

ANANTA SATSANG • SACRED TEXTS

मेरे तो गरिधर गोपाल

Mere To Giridhar Gopal

Giridhar Gopal Alone Is Mine



Swami Ramsukhdas

*Twelve Discourses on Exclusive Belonging,
the Three Yogas, Practice, and Natural Freedom*

Contents

Reader's Orientation	4
Terminology Guide	5
Imprint, Publisher's Note, and Contents	6
Giridhar Gopal Alone Is Mine	8
Desire, Spiritual Inquiry, and Longing	15
Non-difference and Inseparability	22
The Right Use of the Human Body	29
Genuine Faith	44
How Does the World's Influence Fall Away?	50
How Does Pride Fall Away?	57
The Seeker, the Goal, and the Means	65
Who Is a Seeker?	71
Liberation Is Natural	80
We Are Neither Doer nor Experiencer	86
Attaining Paramātmā through Actionlessness	91

Twelve Discourses on Exclusive Belonging, the Three Yogas, Practice, and Natural Freedom

Swami Ramsukhdas

This is a fresh, complete English reading edition translated paragraph by paragraph. The official Hindi PDF controls the text. Its first discourse begins on a page newly treated as logical page 1, while the next scan retains the older printed page number 6. This jump is a pagination artifact: consecutive pages in an archival Gita Press-uploaded witness confirm that the sentence joins directly and that no authored text is missing. The publisher's note says fifteen writings were incorporated, while the present printed contents and body contain twelve discourses; both statements are preserved without harmonization. The modern eBook wrapper, cover, closing catalogue, and Word/footer artifact are not treated as translation paragraphs.

Across twelve discourses, exclusive belonging to Giridhar Gopal opens into a sustained inquiry into desire and longing, the three yogas, the right use of human life, faith, pride, the seeker and the goal, natural liberation, non-doership, and actionlessness. Actionlessness here means freedom from the claim of being the doer, not laziness or withdrawal from responsibility.

Reader's Orientation

Readers drawn to devotion may begin with *Giridhar Gopal Alone Is Mine*; readers concerned with daily life may begin with *The Right Use of the Human Body* or *How Does Pride Fall Away?*; readers approaching knowledge and liberation may begin with *Liberation Is Natural*, *We Are Neither Doer nor Experiencer*, or *Attaining Paramātmā through Actionlessness*. The author's oral satsang voice uses questions, concrete examples, and deliberate repetition; this edition preserves that movement rather than recasting the talks as a self-help manual.

Terminology Guide

Apnāpan is intimate, reciprocal belonging. *Kāmanā* is desire; *jijñāsā*, spiritual inquiry; *lālasā*, longing; *abheda*, non-difference; *abhinnatā*, inseparability; and *āstikatā*, genuine faith or affirmation of divine reality. *Sādhaka*, *sādhya*, and *sādhana* are seeker, goal, and means or practice. *Kartā* and *bhoktā* are doer and experiencer. *Akriyatā* is actionlessness or non-doership, never laziness. Bhagavān, Paramātmā, Hari, Prabhu, and Giridhar Gopal are retained as distinct divine names.

Imprint, Publisher's Note, and Contents

From the first edition through seven reprints - 105,000 copies
Eighth reprint, Vikram Samvat 2063 - 10,000 copies Total -
115,000 copies

Price-six rupees

ISBN 81-293-0955-6

Publisher and printer-Gita Press, Gorakhpur-273005 An institution
of Govind Bhavan Office, Kolkata Phone: (0551) 2334721; Fax:
2336997 website: www.gitapress.org | e-mail:
booksales@gitapress.org

Om. Salutations to the Supreme Self.

A Humble Submission

Love of God has been regarded as higher even than liberation.
Saints have taught that its principal means is to accept God as one's
own. Mirabai adopted this very means. "Giridhar Gopal alone is
mine; no one else"-this was Mirabai's sole spiritual practice.

This book is a distinctive collection of fifteen essays by the most
revered Sri Swamiji Maharaj, including "Giridhar Gopal Alone Is
Mine." For seekers who love God, these essays are very useful and
especially helpful in making God-realization readily accessible. We
humbly request readers to study this book attentively, understand
it, and benefit from it.

