injured Monk: Shri Ramakrishna and the Temple Priest:

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 nandanahal
parthovatsa: sudheerbhoktaa, dugdham gitamrutam mahat I**

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 I
Yat-krupa tamaham vande paramananda madhavam II**

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 have been discussing this marvellous chapter called Bhakti Yoga. What is the easiest path to realise God? It is Bhakti Yoga. That is the teaching of Shri Ramkrishna. Shri Ramkrishna echoes the same teaching that Bhagwan Krishna is telling us. What is meant by Bhakti-Yoga? An aspirant follows and walks on the path of devotion. What should be his attitude and lifestyle? What type of characteristics must he develop? The 13th to the 19th verse depicts these beautiful ideas.
- The Divine Lord says in the last verse, “ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते **ye tu dharmyāmṛitam idaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate**. That is the immortal nectar and we should obtain this nectar. Such an aspirant becomes blessed by realising the Divine Lord. And he gets out of this samsara permanently.

Who is a true *Bhakta*/devotee?

- The 13th to the 19th verses of the Twelfth Chapter depict more than 20 characteristics of a Bhakta. Lord Krishna describes the characteristics of a Bhakta, a Jnani and a Paramahansa in the Second Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita as *Sthiti-Prajna Lashana*. *Sthithi-Prajna*, Jnani, Bhakta, Bhagavad Bhakta, and Yogi are all synonymous terms.
- **Four types of *Bhakta*/Devotees**; Bhagwan Krishna tells us earlier in the 7th Chapter that every spiritual aspirant is a great Bhakta. There are four types of Bhaktas.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ C7, V16॥

***chatur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukrīto 'rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī cha bharatarṣhabha***

[**Translation:** O best amongst the Bharatas (Arjuna), four kinds of pious people engage in My devotion—the distressed, the seekers of knowledge, the seekers of worldly possessions, and those who are situated in knowledge].

- 1) अर्तो **Artho Bhakta**: Some *Bhaktas* pray to God only when they are in distress. They are called **Artho Bhaktas**.
- 2) अर्थार्थी **Artha-Arthi Bhakta**. Some are not in distress but have so many unfulfilled desires. They are called **Artha-Arthi**. **Artha** means desires, and **Arthi** means one who desires. What does it mean? They are okay but would like to be more than okay, happier by fulfilling some of their desires. Is it wrong? Absolutely not! Is it wrong to pray to God when we are in trouble? Absolutely not! Who says this? God Himself says, “**chatur-vidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukrītinō Arjuna**.” There are four types of devotees - all of them are **Sukrutis** - persons who have done great *Punya/deeds*. How do we know they did great meritorious deeds/*Punya*? Because if they had not done something good in their past lives, they would never have turned towards God. (People without merits will always fulfil their desires by hook or crook, by untruthfulness, by cheating, by stealing and by joining wicked people, what we call gangs.) “My devotees are all great people.” How do we know they are great people?
- 3) जिज्ञासु **Jignasu**: Because sooner or later, God gives them *Buddhi* understanding. They will turn towards God and become curious to know - What is **Tattva, Purushartha and Hitha**? [*Tattva, Hita, and Purushartha* are significant concepts in both *Vaishnavism* and *Vedic danta*. In *Vaishnavism*, they represent truth (*Tattva*), the path to realization (*Hita*), and the ultimate goal (*Purushartha*). Similarly, in *Vedanta*, particularly within *Vishishtadvaita* philosophy, these terms focus on reality (*Tattva*), well-being (*Hita*), and human purpose (*Purushartha*). Together, they provide a framework for understanding philosophical ideals and the journey toward *Self-Realisation* and fulfilment in life.]¹The enquiry into 1) **Tattva** - What is the goal of life? 2) **Purushartha** - What is the truth? 3) **Hitha**- How can I direct my mind and reach that goal to know the truth? These three are called **Tattva, Purushartha and Hitha**. That is the essence of every scripture. What is the Lord telling? **Chaturveda bhajante mam janaha sukrutino arjuna arthaha jignasu arthaarthe jnane ja bharatarshabha** This is the description of a ladder of the spiritual progress. We all have to go through it except those who are already free but take upon this human birth. They are called *Karanjanmis*, people born with a mission in life. *Avataras* are His *Anucharas*, His *Sakas*, *Nityamuktas*, *Ishwarakotis*. To

understand this concept, let's take the example of a child. A child cries for his mother whenever he is in trouble. The child grows and turns towards his father - to go to the school and to get a pen, pencil and a toy car. This child grows further and becomes an adult - he turns towards God. That is the third stage of *Jignasu*. That is a step-by-step development.

