

**Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12, Part 8, dated 02_01_2021 by
Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from India.)**



Subjects: C12, V15 and 16. *vajradhapi kathorani murudhuni kusumadapi*

Illustrations: Rani Rasmani: Tyagaraja: Kshudirama: Story of Meerabai: Philosophy of the Zen Master: “So, What?” Parable of “Rama’s Will” also known as the story of Raghuram. Bhakta: Surdas and Shri Krishna: Shri Ramakrishna - Radha and Krishna’s Painting: vajradhapi kathorani murudhuni kusumadapi. Shri Ramakrishna and Hajra: Swami Dayatmananda and the Rice pudding: Why did Shri Ramakrishna not call Maa Sharada Devi to come to the Dakshineswar Temple?

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 studying the 15th Verse of the 12th Chapter very aptly called Bhakti Yoga.

(Please refer to the transcript of the Chapter 12, Part 7.)

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 12, Verse 15.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ 15॥

*yasmān nodvijate loko lokān nodvijate cha yaḥ
harṣhāmarṣha-bhayodvegair mukto yaḥ sa cha me priyaḥ*

yasmāt—by whom; *na*—not; *udvijate*—are agitated; *lokaḥ*—people; *lokāt*—from people; *na*—not; *udvijate*—are disturbed; *cha*—and; *yaḥ*—who; *harṣha*—pleasure; *amarṣha*—pain; *bhaya*—fear; *udvegaiḥ*—anxiety; *muktaḥ*—free; *yaḥ*—who; *saḥ*—they; *cha*—and; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—very dear

[**Translation:** Those who are not a source of annoyance to anyone and who in turn are not agitated by anyone, who are equal in pleasure and pain, and free from fear and anxiety, such devotees of Mine are very dear to Me.]

[The Lord says, “A *Bhakta/devotee* is exceedingly dear to me. Who has these qualities as well?” What are the qualities? He by whom the world is not afflicted and whom the world cannot afflict. He who is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety, such a devotee is exceedingly dear to Me. It's a beautiful verse. We have to understand in depth. A person who thinks or claims that he is a spiritual aspirant. He must have these qualities. Bhagawan Himself imparts to His devotees. You want to be My devotee. You must acquire these qualities. Then only you will be dear to Me.]

Who is dear to the Divine Lord? The Lord Himself is telling such a devotee who has the following characteristics is very near to me, near means dear to me, dear means near, near means He is one with Me. A person with these characteristics soon destroys his individuality and becomes one with Me. Whether a Sādhaka, spiritual aspirant, takes to the path of devotion, *bhakti* or any other path, slowly

approaching the Lord means getting rid of the distance, getting rid of the duality. You and I are separate. That separateness must slowly become less and less.

That is called morality. Swami Vivekananda defines morality - as identifying oneself with the other. Then if the other person is happy, I am happy. He or she is not happy, and I am also not happy. This identity alone is a true morality, otherwise, it becomes a kind of social obligation.

In this 15th Verse, what are the special characteristics or qualities a devotee must develop? And a person who develops these qualities will come nearer and nearer to God. And that means he and God cannot remain separate for a long time. But we have to try from 1%, 5%, 10%, 25%, 50%, 100%. What is the very first thing? He by whom the world is not afflicted and whom the world also cannot afflict. He who is free from joy and anger; fear and anxiety. Six spiritual characteristics are mentioned here. What is the very first thing?

1) यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको 2) लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः । *yasmāt*—by whom; *na*—not; *udvijate*—are agitated; *lokaḥ*—people; *lokāt*—from people; *na*—not; *udvijate*—are disturbed; *cha*—and; *yaḥ*—who. (There are first two qualities.)

By coming into contact with true *Bhakta* even as a thought, nobody in this world is agitated, is frightened or becomes misbalanced. Why? As I have explained, and we explored in our last class, a devotee is one. First of all, he tries to see God in everyone. And no devotee will ever try to tell a lie, to cheat or to evade the divine presence. Second, when a devotee sees God everywhere, what is the nature of God? Fearlessness. What does it mean? That means God is of the nature of *Sat*. *Sat* means existence. (Fear comes from, I am not going to be, I am not going to keep something, I am not going to expect something which would have made me very happy.) Since God is eternal existence, that means immortal, deathless, and I am none other than God. Because if God is everything, there is no I or you. Everything is God. Therefore, by implication, I am also immortal. I am also eternal. Great fear is gone. Then, even when a devotee experiences the whole world, he sees it as a manifestation of God. We have seen it in the 10th Chapter, God said, “I manifest as this world.” In the 11th Chapter, he grants that vision to Arjuna. And naturally, Arjuna has not developed some of these requisite qualities, so he get a glimpse. He knows the whole world is nothing but Brahman, but he could not retain it. A very interesting point, if Arjuna could have seen God in the form of