-Publisher

Note-The booklet entitled *Alaukik Prem* (“Transcendent Love,” code no. 781) was incorporated into the fourth edition, Vikram Samvat 2051, of the book *Mere To Giridhar Gopal* (code no. 1247).

Sri Hari.

Contents

Subject	Page
1. Giridhar Gopal Alone Is Mine	1
2. Desire, Inquiry, and Longing	13
3. Non-difference and Inseparability	20
4. The Right Use of the Human Body	22
5. True Theism	35
6. How Can the World's Influence Be Shed?	41
7. How Can Pride Be Shed?	49
8. Seeker, Goal, and Means	58
9. Who Is a Seeker?	66
10. Liberation Is Natural	75
11. We Are Neither Doers nor Experiencers	82
12. God-realization through Actionlessness	89



Giridhar Gopal Alone Is Mine

Sri Hari.

The human body has been received by God's grace, and it has been received solely for attaining God. Therefore one should set all else aside and become absorbed in God. Those who have grown old must certainly turn to God, and those who are young must also turn to God with a true heart. One may perform all the work of the world, but one's real aim, goal, and purpose must remain solely the attainment of the Supreme.

In reality, only the Supreme truly exists. If you attend to the world, all of it is perishing and is ceaselessly passing away. Look at yourself: what was the condition of your body when you emerged from your mother's womb, and what is it today? The world changes continually, while the Supreme abides continually. The world cannot remain, and the Supreme cannot change. That Supreme is ours and we belong to the Supreme-this conviction should be firm. A little child says, "Mother is mine." If someone asks why his mother is his, he has no answer. The doubt "Why is mother mine?" never even arises in him. Mother is his-there is simply no doubt. In the same way, do not doubt; accept firmly that God is mine. No one besides God is mine, because everything else will be left behind. The money, land, house, and other things about which you are so vigilant will all be left behind. Not even their memory will remain. If memory did remain, then tell me: where were you before this birth? Who were your parents, wife, and children? Which house was yours? Just as you do not remember your previous birth, this birth too will not be remembered. You are needlessly troubled over what will not remain even in memory! Everyone experiences that no one

is ours: all have met and all will part. Therefore, become carefree in the conviction, “Giridhar Gopal alone is mine; no one else.” If the world’s affairs are going wrong, let them go wrong. They are bound to do so. Even if they improve, they will deteriorate again. Do not worry about them. At first things may worsen a little, but afterward they will become excellent. Even if the whole world goes away, it does not matter. There are only these two—God and I. I belong only to God, and God alone is mine. Look toward and think about nothing else.

The one Supreme alone pervades and fills every place. Besides Him no one exists, has existed, will exist, or can exist. Accept that this very Supreme is mine, and become carefree and joyful. Do not worry whether we are good or bad. When Bharata Maharaj, on his way to Chitrakut, looks toward Mother Kaikeyi, his feet draw backward; when he looks at himself, he stands still; but when he looks toward Maharaj Raghunath, he begins to run:

जब समुझत रघुनाथ सुभाऊ। तब पथ परत उताइल पाऊ॥ *jaba samujhata raghunātha subhāū, taba patha parata utāila pāū.*

“When he recalls Raghunath’s gracious nature, his eager feet hasten onto the path.”

Likewise, do not look at what you have done or at your sins; look only toward God. When Vidurani gives God the peel, God eats the peel itself. He finds a delight in eating it that He does not find in eating the fruit, because Vidurani feels, “God is mine.” Her feeling is even more intense than that with which a mother feeds her hungry child. In the same way, accept God as your own. Do not care about life, death, or anything else. Fear no one. You have no need to depend on anyone. Keep only this one thought: “Giridhar Gopal

alone is mine; no one else.” If you hold this thought, you will be fulfilled. But if you earn great wealth, indulge in much travel and luxury, and gain much honor and acclaim, none of it will help:

“Children, family, wealth, and home will become like a dream. Awaken from sleep, Baldev, and repeat God’s Name.

The human body will not come again and again; no auspicious deed was done; the whole lifetime was lost in heedlessness.”