- 4) ***Jnani* ज्ञानी**: Over time - with the Grace of God, the devotee will attain the fourth stage of a *Jnani*. The Lord says (in the following verses), "Among devotees, Self-Realised *Jnanis* are true Yogi. *Eka-bhakti* - his devotion is only towards *Eka/only one*, the Divine Lord. He excels. He is the greatest among all the *Jnanis* and all the progressing devotees. I am dear to Him. *Aham cha mama Priyaha* - and for Me, he is the nearest and closest. There is no difference between Him and Me.

The 12th Chapter describes the characteristics of a *Jnani* (wise person) and *Bhakta* (devotee). Why do we refer to someone as a *Jnani*? It is essential to have knowledge (*Jnanam*) about God before desiring a connection with Him. Remember, knowledge of God is ultimately knowledge of Self. Everything that exists is, in essence, nothing but God. Such a person, *Atyanta Priyaha* - is very near to Me. (That's why we always say near and dear. When a person comes near us, he becomes very dear to us). That means - there would be no difference between that person and me. I am he, and he is me. (A loving couple can intuit each other.) So there is no difference between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*. *Jnana* means to have the right knowledge. *Bhakti* means to know that there is no other so near, so dear, excepting God. When a person attains that, then that person will never again become deviated, *Chuta*. He will also become *Achuta* like God. That knowledge, *Aham Brahmasme* will always be there. So such a person is the greatest devotee. We are the greatest devotees of ourselves. Why? Because we know we love ourselves very much. Why do we love ourselves so much? Because we know this is me. That knowledge is there. I am not somebody else. I am myself. Therefore, it's most natural to love the Self. This is the *Jnani Bhakta*. That is what Swami Vivekananda says in his *Bhakti-Yoga* in the ultimate run. There is no difference between these three *Jyana*, *Para Jnana*/ Supreme Knowledge and Supreme *Bhakti/Para Bhakti*. Also, Swami Vivekananda says that supreme Devotion is like a triangle. It is characterised by three characteristics. What are they? First of all, the devotee doesn't have any motive. He only loves God for the sake of God. Secondly,

he doesn't want anything except God. And thirdly, he feels, I am God. God is me. There is no shopkeeping there. There is no fear there. Because fear comes from a second. There is no second—me and God. God is everything. If everything is God, I am also God. If God is everything, then God is not only me. I experience God in this whole world. That is what is being expressed in the 13th and then 14th verses.

(Please refer to the transcript of Chapter 12, Part 5.)

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 12, Verse 13 and 14.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 13॥

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 14॥

*adveṣhṭā sarva-bhūtānām maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha
nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣhamī*

*santuṣhṭaḥ satatam yogī yatātmā dṛiḍha-niśhchayaḥ
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

adveṣhṭā—free from malice; *sarva-bhūtānām*—toward all living beings; *maitraḥ*—friendly; *karuṇaḥ*—compassionate; *eva*—indeed; *cha*—and; *nirmamaḥ*—free from attachment to possession; *nirahankāraḥ*—free from egoism; *sama*—equipoised; *duḥkha*—distress; *sukhaḥ*—happiness; *kṣhamī*—forgiving; *santuṣhṭaḥ*—content; *satatam*—steadily; *yogī*—united in devotion; *yata-ātmā*—self-controlled; *dṛiḍha-niśhchayaḥ*—firm resolve; *mayi*—to Me; *arpita*—dedicated; *manaḥ*—mind; *buddhiḥ*—intellect; *yaḥ*—who; *mat-bhaktaḥ*—My devotees; *saḥ*—they; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—very dear.

[**Translation:** Those devotees are very dear to Me who are free from malice toward all living beings, who are friendly, and compassionate. They are free from attachment to possessions and egotism, equipoised in happiness and distress, and

ever-forgiving. They are ever-content, steadily united with Me in devotion, self-controlled, of firm resolve, and dedicated to Me in mind and intellect.]

That's why he said that there are several beautiful characteristics. These characteristics are described. First of all, they have to be acquired. However, over time, all these characteristics became natural expressions when I get that knowledge. And what is that knowledge? I am God. God is me. The drop of water is the ocean. The ocean is the drop of water. So a small wave is nothing but water. A big wave is also nothing but water. We are all like that. Big bubbles, small bubbles, rich man, rich bubble, poor man, poor bubble, wise person and wise bubble, otherwise bubble. Everything is the same. The differences and the problems stem from *Ajnana (ignorance)*. Not knowing we are nobody else except God.