Duryodhana, Dushasana, Shakuni, Karna, he would not have been able to kill because nobody contemplates killing God. But then, when a person understands this is a play, a solitaire game, God is playing with Himself, when that idea firmly takes root in the mind of an aspiring, struggling devotee, such a person loses all fear. An appropriate example is a drama. An evil person comes and shoots down another ordinary person. And both of them know - (the evil person, an ordinary person) that this is a pretence, and a play acting. And he (the evil person) will discharge the gun, the other person will pretend to fall, and the evil person knows, I am not going to kill this person, it is just part of the play acting. This knowledge comes to a devotee in actual life, when he sees that everything is nothing but God. Of course, we progress slowly towards that idea, but let us start seeing God in something special.

Let us start Seeing God in something especial: And that is where the first thing is, the nearest one to us, and who occupies the place of God almost, is our Mother, **Matru Devo Bhava**, then Father, **Pitru Devo Bhava**, then our beloved teachers, school teacher, college teacher, university teacher, our PhD guide, and many other people. That is **Acharya Devo Bhava**. Then slowly this idea grows, and we try to identify more and more people with that Divine. That is how a man grows. And this is called 'Progress in Bhakti or Growth of Bhakti', not simply becoming emotional. This fear is an emotion. Therefore, one has to control that fear, not losing fear, but we should not be overwhelmed by fear as expressed in the second sentence. We will come to it very soon.

So not only is a devotee not frightened, but the world also is. That means nobody is frightened. I gave the example of born enemies like a cobra and a frog. There was no fear at all there. And that is what we are talking about here, the world also. The other example is of a small baby. Nobody will be frightened of a small baby because the baby can't do anything wrong to anybody. So these are the ideas we have to develop slowly.

yasmāt—by whom; **na**—not; **udvijate**—are agitated; **lokaḥ**—people: Seeing whom? Coming into contact with whom? A person with whom nobody in this world will hesitate, be frightened, be scared, or try to run away. Similarly, a devotee has no fear because he sees God everywhere. From both sides, a devotee is not frightened of anything. Even death doesn't frighten a devotee. Supposing some so-called evil person robs a devotee, he doesn't say that I have been robbed. What

does he say? It is God who has taken away something. God has given, God has taken away. So if God has taken away, it must be for my good. That is the conviction, firm conviction of every advanced devotee. Of course, ordinary devotees, pray to be rescued from suffering, to be rescued from distress. These are called *Arthbhaktas*, a little more advanced. They are not frightened, but they have certain unfulfilled desires. Such a person prays, like a small child, pestering the mother. And the mother also lovingly gives what is good for the child. This is the second example. A devotee, in other words, becomes like a child and he sees the whole world as God, as his mother. And he knows, I am not to be frightened from my mother. Of course, the mother never becomes frightened of the child. That means whatever happens, the person doesn't lose their balance of mind. This is called समत्वबुद्धि *amatavabuddhi*. These are the two important qualifications. I also explained that - a devotee, perhaps has some property and somebody is taking it away. Shuddhiram never hesitated when the Jamindar had deprived him of his entire property. He said, Rama has given, Rama has taken, and I depend upon. His dependence upon Rama became even more intense. (We come to the next line of the verse describing four other qualities.)

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रिय

harṣha—pleasure; **amarṣha**—pain; **bhaya**—fear; **udvegaiḥ**—anxiety; **muktaḥ**—free; **yaḥ**—who; **saḥ**—they; **cha**—and; **me**—to Me; **priyaḥ**—very dear

Then four other qualities, **harṣha**—pleasure or excessive excitement; **amarṣha**—pain; **bhaya**—fear; **udvegaiḥ**—anxiety. One who is comparatively free from these four emotional situations. Such a devotee is most dear to Me. What's our problem? We want to love God. That means we think about God. But what is it that prevents us from continuously thinking about God? Emotional upsets. We have high emotion, sometimes low emotion. Constantly we are being buffeted by this high tide and low tide. This is what the Lord is indicating हर्ष. हर्ष means joy. What does it mean? We are expecting something, then we get it, then it gives us joy. If it is dear to us, then we become happy. We are not expecting it, but we would feel excited if we could obtain it. Somehow without any expectation or even sometimes beyond our hope, suddenly something comes. I can give you many examples. For example,

Rani Rasmani:

We know the story. Rani Rasmani's father, was a poor man. He was thinking, how can I marry off my daughter? And every parent wishes his or her children to be settled in a much better and happier place. You all know the story. Rasmani's would-be husband took a vow that he would not remarry. He happened to see this girl and fell in love. And he married Rani Rasmani. Now, what would be the mindset of the father of Rasmani? This was a Divine play.