From today, live as one who belongs to God. Whatever anyone else is doing, God knows; it is no concern of ours. Even if the whole world becomes displeased, do not care-but never abandon the truth that God is mine. Mirabai became certain that she could no longer live apart from God-“If we must meet only to part, what is the use?” Even the sack of a body weighing one and a half or two maunds was not found; it merged into God! Apart from Thakurji alone, nothing and no one concerned her.

अंतहूँ तोह तिजैगे पामर, तू न तजै अबही ते। *antahū tohiṃ tajaiṅge pāmara, tū na tajai abahī te.*

“In the end those wretches will abandon you; abandon them now.”

Printed gloss: In the end everyone will leave you and no one will remain yours, so leave them beforehand.

“The holy man reflected and understood well, and turned his back upon the world. Seeing that it would all go wrong later, he sat apart from it at the outset.”

In the end everything is bound to deteriorate. What benefit is there in first ruining one’s own true work and only then letting matters deteriorate? Become God’s here and now. You are yours; we are

ours. No one is ours and we are no one's; God alone is ours and we are God's. Take refuge at God's feet and become carefree. Do not care who is pleased or displeased, who is mine or another's. Let them criticize or praise, reject or honor us-it is their choice. Criticism and praise, rejection and honor do not concern us. What is it to us if everyone is pleased, and what is it to us if everyone is displeased?

God alone is mine-nothing is greater than this: no sacrifice, austerity, charity, pilgrimage, learning, or any other excellent thing. Therefore remain ever joyful while accepting God as your own. Desire neither to live nor to die, neither to go nor to stay. Let God alone concern you. Besides God alone, no one is mine. In infinitely many universes, not even something the size of a hair or a straw is ours. Nothing is ours, ever was ours, ever will be ours, or ever can be ours. Accept the one God as your own and you will be fulfilled. Apart from God, be concerned with no one even in a dream. There is no need to be anyone's slave. What have we to take from or give to anyone? For how many days will our relations remain with us? "Children, family, wealth, and home will become like a dream." A dream is at least remembered, but even they will not be remembered. Just as you format a computer and forget what was on it, format the world in the same way and you will forget it. Thinking that this person is right and that one wrong, that this should happen and that should not, is mere delusion. Delusion is the root of every disease-"Delusion is the root of all ailments." Whether things are right or wrong, what is it to us? Others will need us; why should we need anyone? What concern have we with the people of the world? Remember only this: "Giridhar Gopal alone is mine; no one else."

When thirsty, drink water; when hungry, eat bread; when cold, wrap yourself in a cloth-and if these are unavailable, let that be so!

If the body goes, that is good; if it remains, that too is good. It is no concern of ours. Neither its remaining nor its going concerns us. God alone concerns us. Think, “God alone is ours, and we are God’s,” become carefree and joyful, and rise to dance: “Today we have discovered it; today there is delight!” We shall no longer be slaves to anyone.

Above and below, outside and within, the one Supreme alone is everywhere:

बहिरिन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च। *bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaram
caram eva ca.*

“Outside and inside all beings, He is the unmoving and also the moving.”

यच्च कञ्चिज्जगत्समन्निदृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा। अन्तर्बहश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य
नारायणः स्थितिः॥ *yac ca kiñcij jagaty asmin dṛśyate śrūyate 'pi vā;
antar bahiś ca tat sarvaṁ vyāpya nārāyaṇaḥ sthitaḥ.*

“Whatever in this world is seen or even heard-Narayana abides, pervading all of it within and without.”

That Supreme is nearer than the nearest and farther than the farthest, farther outside than anything and deeper within than anything. There is only the Supreme, and He is one’s own-think this and become carefree. If someone comes, it is the Supreme; if someone goes, it is the Supreme. If someone loves, it is the Supreme; if someone acts with hostility, it is the Supreme. Whatever anyone does, there is only the Supreme. Call to Him: “O Lord! O my Lord! May I never forget You.” Your birth will be fulfilled! How excellent, exalted, true, and pure this is! Do not watch what others do. What concern is that of ours?

“Let the world do as it pleases, good or bad; ‘Narayan,’ sit and sweep clean your own dwelling.”