An important teaching of a Rabbi:

Once a Rabbi, (a Rabbi is a Jewish teacher) was asked, to teach me about Judaism. He said, "This is the essence. Do unto others what you wish others to do to yourself." If you understand this, you have understood the essence of not only Judaism but every ism including atheism. Because even an atheist also doesn't say, "I will do harm to others but others should never do harm to me." He also wants to be happy only. These teachings are marvellous. What is the point we have to remember before we go deep into the discussion? I, God and the world are not at all different. Everything is God. I, the world, and Brahman is God, We have not attained that knowledge but we have the firm conviction from the teachings of my Guru and the scriptures. We have *Shraddha/unshakable faith*. We know that is the truth. But by developing these qualities, by striving slowly to acquire half per cent, one per cent, five per cent, ten, fifty, seventy-five, ninety-nine per cent of this knowledge. By acquiring a hundred per cent of these spiritual qualities, we become a realised soul. Thereafter, we don't strive. They become our natural characteristics.

Analogy of a Mother and her Baby:

An unmarried woman gives importance to herself only before her marriage. After marriage, her attention and love turn towards her husband and herself. When she conceives, she knows now - she will be a mother. She takes care of herself about eating, moving, activities and everything. Her activities change only because of that knowledge. She knows, that if I do something undesirable, it may affect my

baby. Her entire attention is towards her baby. Why? She knows that baby is none other than my reflection. This baby is me only. We do not need to teach her to love your baby. The knowledge that I and baby are one only, makes her love her baby.

A Bhakta/devotee acquires the knowledge that God is everything and is everywhere. He begins to love the entire creation as God only. He behaves like a loving grandmother. This is the logic of why we should develop these qualities. These qualities help us and push us towards realisation. The realisation itself pushes us, and we express these qualities from the inside to the outside. First, we have to get these qualities from outside to inside. After realisation, they will naturally flow from inside to outside. This is beautifully expressed in the following Verse:

ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्।।(1)

īśāvāsyamidaṃ sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat |
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam ||

(1st Mantra, Isha-Upanishad)

This whole world is nothing but Ishwara. With that knowledge, you live the rest of your life. Do not desire any other wealth except the wealth of this knowledge that everything is God. Then what happens to the aspirant? As we saw in the Manisha-Panchakam - one billionth and billionth part of this Brahmananda satisfies all of us. But we become Brahmananda itself. With this background, let us discuss these verses. We discussed 13th, but I would like to expand a little.

adveṣhṭā—free from malice; **sarva-bhūtānām**—toward all living beings
I cannot hate anybody.

maitraḥ—friendly - I am friend of all.

karuṇaḥ—compassionate - when a *Bhakta*/devotee see anyone suffering infinite compassion, sympathy and empathy comes to him. I think I narrated the incident in the life of Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda and His infinite Compassion:

One day, Swami Vijayananda heard Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). He was sobbing. The next day, he asked: 'Swamiji, Why were you sobbing?' Swamiji said: 'I do not know. I felt that somewhere a terrible disaster had taken place. I can feel the piteous cries of those people.' Later on, the news came that more than 50,000 people had died somewhere in the African region. Unconsciously, even though he did not know the incident, Swamiji felt it. Why? Because those people were no other than himself. This is the attitude of a Jnani. A Jnani says: 'You are me and I am you.' That is the philosophy of charity. We are not giving charity to anybody. We are not helping anybody. By helping others, we are helping ourselves. That is why Ramakrishna's greatest teaching, is **Shiva Jnane Jiva Shiva**. I am Shiva, you are Shiva. One Shiva helps the other Shiva. I am helping myself. So this is the idea.

Meaning of Verse 13, 14: He who never hates any being and is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from the feelings of I and mine and even-minded in pain and pleasure, who is forbearing, ever content, steady in contemplation, who is self-controlled and possessed of firm conviction, and who has consecrated his mind and understanding to me, dear to me, is the one who is thus devoted to me.

Let us briefly expound these things.

advēṣṭā—free from malice: A true devotee never hates anyone, even the lowest creature. Ramakrishna told his devotees: 'One day I saw a tiny wriggling insect. I saw consciousness wriggling in the form of this small insect.'

Philosophy of Jainism:

- Jains avoid walking in the dark after sunset because they are concerned about accidentally stepping on small creatures.
- They are careful to cover their nose and mouth while breathing. The reasoning behind this is that we may inadvertently inhale insects and bacteria, which could die in the process. The goal is to avoid harming any living being, which is why they make an effort to cover their nose and mouth.
- Jains refrain from eating food after sunset so they can see what they are consuming.