Tyagaraja and his Daughter:

And another story is of Tyagaraja. He had a daughter. He was poor. He was living and begging. And everybody was looking and asking, "How would you marry off your daughter? He said, "I depend upon Rama." One day, a rich man sent his proposal to Tyagaraja. What was the proposal? We would be blessed and fortunate, if we could get your daughter as our daughter-in-law, as a wife for my son. This made Tyagaraja happy, but controlled happiness. Why controlled happiness? Rama has given me a daughter, and Rama has arranged her marriage, I depend totally upon Rama. So what is the proof that he controlled his mind? After this incident, his devotion to Rama had grown by leaps and bounds.

Kshudirama:

We know the story of Kshudirama.

The recording time is 15 minutes.

Story of Meerabai:

Meerabai's brother-in-law, or some people say, her husband, Bhojraj sent poison to her. We know the incident, she drank the poison and sang a beautiful song, *Vis ka piyala rana ne bheja*. Rana means king, it could be her husband, or it could be her brother-in-law. *Pivat Meera hansi re* Mirabai says, I drank this joyfully. Why? Because she offered it first to Krishna, and then took it as Prasad. Why did Meera dance joyfully? If it is Krishna's will, this body will go. *Atma*, of course, will not go. And if it is Krishna's will, I will survive. Let him do whatever he likes.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ C18, V61॥

īśhvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛid-deśhe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā

[The Lord/Ishwara is sitting as the puppeteer inside the hearts of every human being, inside the COVID viruses, inside the mosquitoes, inside the elephants, the tigers and everything else. He goes on revolving everybody; He goes on playing with us as the puppeteer plays with his puppets - make them fight with each other or makes them feel happy or unhappy. Every thing is going on by the will of the Divine Mother.] The divine Lord, sitting in the hearts of every being makes us do whatever He wants. He makes us dance, speak or do whatever.

(The recording time is 16 minutes approx.)

Jem ne bolhao, tem ne boli. Jem ne nachao, tem ne nachi. (In Bengali)

Mother, I do whatever way you make me do. Because she comes in the form of knowledge, she expresses in the form of verbal expression, everything She does. We foolishly think that we do. That is called *ahankara*. A good devotee says, "I'm an instrument, and *ami jantra*, *tumi jantri*, you are the mechanic and the driver. And that is the characteristic here.

3) **Harsha** means, do not be elated. Should we not become happy? We should become happy. Then, is this not a contradictory statement? No. What it means is, your mind should be in-charge. How much you'll be happy, how much you'll be unhappy. Because when I am in great excitement, rather than saying, I am happy, the better word is, I'm excited and I'm depressed. He who gets excited becomes depressed as well. So both ways, a person only loses his control. If you are excited/happy, you cannot think of God. If you are depressed/unhappy, you can't think of God. So that perfect emotional control and balance is what is indicated here.

4) **Amarsha**— Similarly, **Amarsha** means, becoming despondent, unhappy, suffering. There are so many events. Life is full of that. Sometimes it is a beautiful spring. Sometimes it is very hot. Sometimes it is very cold. Sometimes it is raining. Some COVID will come. Or health situations will also come. Everything should be

taken with a big pinch of salt. Let us enjoy, but let it be under our control. This is what every saint does. So a Zen Buddhist, how does he react to it? They have peculiar terminology. And this is how you do it.

Philosophy of a Zen Master: “So, What?”

There is a Zen Master. Someone comes and says, I will kill you. What do we say? What? But a Zen Master will say, “So what? You want to kill this body? OK, go ahead. It doesn't affect me.” On another occasion, someone says, “Oh, I am going to make you a prince of this particular province in-charge.” We'll say, “Oh my God, how gracious God is.” But this Zen Master will say, “So what?” Somebody comes and says that a death has happened. Zen Master says, “So what?” Somebody comes and says, “You will be given a big reward.” He says, “So what?” So what? So what? So that is called the perfect characteristic of a devotee. If some devotee, some person does something wrong, or if some person does some good, he will not be happy too much. He will not be excited. He will not be depressed. What about someone doing some evil to him? Oh, he will say, “Rama has come. Rama has given. Rama has taken away.” These two qualities are expressed in a beautiful parable by Shri Ramkrishna, the master of parables.

Parable of “Rama’s Will” also known as the story of Raghuram.