God alone concerns us. If we are good, we are His; if bad, we are His:

जौ हम भले बुरे तौ तेरे। तुम्हें हमारी लाज-बडाई, बनितौ सुनि प्रभु मेरे॥ *jau hama bhale bure tau tere; tumheṃ hamārī lāja-barāī, binatī suni prabhu mere.*

“Whether we are good or bad, we are Yours. Our honor and repute are Your concern; hear my plea, my Lord.”

Not even a straw in this world will remain ours-will not remain, will not remain. How could it remain ours when it is not ours at all? At every moment you are being separated from the world. As many years as have passed since your birth, to that extent you have already died; the days that remain will also pass away.

Nothing besides God is ours. Therefore call to God: “O Lord! O my Lord! No one is mine. You alone are mine; no one else is mine.” Then there will be delight and joy! Dance and leap with the truth “God is mine,” saying, “Today our work is accomplished!” Offer everything at God’s feet. Do not be anyone’s slave even in a dream. Remove servitude from your heart. Dance, saying, “Today we have indeed been fulfilled!” If someone asks what you have found, say, “I found what ought to be found!” The Supreme is naturally attained by everyone and dwells within all. He is our own. We need nothing from anyone else, require no one, and care for no one’s approval. If someone is pleased, delight; if displeased, delight! We hurt no one, act against no one, and wish no one harm even in a dream. Whether another is pleased or displeased is therefore that person’s choice. No one else concerns us.

Nothing equals the truth “God is mine”; nothing ever will, and nothing can. Now that we have discovered this, there is delight! For so long we served others and suffered for nothing. Now we bow to everyone. All are worthy, but they do not concern us. God alone concerns us; yet even from God we have nothing to take and no demand to make.

“I searched everywhere, but found no trace of You. When Your whereabouts became known, no trace of me remained.”

In reality, I do not exist at all; there is only You, You alone. Small and great, good and bad-all are You alone. Now we have found the real thing! Today we have discovered that You alone are, and I am not! There is neither “I” nor “mine.” There is only You and Yours. Now there is joy alone-complete joy, boundless joy, equal joy, peaceful joy, compact joy, unmoving joy, joy outside, joy within-only joy, nothing but joy!



Desire, Spiritual Inquiry, and Longing

The desire present within a human being is of three kinds: desire, inquiry, and longing. Desire (*kāmanā*) is for worldly enjoyment and accumulation; inquiry (*jijñāsā*) is for one's true nature, the attributeless Reality; and longing (*lālasā*) is for God, the Reality with attributes.

Worldly desire arises from an error, because within us there is an element of the Supreme and an element of nature. The individual self is the element of the Supreme—"An eternal portion of Myself in the world of living beings"-while the body is the element of nature—"the mind as the sixth among the senses, which abide in nature" (Gita 15.7). The wish to know "What am I?"-to know one's true nature, the individual self-is inquiry. The wish to attain God—"How may God be attained? How may love for Him arise?"-is longing. Inquiry and longing are truly ours, but desire is not ours, because inquiry and longing concern the Reality, whereas desire concerns the unreal.

Desires arise in relation to the body. Many brothers and sisters regard the body as primary. In reality, however, the body is not primary; the embodied one who considers himself to dwell in the body is primary. The body is like clothing. Just as a person discards worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, the embodied one discards old bodies and assumes new ones. The body changes at every moment. Therefore desires centered on the body are not truly ours.

Printed footnote
वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा वह्निाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणां

तथा शरीराणविहिय जीर्णान्यन्यानसिंयातनिवानिदेही॥
*vāsāṃsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro 'parāṇi;
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny anyāni saṃyāti navāni dehī.*
“As a person casts off worn-out garments and takes other new ones, so the embodied self casts off worn-out bodies and enters other new ones.”