A true devotee should have this quality - **Advestah**/free from malice. There is reason behind it. When a person hates someone then two things happen. 1) First of all, our mind is diverted from God to the person whom we dislike. Hatred is an extreme manifestation of dislike. 2) Secondly, there is a psychological law. By thinking of a wasp, a bee turns into a wasp - Keeta-Brahmara- Nyaya So, the same way, by thinking of the evil qualities of other people, slowly we also acquire evil qualities and visa-versa. As we have seen in the Second Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ C2, V62॥

**dhyāyato viṣhayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣhūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate**

We must try not to hate anybody for our peace of mind. There is an inevitable result of hatred. When a thought of hatred arises, we immediately lose our peace of mind and get restless. How to get rid of it?

maitraḥ—friendly - become a friend of all. That is the first thing. Let us not look at the faults of other people. By looking at the faults of people, we develop those qualities. We only see those things outside that are already inside us. We will not see a bad quality outside - if our hearts are pure and free from negative qualities. So, this is the first quality we have to develop. *Advesta Sarvabhutanam*. But naturally, the question comes, what about if others hate us? Okay, I would not like to hate them. But if they are trying to harm us. Ramakrishna has two levels of advice for us in this situation. There is a beautiful parable of Shri Ramakrishna.

Parables of Ramakrishna/The Snake and a Brahmachari:

[Ramakrishna narrated this story saying, "A man living in society should make a show of tamas to protect himself from evil-minded people. But he should not harm anybody in anticipation of harm likely to be done him."

Some cowherd boys used to tend their cows in a meadow where a terrible poisonous snake lived. Everyone was on the alert for fear of it. One day a

Brahmachari (Monk) was going along the meadow. The boys ran to him and said; "Revered sir, please don't go that way. A venomous snake lives over there." "What of it, my good children?" said the Brahmachari. "I am not afraid of the snake. I know some mantras." So saying, he continued on his way along the meadow. But the cowherd boys, being afraid, did not accompany him. In the meantime, the snake moved swiftly toward him with an upraised hood. As soon as it came near, he recited a mantra, and the snake lay at his feet like an earthworm. The Brahmachari said: 'Look here. Why do you go about harming? Come, I will give you a holy word. By repeating it you will learn to love God. Ultimately you will realise Him and so get rid of your violent nature.' Saying this, he taught the snake a holy word and initiated him into spiritual life. The snake bowed before the teacher and said, 'Revered sir, how shall I practise spiritual discipline?' 'Repeat that sacred word', said the teacher, 'and not harm anybody.' As he was about to depart, the Brahmachari said, "I shall see you again."

Some days passed and the cowherd boys noticed that the snake would not bite. They threw stones at it. Still it showed no anger; it behaved as if it were an earthworm. One day one of the boys came close to it, caught it by the tail, and, whirling it round and round, dashed it again and again on the ground and threw it away. The snake vomited blood and became unconscious. It was stunned. It could not move. So, thinking it dead, the boys went their way.

Late at night, the snake regained consciousness. Slowly and with great difficulty it dragged itself into its hole; it was injured and it could scarcely move. Many days passed. The snake became a mere skeleton covered with skin. Now and then, at night, it would come out in search of food. For fear of the boys, it would not leave its hole during the daytime. Since receiving the sacred word from the teacher, it had given up harming others. It maintained its life on dirt, leaves, or fruit that dropped from the trees.

About a year later the Brahmachari came that way again and asked after the snake. The cowherd boys told him that it was dead. But he couldn't believe them. He knew, that the snake would not die before attaining the fruit of the holy word with which it had been initiated. He found his way to the place and, searching here and there, called it by the name he had given it. Hearing the teacher's voice, it came out of its hole and bowed before him with great reverence. "How are you?" asked the

Brahmachari. "I am well, sir", replied the snake. 'But', the teacher asked, "Why are you so thin?" The snake replied: "Revered sir, you ordered me not to harm anybody.

the teacher asked, 'Why are you so thin?' The snake replied: "Revered sir, you ordered me not to harm anybody. So I have been living only on leaves and fruit. Perhaps that has made me thinner."

The snake had developed the quality of *Sattva*; it could not be angry with anyone. It had forgotten that the cowherd boys had almost killed it.

"The Brahmachari said: "It can't be mere want of food that has reduced you to this state. There must be some other reason. Think a little.' Then the snake remembered that the boys had dashed it against the ground. It said: "Yes, revered sir, now I remember. The boys one day dashed me violently against the ground. They are ignorant, after all. They didn't realise what a great change had come to my mind. How could they know I wouldn't bite or harm anyone?" The Brahmachari exclaimed: "What a shame! You are such a fool! You don't know how to protect yourself. I asked you not to bite, but I didn't ask you not to hiss. Why didn't you scare them by hissing?"]