[The parable of "Rama's Will," also known as the story of Raghuram, is a well known teaching of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa emphasising complete surrender to God’s Will. In this parable, a weaver named Raghuram attributes all events, both positive and negative, to the Will of Lord Rama. This includes his capture by thieves, his arrest by the police, and his subsequent release by the magistrate. The story highlights the importance of unwavering faith and the idea that everything that happens is ultimately part of God's plan.]

What is that story? I hope and expect my devotees to remember it. Everything is by 'the Will of Rama'. The story is of the weaver. He used to say, "Everything happens by the Will of Rama." When this person was caught, he said, "It is Rama's Will." When he was brought before the magistrate, he said, "It is Rama's will." And when the magistrate said, "You can go free." He said, "It is Rama's Will". But did he lose his mind control? No. His remembrance of Rama, his devotion to Rama had grown by leaps and bounds.

Harsha means excessive excitement. **Amarsha** means just the opposite, full of fear, full of depression. Oh, I have lost something. No. Something has come. Something has come. 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram' Whatever comes, that also goes away. This is being beautifully expressed, **Harsha, Amarsha** - excessive excitement, and the opposite, that is depression. Next is -

5) **Bhaya**—fear: It is said that fear comes only from two sources.

What are the sources of fear?

The main sources of fear are two. What is it?

1. What I am expecting, I may not get.
2. And what I already have may be lost. For a devotee, nobody can take God away from him.

Bhakta Surdas and Shri Krishna:

There's a beautiful, funny incident. Surdas was travelling to Vrindavan. As we all know, he was blind. He came to a spot, where he could not find the right way and got lost. He cried out to Krishna for help. Krishna came in the guise of a small boy, caught hold of his hand, and took him to the right path. Surdas reached Brindavan holding His hand. Now, the boy was about to leave him. But the touch of the Divine had awakened the understanding of Surdas. He thought - "The boy who is showing me the right path, and put me in the right way, is none other than my own Krishna." So he wanted to catch hold of the hand and keep it. But that child

Krishna, as usual, did some mischief. He snatched his hand away and ran away. Then Surdas said, "I don't care now you run away from me. You snatched your hands from my hand and went away. But I have firmly imprisoned you in the cage of my heart. Now, my dear fellow, try to escape from my heart. Let me see who is great, you or I." It is like this -

हाथ छुड़ाए जात हो, निर्वल जान के मोये ।
हृदय से जब तुम जाओगे, तब प्रबल मानिहौ तोये ।

Shri Ramakrishna - Radha makes Krishna's Painting:

Shri Ramakrishna expressed it in a slightly different way, but a very telling way.

Radha paints Shri Krishna with a full body, including legs. And Krishna runs away. Then next time, she paints Krishna without legs. Somebody asks, "What is this, Krishna without legs? She smiles, "I painted Him with legs, and as soon as I completed my painting, He ran away. Now, He cannot run away from me. I will carry Him wherever I am." So such a beautiful song is there. 'If only, Krishna, you are a nose ring in my nose, I will always walk proudly because I will always see you. If you are only the anklets around my legs, I will always dance taking your name. You will always be with me. If you are in the form of a flute, then you will always be on my lips.' Such meaningful, sweet songs are there in the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna. I mean, Shyam Sangeet or Krishna Sangeet, Vaishnava Padavali. Shri Ramakrishna was not only a great singer, but he could bring out all the emotions so vividly to all the devotees. That's why Totapuri was charmed.

Coming back to our subject:

What What are we talking about? **Bhaya**. So a devotee will never have any fear because who can take away God from him? If God takes away, then what can anybody do? There is a beautiful Hindi saying:

Ram Rakhe, Kaun Maare? If Rama is protecting me, who can kill me?

Ram Maare, Kaun Rakhe? If Rama himself has decided to finish me, who can save me?

Everything is done by God, and I totally depend upon Him. So I will have no fear at all. OK. Fear comes from the fact of death. But what can death do? What did Markandeya do when *Mrityu Devata* had come to catch hold of him? He went and embraced Shiva Linga, the emblem of Shiva. And Yamadharma Raja could not come near Shiva because He is called **Mrityunjaya**. That's why we all repeat the **Mahamrityunjaya** Mantra.

- **Om Tryambakam Yajamahe:** "We worship the three-eyed one."
- **Sugandhim Pushtivardhanam:** "Who is fragrant and increases prosperity."
- **Urvarukamiva Bandhanan:** "Like a cucumber from its stalk."
- **Mrityormukshiya Maamritaam:** "May he liberate us from death, not from immortality."