Desire connected with the body and world has many names—desire, expectation, latent craving, thirst, and so on. “May I obtain this object, wealth, enjoyment, a family, a house”—none of these desires is true to our real nature. Such desires occur in every species. Human desires differ from a dog’s, and a lion’s differ again. Cows, buffaloes, sheep, goats, donkeys, horses, and others each have different desires. Thus bodies keep changing and desires change with them. Trees desire fertilizer and water: if they receive these, they become green; if not, they dry up. But inquiry and longing occur only in the human body, not in other bodies, because other bodies are forms of birth meant for undergoing experience; in them only the wish to enjoy is present.

Inquiry and longing are not found in demons, monsters, ghosts, spirits, or fiends. They may occur among celestial beings, but even among them the wish for enjoyment predominates. Similarly, among very wealthy people in the human world, the desire to enjoy and accumulate wealth predominates, so they do not turn toward the Supreme. I asked a wealthy man in Calcutta, “You have enough money to support many generations. What will you do by earning still more?” He answered very candidly, “Swamiji, I have no answer.” There is only one obsession: earn money, earn money. What will be done with that wealth is never considered. One cannot consume all of it; one will have to die and leave it behind.

Those who desire only enjoyments are not worthy of being called human. Worthy of that name are those who have inquiry into their true nature and longing for the Supreme. Only a human being can wish to know the Self and attain the Supreme; only a human being has this capacity. Those who abandon it and become absorbed in enjoyment and accumulation possess not humanity but animality. The Bhagavata calls this animal-intelligence: “Abandon this animal notion” (12.5.2). The wish to know “Who am I? Who is my master?” is human intelligence.

“A darkness in this world has veiled everyone’s eyes; because of it I cannot see who I am or whence I came. In which direction must I go, and at the sight of what have I grown desirous? Who is the master of this world, and who fashioned this maya?”

Such inquiry is possible only in a human being. Among animals, the cow is very pure. No creature’s excrement or urine is considered pure, but even a cow’s dung and urine are pure: cow urine is sprinkled for purification, and a floor is coated with cow dung. Yet despite such purity, a cow lacks the power to know, “What is my true nature? What is the Supreme?” Only a human being can know this. Apart from human birth there is no other place for such knowing. This opportunity exists only in human birth. Only in this birth can we know ourselves, attain God, and love God. If we enter a human body but do not accomplish this, the human body has gone to waste.

Desires continually change, but inquiry and longing remain the same and never change, because these two belong to oneself. The self never changes; the body keeps changing. Desires, dispositions, and ways of living likewise change. Whatever changes is not our true nature. Therefore Shukadeva told King Parikshit:

त्वं तु राजन् मरिष्येतपिशुबुद्धमिमं जहति *tvam tu rājan mariṣyetīti*
paśubuddhim imāṃ jahi.

“O King! Abandon now this animal-intelligence that says, ‘I shall die.’”

If the self dies, who goes into another species? Who goes to heaven or hell? Who passes through the 8.4 million forms of birth? The self never dies, because it is a portion of the Supreme.

“If Rama dies, then I shall die; otherwise let calamity itself die. The child of the Imperishable neither dies nor can be killed.”

Since Sri Rama does not die, why should we alone die? We are portions of Sri Rama. We are never destroyed. We do not yet know what we are, but as we passed through many species-at times aquatic, aerial, terrestrial, egg-born, womb-born, moisture-born, or sprouting from the earth-the bodies changed but we did not. Those bodies no longer remain, yet we remain. Thus our true nature is an ever-abiding existence that is never destroyed. This existence is a portion of the Supreme.

Water rises from the ocean and becomes a cloud. As a cloud it rains. Those who understand can say that a cloud rising from one place will rain at another. Rainwater enters a channel, the channel a river, and the river the ocean. Once water has risen from the ocean, it rests nowhere but keeps moving. Only when it finally merges into the ocean does it find rest. In the same way, so long as the portion of the Supreme has not attained the Supreme, its journey continues. It finds peace only on meeting the Supreme. The body, similarly, is a portion of the earth. Until it merges into the earth, it continues moving about; in the end it dies and merges into soil. It is born in earth, remains in earth, and dissolves into earth; it cannot go

anywhere apart from earth. Likewise, until this individual being attains the Supreme, its journey will continue: it will keep being born, dying, and suffering-“Again birth, again death, again lying in a mother’s womb” (*punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi jananijathare sayanam*). It will find peace nowhere. Therefore a human being should awaken the inquiry and longing that are truly one’s own.