We all know the above story. The brahmachari gives a beautiful advice. Ramakrishna gives us this advice at two levels. What is it?

- 1) **Advice for householders:** You should not hurt but you must hiss. That means, taking every step to protect yourselves. Sometimes you may need to threaten them, abuse them, take them to court or sometimes take the help of evil people, gundas. If necessary, you do it. (I know so many householders, they have rented out their houses. The tenants have not given the rent for many months. The tenants are unwilling to give more than what was fixed several years back. But they have not given even that much. What are you going to do? The struggling householders must hiss, and do whatever is necessary to prevent themselves.) If we can help, let us help ourselves. If we cannot, we must pray earnestly to God. And that is called Artha Bhakti.
- 2) **Advice for Sannyasins:** An advanced spiritual aspirant/ Sannyasin should not even hiss. (Ramakrishna used to call advanced spiritual aspirants as Sannyasins.) They have no right even to hiss. Ramakrishna and Swami

Brahmananda tell us some beautiful parables. We have discussed them in the past but it is worth repeating. I am going to take a little time in discussing this because these are of paramount importance.

A parable of Shri Ramakrishna - Response of an injured Monk:

There was a monk, one day he went out to beg. He saw a rich man beating a servant. This sadhu, holy man, could not bear it. He went to interfere. Now the wrath of that rich person turned towards this monk. And he beat him black and blue until he fell unconscious. And then what happened, we don't know. After some time, the Gurubhais/fellow brothers, they came to know. They rushed there, lifted the sadhu, and took him to the monastery. Slowly he was being brought to consciousness. And a little bit of milk was being poured into his mouth. And then to know whether he was aware of what was happening, one of the brothers asked, Do you recognise who is pouring milk into your mouth? And that man opened his eyes and said, He who had been beating me all this time, the same one is giving me milk. This is of course the highest state. He sees nothing but God, nothing but God. This is the most wonderful thing that we have to understand.

A story by Swami Brahmananda - A Sadhu and A Scorpion:

Brahmanandaji gives a beautiful story. Brahmanandaji recollected some teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, which were not like M, but some teachings. He decided to publish them. It was published as "Words of the Master". He narrated a particular story in the name of Shri Ramakrishna. One night Sri Ramakrishna appeared to him and said: 'Did I say that? No, I did not say this. I heard it from a Gujarati Sadhu. This is not my story.' Many Paramhansa sadhus used to wander and pass through the Dakshineswar temple. What was the story? There was a monk. He was sitting on the bank of a river. There was a tree nearby. There was a scorpion near the tree. It accidentally fell into the river. It was struggling. The strong stream was carrying it away. The monk saw it, immediately rushed, took it in his palm and brought it out. The scorpion stung him. The scorpion fell into the river again and was saved by the monk. Again scorpion stung the monk. This took place three, or four times. Another man was observing it. He said: 'Sir, the scorpion is stinging you, giving you so much pain. Why are you still helping it?' The Sadhu gave a beautiful reply. He said: 'It is the nature of the scorpion to sting. It cannot help. It is the nature of a sadhu to help

other people. Therefore, when it is not giving up its nature, why should I give up its nature.'

Shri Ramakrishna and the Temple Priest:

The family priest of Mathur Babu was under the illusion that Shri Ramakrishna knew some magical mantras. He thought Shri Ramakrishna got whatever he wanted from Mathur Babu because of these mantras. The priest thought that if I could get these mantras then I could also get whatever I desire from Mathur Babu. One day the priest asked Shri Ramakrishna to tell him those mantras. Ramakrishna was in bhava/semiconsciousness and could not respond to the priest. The priest thought that Ramakrishna was unwilling to tell him the mantras. He got angry and kicked Shri Ramakrishna several times. Hriday witnessed the incident. Shri Ramakrishna said: 'Hriday, promise me, you will never tell this to Madhur Babu.' Mathur Babu came to know about this incident after several years and got very angry. Madhur Babu said: 'Baba/Father, why did you not inform me? I would have wrung his neck and separated it from his body.' Sri Ramakrishna smiled and said: 'I knew it, you would do that. That's why I did not tell you. I took a promise from Hriday that he would not tell it to a second soul.' This is the nature of a true devotee.

adveṣhṭā—free from malice; **sarva-bhūtanām**—toward all living beings. What are we talking about? A true devotee cannot hate anybody. Why he can't hate? Because he sees that everybody is nothing but God. What does he think about troublesome? A devotee doesn't see that anyone gives him trouble. Why? He has two explanations. The first explanation is that it is my purvajanama karma phala. This is the result of what I have done in my past life. This is called Karma Siddhanta. And Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs believe in it. And second is, even after realisation, Sakhalin tamari iksha somebody abused me because it is God's will. Who is abusing? Who is friendly? It is God only. Who is a relative? It is God. Who is father, mother? Everything is God. What about an enemy, that also is nothing but God? We know the story of Prahlada.