If Shiva is *Mrityunjaya*, *Dakshinamurthy* is *Mrityunjaya*, and by repeating this *Mrityunjaya* Mantra, or *Dakshinamurthy Stotam*, I will be free from the fear of death. But what about death? Well, death comes only to the body, and anyway it will come, whether it is a saint or sinner or a king or pauper. The physical body, old age, disease, and death, are inescapable to anybody. So a devotee's mind will not be agitated by joy, excitement, depression, or fear. Next is -

5) **udvegaiḥ**—anxiety or excessive agitation: **Udvegaiḥ** means excessive agitation of the mind following certain events. I give you an example to explain it.

Supposing you are a devotee. You are going somewhere, and you see some evil people catching hold of a small girl and trying to cut her limb by limb. Even the hardened human heart will be moved by that type of sight. You become extremely agitated by the sight. But if the same event happens in a cinema, we will neither experience the **bhaya**/fear nor the **udvegaiḥ**/agitation. We will enjoy the cinema. That's why it is called aesthetic enjoyment. It may be what is pity-evoking. But we will not be agitated. Why? Because we know it is not the reality. A devotee knows nothing is real in this world except God. As I mentioned in my last class, Prahlada was tortured. Was he afraid? He was not feared. Was he agitated? He never became agitated. What is the secret? Because for him, everything is God.

The summary of Verse 15: (The verse describes six qualities of a devotee.)

1. He is never agitated by the world.

2. He from whom the whole world never gets agitated,
3. He who is free from excessive joy.
4. He who is free from excessive depression.
5. He who is free from excessive fear.
6. He who is free from excessive agitation. If a devotee has these six qualities, then he is progressing in spiritual life.

Illustration of a Mother and Her Baby:

A mother observes her child's first faltering steps the baby is taking, for a few days. The mother is ever alert and holds the baby's hand so that the baby does not get hurt. But if she continues holding the baby, the baby will never be confident to walk, much less to run. So after a few days, when the baby has advanced a little bit, the mother and father sit at a distance and allow the child to tumble. Once the child tumbles a few times, he understands it is not dangerous. Thereafter, he will not be afraid. And over time, the child runs with his parents. And this is what Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother used to give the example. A calf, many times it stumbles trying to get up. It gets up, and it runs with equal speed with its mother and father.

The recording time is 30 minutes approx.

A devotee should be free from fear and excessive attachment. That is important. However, we should not be like stones, like a lump of clay. It does mean that if something good happens, I will not enjoy it. Something bad happens, and I will not feel it. So when we are dead or unconscious, they will not affect us. When we are in deep sleep, we don't feel all these things. But consciously, we experience all these situations and keep our minds perfectly under control. That is called yoga. *Samatvam yoga uchayte* and *Yogaha karmasu kaushalam* are the two definitions of yoga.

It reminds me of a beautiful wise saying/proverb. (Shankaracharya)

"वज्रादपि कठोराणि मृदूनि कुसुमादपि।

vajradhapi kathorani murudhuni kusumadapi.

लोकोत्तराणां चेतांसि को हि विज्ञातुमर्हति॥ "

lokottara naam chetansi, ko hi vijyatumarhati

[The English translation of the Sanskrit phrase "वज्रादपि कठोराणि मृदूनि कुसुमादपि" is: Harder than a thunderbolt, softer than a flower". This phrase is a well-known Sanskrit subhashita (proverb or wise saying) that describes the nature of noble or exceptional individuals. It means that their minds are capable of being as hard and unyielding as a thunderbolt (*Vajra*, the weapon of the god Indra) when facing adversity or injustice, but also as gentle and compassionate as a flower in dealing with others.]

So it is good to have a strong heart like a thunderbolt, and our hearts should be softer than flowers. When should we apply this?

वज्रादपि कठोराणि Vajradhapi kathorani: When we are going through hard times, our heart should be strong like a rock/Indra's Vajra. So that nothing could touch us.

मृदूनि कुसुमादपि। Murudhuni Kusumathi: When we see other people suffering, our hearts should be softer than the softest flowers.

Who can understand these contradictory qualities of a great soul? So such great people are called **lokottara naam**, the greatest people. Their minds are like this. A bhakta's heart is harder than even a diamond. When he experiences hardness, suffering, etc., he remains strong and does not get disturbed. But at the same time, his heart is more tender than even the tenderest of the flowers. So this kind of emotional control, every devotee has to develop. Usually, unfortunately, very sadly, most devotees, if they see other people suffering, they don't feel it. But if they have any tragic events happening in their own families, they cling like super glue. So the Lord is telling us, if you want to come to Me, you will have to develop these qualities.