If, after obtaining a human body, we become absorbed in enjoyment and accumulation, nothing has been gained; we remain exactly where we were. The ox at an oil press walks its whole life but remains in the same place. Likewise, if we repeatedly take birth and die, we remain where we were and gain nothing. There will be gain only when our wandering ends. Therefore we should consider: whose portion are we? Our wandering will cease only on attaining the One whose portion we are.

With the human body comes the right to attain the Supreme and accomplish one’s highest good. For that attainment, inquiry or longing alone is primary. If genuine inquiry or longing is present, every aid to realization will be found: satsang, a guru, good saints and great souls, and good scriptures. One cannot say where or how they will be found, but with true inquiry or longing they certainly will be. Whichever path you wish to follow-Karma-yoga, Jnana-yoga, or Bhakti-yoga-God is ready to provide what that path requires. But if you do not wish to walk at all, what can God do? No tax or burden is imposed on you; only longing is required.

A seeker with true longing for the highest good cannot settle anywhere before attaining it. If such a person finds a guru but not realization, he will not remain there; if he becomes a sadhu, he will not settle merely in that role; if a householder, he will not settle

there; if he enters a sect, he will not settle there. How can a hungry person rest before finding food? One who longs for the highest good will not remain anywhere short of it. Remaining is not in his hands; he will stay only where his longing is fulfilled.

Satsang is obtained through great good fortune—"Through great good fortune one gains satsang" (Manas, Uttara 33.4). Yet the same work that speaks of fortune also says: "Whoever truly loves another surely meets that beloved; of this there is no doubt" (Manas, Bala 259.3). One with true longing will certainly receive true satsang. Whoever has genuine longing for the highest good will receive the opportunity for it—there is no doubt. Fortune has no role here at all.

Three things are necessary for obtaining a worldly object: one must desire wealth, exert oneself for it, and have fortune cooperate. The Supreme, however, is attained through desire alone, because the human body has been given precisely for attaining the Supreme. If the Supreme is not attained, in what sense has human birth been fulfilled? Therefore renounce worldly desires and awaken only inquiry into one's true nature or longing for the Supreme. In this lies the fulfillment of human birth.

So long as desire—the wish for enjoyment and accumulation—remains, the individual remains worldly. When desire disappears and inquiry is fulfilled, the individual becomes established in one's self-evident true nature. Thereafter arises longing for love of the One of whom that nature is a portion. Though the self is unmanifest, knowledge contains only nonduality, while devotion sometimes contains duality and sometimes nonduality. In devotion, when the devotee looks toward oneself there is duality; when the devotee looks toward God there is nonduality. Looking toward oneself gives the experience, "I belong

to God, and God is mine”; looking toward God gives the experience, “Everything is God alone.” Because both duality and nonduality are present in this way, love increases at every moment.



Non-difference and Inseparability

There are three yogas for the welfare of every human being: Karma-yoga, Jnana-yoga, and Bhakti-yoga. Although all three lead to the highest good, there is a subtle distinction: Karma-yoga and Jnana-yoga are means, whereas Bhakti-yoga is the goal. Bhakti-yoga is the final fruit of all yogas. Karma-yoga and Jnana-yoga are both worldly orientations, while Bhakti-yoga is a transcendent orientation. Both the body and the embodied self enter our knowledge and are therefore within the worldly domain. The Supreme, however, does not enter our knowledge but is initially accepted through faith, and is therefore transcendent. Karma-yoga proceeds with reference to the body, Jnana-yoga with reference to the embodied self, and Bhakti-yoga with reference to the Supreme. Karma-yoga is a material discipline, Jnana-yoga a spiritual discipline, and Bhakti-yoga a theistic discipline.

The Gita presents Karma-yoga and Jnana-yoga as parallel: लोकेऽस्मिन्निद्विविधा नष्टि-*loke 'smin divividhā niṣṭhā*, “In this world there is a twofold discipline” (3.3). Both lead to attainment of the same Reality: एकमप्यास्थितिः सम्यगुभयोर्वनिन्दते फलम्-*ekam apy āsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam*, “One who is rightly established in either obtains the fruit of both” (5.4); and यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते-*yat sāmṅhyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ tad yogair api gamyate*, “The state attained by the followers of knowledge is also reached by the yogins of action” (5.5). Whether a seeker proceeds through Karma-yoga or Jnana-yoga, the fruit is the same.