Prahlada perfectly expresses this attitude. He says: 'It is not Hiranyakashyapu, my father. It is Narayana who is making me go through all these trials and tribulations. Therefore, if Hiranyakashyapu, my father, he is not giving trouble, he cannot save

me from trouble. It is Narayana who is giving me. Only Narayana can really also save me, help me. These two go together. A Bhakta cannot hate anyone. He is Mitra/friend to everyone. He is a universal friend. One of the greatest Rishis is called Vishwamitra - Mitra/friend for the entire world, Vishwamitra. Such a person, what does he do?

In the 5th chapter which we have discussed, I am sure most of us have forgotten, 29th verse.

A Bhakta says, “I feel happy when the other person feels happy. I feel unhappy when the other person feels unhappy. Why? Because everything is God.” The Divine Lord says:

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ C5, V29॥

***bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśhvaram
suhṛidaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śhāntim ṛichchhat***

[Having realised Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds and the selfless friend of all living beings, My devotee attains peace.]

bhoktāram—the enjoyer; ***yajña***—sacrifices; ***tapasām***—austerities: Whatever anyone does in this world, who is the doer? God. Who is the enjoyer? God. Who is the Lord of all these worlds? God.

sarva-loka—of all worlds; ***mahā-īśhvaram***—the Supreme Lord. What is His nature? ***su-hṛidam***—the selfless friend; ***sarva***—of all; ***bhūtānām***—the living beings: He is the well wisher of the world. ***jñātvā***—having known Me like this; ***mām***—Me (Lord Krishna); ***śhāntim***—peace; ***ṛichchhati***—attains - person attains eternal peace.

What does it mean? By contemplating upon Me as the doer, enjoyer, knower, the ruler and the greatest friend of all, such a person in reality becomes peaceful. He feels - If anybody is suffering that is me. Anybody is happy, it is me. Anybody is rich, that is me. Anybody is poor, that is me.

Another beautiful Verse from Sixth Chapter: The Lord says:

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ C6, V32॥

*ātmaupamyena sarvatra samam paśhyati yo 'rjuna
sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yogī paramo mataḥ*

ātma-aupamyena—similar to oneself; *sarvatra*—everywhere; *samam*—equally; *paśhyati*—see; *yaḥ*—who; *arjuna*—Arjun; *sukham*—joy; *vā*—or; *yadi*—if; *vā*—or; *duḥkham*—sorrow; *saḥ*—such; *yogī*—a yogi; *paramaḥ*—highest; *mataḥ*—is considered

[I regard them to be perfect yogis who see the true equality of all living beings and respond to the joys and sorrows of others as if they were their own.]

Such kind of devotee are very near and dear to Me. Here, instead of Bhakta, devotee, the Lord says:

saḥ—such; *yogī*—a yogi; *paramaḥ*—highest; *mataḥ*—is considered: Such a spiritual aspirant is the greatest in My opinion. *ātma-aupamyena*—similar to oneself; *sarvatra*—everywhere - he who sees the same God everywhere. The entire world is nothing but Me in different names, forms and qualities. Fiends, enemies, good, evil and everything else is nothing but Me. *samam*—equally; *paśhyati*—see; *yaḥ*—who; *arjuna*—Arjun; *sukham*—joy; *vā*—or; *yadi*—if; *vā*—or; *duḥkham*—sorrow: He sees the world as Me. He says: ‘They are happy, I am happy. They are unhappy, I am unhappy.’

Raja Bhartrihari:

There was a great soul Raja Bharathari.

[**Bhartrihari Shataka** is a collection of three Sanskrit works by the renowned sage **Bhartrihari**: **Niti Shataka**, **Vairagya Shataka**, and **Shringara Shataka**. These works offer profound insights into ethics, renunciation, and the art of love, respectively, and are considered classics of Indian literature. Each Shataka has approximately 108 verses.

Here's a more detailed look at each of the three Shatakas:

1. **Niti Shataka:**

This book is a guide to moral conduct, covering a wide range of topics from ethics and morality to the nature of the self and the importance of knowledge and wisdom. It emphasises the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong and provides a moral compass for navigating life's challenges.

2. **Vairagya Shataka:**

This work explores the concept of renunciation and the path to spiritual liberation. It delves into the nature of attachment, the illusion of the world, and the importance of detaching from worldly desires.