Now, we move on to the Verse 16.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 12, Verse 16.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 16॥

*anapekṣhaḥ śhuchir dakṣha udāsīno gata-vyathaḥ
sarvārambha-parityāgī yo mad-bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ*

anapekṣhaḥ—indifferent to worldly gain; *śhuchiḥ*—pure; *dakṣhaḥ*—skilful; *udāsīnaḥ*—without cares; *gata-vyathaḥ*—untroubled; *sarva-ārambha*—of all undertakings; *parityāgī*—renouncer; *sah*—who; *mad-bhaktaḥ*—my devotees; *sah*—he; *me*—to Me; *priyaḥ*—very dear

[Those who are indifferent to worldly gains, externally and internally pure, skilful, without cares, untroubled, and free from selfishness in all undertakings, such devotees of Mine are very dear to Me.]

The Lord enumerate a few more qualities of a Bhakta here. He who is free from dependence, who is pure and prompt, unconcerned, untroubled, and who has renounced all voluntary undertakings, such a devotee is dear to Me. We must develop these spiritual qualities.

1) *anapekṣhaḥ*—indifferent to worldly gain: It is interesting. *Apekshaḥ* means expecting something. And this expectation is of two types.

The first type of expectation is: A student completes his university examination successfully. His education is complete. He applies for a job, gets an interview, and attends the interview. He believes that he has done quite well, and expects that he should get the job. Another example - is that some young people want to get married. They contact each other and make a plan to meet. They talk with each other. And make a decision after a few days. In these examples, individuals do some activities and expect a favourable outcome. They expect a result sooner rather than later. This is one type of expectation.

The second type of expectation is: Many of us have unfulfilled desires, if only I obtain that CEO's job, if only I suddenly win a lottery ticket, if only that most beautiful girl can marry me, these are called unrealistic expectations. So one should be free from both. Why should we not have expectations? Whether they result from some activity or are unrealistic expectations, both possess us like ghosts and prevent us from freely thinking about God.

Shri Ramakrishna and Hajra:

Hajra used to do a lot of *japa* in the presence of Shri Ramakrishna. However, a greater part of his mind used to think - I need one thousand rupees

because I had borrowed that money. I need to return that money, so if somehow or other I can get that money either from devotees or by some fluke, then I would be thrilled. He even used to say to Shri Ramakrishna's face, "If God can give *Mukti*, why can't He give some money also along with that?"

Anyway, Bhagavan Krishna is telling, "You can have expectations. We are not rocks or pieces of wood. We are human beings, very natural, at our stage of spiritual development to have some expectations. We can hope to get some things, and there is nothing wrong with it. But two things we have to keep in mind. Every devotee should say, I have a right to expect. But I should fulfil these two conditions. What is the first condition? If it is God's grace, God's will, God wants to give, let it come. And if that doesn't happen because I know it is not God's will, gladly I should accept God's will and keep my mind firmly fixed on the lotus feet of God. These two conditions are fulfilled, a devotee will be certain to progress. This is ***anapekṣah***. The next quality is:

2) *śhuchiḥ*—pure. What does *Shuchiḥ* mean? Pure. *Shuchiḥ* again has two meanings 1) External cleanliness and 2) Internal cleanliness. External cleanliness comes from taking a bath, putting on clean or new clothes, keeping everything clean in the room and outside. (Sometimes we see the whole street is littered with a lot of rubbish and people don't notice. Usually in the advanced Western countries, people have understood that for each other's happiness and to control the spread of disease, we should keep our surroundings neat and clean.) Swami Vivekananda said: If we are externally clean but internally impure - it means pushing everything under the carpet. That is not desirable. Swamiji used to say, "Better to keep the external dirty, but keep the mind pure." A devotee should be clean externally and also internally. What does it mean? It means he must keep a guard on his thoughts. He should not have impure thoughts or excessively expectant thoughts. Rational thoughts and rational expectations are permitted and that is fine. That is why the scripture tells us what we should expect and do.

Do not ask God worldly pleasures:

The scriptures also tell us. If God comes, don't go on saying, "I want to be the richest person on earth." Don't say that. Why? Only *Asuras/ Rakshasas/* demons, alone say that. Every devotee says, "Oh Lord, whatever You think is good

and right for me, grant me that. I will be like a child, grateful, accepting that one.” So this is called *Shuchith*.

What is the most important point about the cleanliness or purity?