3. **Shringara Shataka:**

This book explores the art of love and the intricacies of human relationships. It delves into the nature of desire, the joys and sorrows of love, and the importance of understanding human emotions.]

- **Shringara Shataka** describes play between a lover and a beloved. He lived a householder's life as a King. Imagine, his enjoyment as a King was the real enjoyment. (Not sitting in a mosquito-ridden place, 150 degrees temperature, on a torn mat and an old man and woman are trying to squeeze a little bit of their unfulfilled desire. That is not happiness. Happiness means a couple should enjoy it like that.) This is a wonderful book. India produced such books which very few other people have created. I am just telling you because India is supposed to be an otherworldly country by many misguided, misunderstood people. The greatest book on the man and woman relationship, Kaamashastra is written by one of the greatest Rishis Vatsyayana Rishi. Like that, King Bhartrihari composed Shringara Shataka.

He also underwent terrible tragedies in his life. His own wife was running after somebody, leaving such a good person. Anyway, she helped him because it brought tremendous dispassion to him. He renounced the world. He became one of the greatest pious persons. Then he wrote two books.

- **Niti Shataka** means book on wisdom which applies to both worldly people and spiritual people. This has got 108 verses. Here, in this Niti Shatakam, called book on wisdom, he gives a beautiful definition of a friend. And if we judge any person as our friend, I am not sure anybody will qualify. Even a mother, father, brothers, sisters and our closest friends, do not fall into this category. Only a good monk

falls into this category of a true friend. Like Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, direct disciples and any other good monk, they are the only good friends. Why should we cultivate holy company? Because spiritual people are your greatest friends. Let us see now, how is he going to define a friend? He is Suhrut Sarvabhutanam - well wisher to the entire world. An spiritual aspirant realises God and becomes one with God - Brahmavit Brahmayi Bhavati/ one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman - Mundaka-Upanishad

- **Vairagya Shataka:** Then, finally he wrote as a monk one of the greatest books like the imitation of Christ, Bhagavad Gita, called Vairagya Shatakam - 108 verses on this Vairagya Shatakam.

Definition of a True Friend:

पापान्निवारयति योजयते हिताय, गुह्यं निगूहति गुणान् प्रकटीकरोति ।
आपद्गतं च न जहाति ददाति काले, सन्मित्रलक्षणमिदं प्रवदन्ति सन्ताः ॥ -भर्तृहरि (नीतिशतक)

*Paapaannivaarayati yojayate hitaaya.
Guhyam nigoohati gunaan prakateekaroti.
Aapadgatam cha na jahaati dadaati kaale.
Sanmitra-lakshanamidam pravadanti santaah.*

[**Paapaan** = sinful actions. **Nivaarayati** = prevents, hinders. **Yojayate** = urges or impels. **Hitaaya** = advantageous. **Guhyam** = secrets. **Nigoohati** =hides, conceals. **Gunaan**= virtues, talent. **Prakateekaroti** = reveals, expresses. **Aapadgatam**= fallen into misfortune. **Cha** = and. **Na** =not. **Jahaati** = avoids, deserts. **Dadaati** = gives. **Kaale** = time. **Sanmitra** = a true friend. **Lakshanam** = symptoms. **Idam**= these. **Pravadanti**=pronounce,say. **Santaah** = noble persons.

Meaning: Wise and noble persons have pronounced that the symptoms of a true friend are that he prevents us from committing sinful deeds and urges us to do things that are advantageous to us, keeps our secrets and brings out our virtues and qualities, does not desert us when we face misfortune, and helps us whenever we need any help.]

Santaah means great, good, intelligent and wise people. They define a friend with these following characteristics. What are they?

- 1) A real friend prevents his friends committing from a sinful deed.
- 2) He prompts and inspires us always to do some good deeds.
- 3) He conceals our terrible secrets and defects. He never allows anybody else to know these things.
- 4) He brings out our virtues and merits. He will tell us about our merit and help us to bring it up.
- 5) He does not leave the friend in distress. There is a *Subashita*/wise saying. I don't remember exactly the saying. Briefly, when a lake is full of fish, all the birds come there, as soon as that lake becomes dry, they will leave that lake and then disappear from there. So long as there is money, property, and everything is there, everybody is our greatest friend. How many such stories do we hear? As soon as the person needs help, everyone disappears. Let me give an illustration. There is a funny story. There was a rich person. He saw a poor man coming towards his house. He knew the person needed some money and would ask for a loan. He instructed his four-year-old son: If the man asks, "Is your father at home? Tell him, "My father has gone outside. He is not home." So, this poor person came, knocked on the door and then the boy opened the door. The man asked, "Is your father at home?" This boy replied, "Sir, my father asked me to tell you he is not inside the house." The man understood and turned away. So when we are in distress, the world deserts us like poison. A good friend will never do that.

Dadaati = gives. **Kaale** = time - a good friend will help. **Sanmitra** = a true friend. **Lakshanam** = symptoms. **Idam** = these. **Pravadanti** = pronounce, say. **Santaah** = noble persons. These are a few qualities of a good friend. Who is saying? Not Tom, Dick and Harry but the wisest persons, great Mahapurushas.

So let us expound it a little.

Paapaan = sinful actions. **Nivaarayati** = prevents: A good friend will warn us to prevent us from a mistake, even at the cost of being misunderstood. We might think: Oh, this person doesn't want me to become prosperous. He is jealous of me. That is why he is warning me. He does not want me to be successful and rich. The good friends may not be in a great position. They may or may not be rich people. A

few people become rich in business or something else. People become rich only because of *Purva-Janam-Karma* /deeds done in the past life. Some people do not fail in business. He may advise his friend not to get involved in a certain project but he can be misunderstood. He does not wish his friend to suffer. He knows that the friend is sure to suffer if he does this. No mother ever allows her child to eat poisonous food, food not suitable for the child. The child may misunderstand, weeping, shouting and sobbing. And all those things.

Yojayate = urges or impels. **Hitaaya** = advantageous: That's why Shastra, a scripture is called a loving mother. Because Shastra, a scripture does two things. It inspires us to do good deeds and prevents us from doing bad things. A scripture consists of both *Vidhi* and *Nishedha*. Do this, it is a commandment and do not do this, this is also a commandment.

Guhyam = secrets. **Nigoohati** =hides, conceals. A person may know the secrets of a person/friend. He is also aware that my friend will be harmed if his secrets go public. He will neither tell these secrets to anybody nor whisper them to anyone. Most of us cannot hide a secret. We gossip and whisper behind the back. This is called backbiting.

Gunaan= virtues, talent. **Prakateekaroti** = reveals, expresses. A true friend always appreciates and encourages. He helps to bring out potential good qualities. Suppose, his friend has a musical voice. He will always encourage him to sing. I tell you my own experience. I never knew that I could sing well. (I cannot of course sing now.) There was a time when I was not the best singer, but quite a good singer. Even though I am saying it myself. I never knew. I came to the training centre in Belur Math. There was one Shiva Maharaj. He was a Brahmachari. He was also in the training centre. Once he heard me just singing something, like bathroom singing. Immediately, he pulled me out and said, Brother, you have a good voice. You should learn to sing. I did not believe him. But one or two other people also told me the same. So, I took lessons at two centres. At the training centre in Cherrapunji, I had a beautiful harmonium. At the Bangalore Centre, there was a great singer Purushotama. And he taught me for nearly one year how to sing simple bhajans, not classical music, etc. Though, I did practice some raga, etc. Why am I telling all this, what is called autobiography? A good friend will always pick up our qualities. He will support

and encourage us. He will say: you are good in maths, languages music and other talents as appropriate. This is called **Gunaan Prakateekaroti**. Next -

Aapadgatam= fallen into misfortune. **Cha** = and. **Na** =not. **Jahaati** = avoids, deserts. Every one of us goes downwards at some point or other in life. We cannot always go smoothly from the second step to the third, third to fourth, sometimes we have hard falls. When we are in that condition, a good friend will never give up. He will be with us all the time and when we lose everything, he will give shelter, he will do everything whatever he can. Here, I remember that I discussed this point elaborately.

Kshudhiram - father of Shri Ramakrishna:

Kshudhiram lost everything but never deviated from truthfulness. I have discussed it in the past but I would like to discuss it again in my next class. What is important? Why did Kshudhiram lose everything? Is it because of his truthfulness? Truthfulness always wins, *Satyam Eva Jayate*, Mundaka-Upanishad says. *devalokaha vidataha satyena pantha vidataha devalokaha*. He lost not because of truthfulness, it was the will of the Divine Mother. If a person wants God, he has to give up all worldly things and depend totally upon God. Even the parents of the Avatars need to give up everything, not to speak of an Avatar's life. Kshudhiram depended upon God only and left the place. He gave up his ancestral home and 33 acres of costly, beautiful and cultivable wetland. He made his way to Kamarpakur along with his wife Chandramani Devi and two children. His friend Laha gave him some land and two cottages.

These are some of the *Lakshanas*/characteristics of a good friend. This is very important. Every aspiring devotee must try to become a good friend otherwise he can't progress in spiritual life. We'll discuss these points more elaborately in my next class. As I said, there is no other way to progress spiritually.

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

Kind regards

(Mamta Misra)