But this is only one part of the cleanliness or purity. The most important part of external purity is to constantly strive to cultivate holy company, reading good books, seeing good things, hearing good things, talking about good subjects, visiting sacred people and places, attending good events, etc. This is external purity. That means spiritual purity. Internally, we must keep a sharp eye on our minds. Before any unspiritual thought, desire, or impulse, could spring, even when it is just beginning to form, if we can detect it, and we can detect it through practice, then we should be able to nip it in the bud. External purity means externally trying to keep the mind on God, as well as internally trying to keep the mind, which means our thoughts, our imaginations, and our expectations, related to God. This is called *Shuchihi*. The next quality is -

3) dakṣhaḥ—skilful: The devotee must be extremely dexterous, skilful. That is why one of the definitions of Yoga is *Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam" (C2, V50)* is a Sanskrit phrase from the Bhagavad Gita meaning “Yoga is skill in action” or “Excellence in action is Yoga.”] It emphasises performing one's duties with skill, efficiency, and mindfulness, rather than being attached to the results.] Swami, Brahmananda used to say, “A real Brahmachari can do easily 16 worldly people's worth of activity. How can one person do 16 people's worth of activity?” What did he mean to say? This Sadhaka is focused/concentrated, alert, intelligent, discriminative, and so dispassionate/objective, that his mind always finds the best way to finish a job quickly, dextrously, in the best way possible, because he is paying attention. (Swami Dayatmananda tells his experience to explain this point.)

Swami Dayatmananda and the Rice pudding:

I used to poke my devotees sometimes in a funny way. The devotees used to cook various dishes and used to bring these to the Centre for everyone to share. Once a devotee cooked a pudding called *Pyasam*/rice pudding. I ate the pudding and she was very curious to know my opinion. She asked, “Swamiji, how is the pudding?” I said, “Well! there is a lot of room for improvement.” She asked, “What is wrong with it?” Sometimes, it used to get a little annoyed. I used to say politely,

“You must have prepared the pudding many times. By now, you should get a fair idea about the proportion of sugar, rice, milk and time required to cook. The pudding is too sweet and the rice is half cooked. You must taste it and pay attention every time you cook. If there is too much sugar, then reduce the amount; if rice is half cooked then cook it for a little longer. If you pay attention, you will get perfect results. Every time you cook, taste it and make necessary changes. That will make you an expert.” This happened many times. Sometimes, devotees cook but do not pay attention and lack skilfulness. Swami Yatishwarananda Maharaj used to say, “Cultivate constant awareness. If a person can practice it, he will save a lot of time.” You can read a book in less than half the time if you pay attention. You can easily understand what the author wants to say, what the important points are, what the relationships are between one idea, the second idea, and the third idea, and how to retain them, so that I never again forget. All these things will come automatically if done skilfully. That is meant by **Dakshah** - **Karmasu Kaushalam**.

The reading time is 45 minutes approx.

Definition of Skilfulness based on the Bhagavad Gita:

The Bhagavad Gita gives a new definition of what is skilfulness. What is skilfulness? Whatever actions I do, I don't want different results. I don't wish for worldly results. I want only one single result. What is it? May my devotion to You, O Lord, increase. May my knowledge of You increase. May I approach nearer and nearer to God.” And this is called skill, which takes us nearer and nearer to God, whatever the activity. That is called **Dakshah**.

Everybody has to go through the ups and downs of this samsara. So, what is the remedy?

Then, we are human beings, despite whatever we do, so many times, so many things can happen. We can't avoid it. Saints and sinners, kings and beggars, scholars and illiterate people, everybody has to go through the ups and downs of this samsara. So, what is the remedy?

4) udāsīnaḥ—without much excitement: Earlier, we discussed *Maitri*, *Karuna*, *Mudita*, and *Upeksha*. That *Upeksha* is termed here as **udāsīnaḥ**— What is it? Do not be too excited. We should try to feel as if it is happening to somebody else. It

may be happening to you or me. But as if it is happening to somebody else, and this is one of the qualities of Bhakti. Otherwise, we will regret it, our minds will deviate from God, and we will pay a heavy price for not approaching nearer to God.

5) **gata-vyathah**— is a beautiful word again. *Vyathah* व्यथा means terrible suffering, regret. What is it? In life, so many things happen. Many things are not pleasant. A spiritual person perhaps has to go through much more suffering than even an ordinary person. Why do I say it? Because a devotee's heart becomes extremely tender. He cannot tolerate other people's sufferings, and sometimes his own sufferings. So he will not be hard-hearted like a buffalo. He will be very tender-hearted. That tenderness sometimes causes great suffering to him. So we have to develop this special quality. Whatever has happened, happened. Changes happen in the world whatever may be our philosophy of life. Even the greatest financial pundits, could not predict the current financial downturn 10 years back. Similarly, the greatest scientists never knew that people would suffer for more than one year from COVID-19. They could not imagine a second variety could come. Now, everybody is looking back and saying, Oh, we should have been more alert. Sometimes we make decisions too late. For example, we know about the second wave of this mutant COVID in the UK. India should have been prompt to ban all flights from the UK. But it did not happen. We did it too late. And some people were irresponsible in some ways and cases of COVID increased. We don't know the future. What I am trying to say - a devotee of God should say, "Past is past." Let the dead bury their dead. Let us not worry. Let us always have a positive attitude, and hope in the providence of God. So he will not regret. Somebody insulted me. Fine. I lost something. That's OK. I regretted a little bit. But now I am not going to brood over it any longer. If we do not develop, our mind, as you can imagine, it cannot be fixed on God. This is called brooding and worrying. These things will be counter-spiritual. They're not going to help us. The next quality is -

6) **sarva-ārambha**—of all undertakings; **parityāgi**—renouncer:

What does it mean? Every devotee must do his duties but he should not cherish new desires. The sequence of desires is like this. First, a thought comes, the thought could be of a spiritual or worldly desire. If it is a spiritual desire, there is no harm. But if it is a worldly desire, soon we start brooding over it. I give an example. If I do this, I get this profit. Then it will fetch me so much enjoyment. And the desire

soon translates into action, translates into good or evil, translates into *punya/merit* or *papa/demerit*. And the result is happiness or unhappiness. Again, we are caught in the wheel of this transmigration.

What should a devotee do?

Whatever duties I am supposed to do, I will do my best. But fresh undertakings related to worldly things will never do that. If God wants me to do it, He will make it happen. But I will not deliberately plan for it and do it. In the initial stage, we plan, because we are not completely dependent upon God. A baby doesn't plan anything, not even for the next minute, much less for the next hour or night or next day. His mother plans for him. If the baby has to travel, the mother knows. And she prepares whatever is necessary for the baby. And in this connection, there is a beautiful story. Let me first complete this. So he who deliberately doesn't undertake any new activity that is not related to spiritual life, but depends totally upon God, if God inspires, then he knows it is God's will. He does whatever is necessary, not even a little bit more. Such a person alone deserves to be titled as My devotee. And such a person, undoubtedly, is very dear to me.

sarvārambha-parityāgī yo mad-bhaktāḥ sa me priyaḥ

Who has renounced all voluntary undertakings, such a devotee is dear to Me. We must develop these spiritual qualities. Let's discuss a beautiful incident from the Life of Shri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother.

Why did Shri Ramakrishna not call Maa Sharada Devi to come to the Dakshineswar Temple?

Shri Ramakrishna is a master of parables and stories. I would like to discuss one particular event. One question has been repeatedly asked by many devotees to me and also to other Swamis. The question asked, "Shri Ramakrishna was a married man. He knew his wife, Sharda Devi, was growing away from him. She became nearly 17 to 18 years old. Many times, he trained her. But how come he never called her to Dakshineswar?" This was the question. Swami Shardanandaji raised the same question. And he himself answers. What was the answer? He said, "Shri Ramakrishna never deliberately undertook any activity. He

depended upon the Divine Mother. Whom he used to call My Mother. He will take action only if commanded by the Divine Mother. He himself will never desire or do anything. Shri Ramakrishna did not get the commandment from the Divine Mother - "You go and call your wife/Sarada Devi to Dakshineswar." That is why he did not call Sarada Devi to Dakshineswar. This was the reason.

On the contrary, Holy Mother decided to go to Dakshineswar to meet Shri Ramakrishna. Holy Mother started her journey with her father to see Shri Ramakrishna, assess the situation and serve him, whether he was a madman or a saint. The long journey on foot was arduous, and Sarada Devi, unaccustomed to such travel, fell ill with a high fever, forcing her to take shelter at a wayside stop with her father. Holy Mother was delirious and semi-conscious due to her illness. While resting during her illness, Sarada Devi had a profound vision. She saw a beautiful, dark-complexioned woman and asked, "Who are you?" The lady said, "I am your sister from Dakshineswar." And assured Sarada Devi that she would recover and meet her husband there. Several questions arise in our minds. Who was this strange lady? How could she know what was in the mind of Holy Mother? The woman also said, "I have kept him only for you. He is waiting for you. You should come to him." Shri Ramakrishna never knew all those things.

Another incident is of Totapuri. He came to Dakshineswar. And said, "I want to give you *Sanyasa*". Ramakrishna flatly said, "I don't know anything. My Mother knows. I will ask Her. If She says, "Go and take *Sanyasa*, I will take *Sanyasa*." Shri Ramakrishna was a great devotee, never undertaking anything without the permission of the Divine Mother. Sometimes we misunderstand his actions. I will discuss another beautiful incident in our next class.

Yesterday was Kalpataru. As we know, Shri Ramakrishna blessed almost every devotee present there on 1st January 1886. So we celebrate it as a Kalpataru day. I pray to Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda - to bless us all with spiritual awakening. And I also wish you all the best and a spiritual new year through this Zoom class. I pray to Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji. Let us all have a new spiritual year. Jai Ramakrishna.

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)