Through actions a person becomes entangled in activity and objects, but Karma-yoga raises one above both. The power to bring the highest good is therefore not in action itself but in Karma-yoga,

for yoga is the skill within action: योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्-*yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, “Yoga is skill in actions” (Gita 2.50). Ordinary people keep acting and keep experiencing the fruit of action—that is, they keep being born and dying. Action alone does not bring their highest good, but Karma-yoga does. In Karma-yoga, selfless service brings renunciation of the world. In Sankhya-yoga, the seeker relinquishes everything and becomes established in one’s true nature. Doing is primary in Karma-yoga, while discriminative reflection is primary in Sankhya-yoga; thus there is a great difference between them. Yet despite that difference, their fruit is the same. By rising above the world through either, one is liberated. Both are worldly means, because the body (insentient) and the embodied self (sentient) are divisions that enter our vision, whereas God does not. Whether to accept God is initially our choice; reasoning cannot operate here. One must first accept that God exists. Then He no longer remains merely something accepted: He is directly experienced.

There is exertion in “action,” but repose in “Karma-yoga.” Exertion belongs to animals; repose belongs to the human being. The body is needed only for exertion, not for repose. This proves that the body is not for ourselves at all. In Karma-yoga, the exertion performed through the body is for serving others, while repose is for oneself.

Karma-yoga and Sankhya-yoga culminate in non-difference (*abheda*), while Bhakti-yoga culminates in inseparability (*abhinna*). Wherever knowledge is described, two are spoken of: real and unreal, nature and spirit, field and knower of the field, perishable and imperishable, and so forth—for example, नासतो वदियते भावो नाभावो वदियते सतः-*nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ*, “The unreal has no being, and the real never ceases to be” (Gita 2.16). In Bhakti-yoga, however, two are not described; nothing

exists besides the one God: वासुदेवः सर्वम्-*vāsudevaḥ sarvam*, “Vasudeva is all” (7.19). In Jnana-yoga the real and unreal are distinct, but in Bhakti-yoga both the real and the unreal are God: सदसच्चाहमर्जुन-*sad asac cāham arjuna*, “I am both the real and the unreal, Arjuna” (9.19).

Inseparability possesses a special quality beyond non-difference: within inseparability there is sometimes difference and sometimes non-difference, so love increases at every moment. The joy of the non-difference attained through Karma-yoga and Sankhya-yoga does not increase at every moment. When milk boils it surges and churns; the joy with such surging is devotion’s joy, whereas knowledge’s joy is peaceful and uniform. Devotional inseparability has two aspects. When the devotee looks toward oneself, the devotee sees God as master and thinks, “I am God’s servant.” When the devotee looks toward God, the devotee forgets oneself: “God alone is; nothing besides God exists, ever existed, or can exist.” Difference and non-difference thus alternate, and love keeps increasing at every moment. Goswami Tulsidas writes:

माई री! मोहकिउ न समुझावै। राम-गवनु साँचो कधिँ सपनो, मन परतीतनि आवै॥१॥
सहज सुभाय मेरे नैननआगे, राम लखन अरु सीता। कबहुँ न मटित दाह या उर को, बधिँ
जो भयो बपिरीता॥२॥ दुख न रहै रघुपतहिँ बिलोकित, तनु न रहै बनिु देखे। करत न प्रान
पयान, सुनहु सखी! अरुझापिरी यहलिखे॥३॥

*māi rī! mohi kou na samujhāvai; rāma-gavanu sāco kidhaī
sapano, mana paratīti na āvai. sahaja subhāya mere nainani āge,
rāma lakhana aru sītā; kabahū na miṭata dāha yā ura ko, bidhi jo
bhayo biparītā. dukha na rahai raghupatihi bilokata, tanu na
rahai binu dekhe; karata na prāna payāna, sunahu sakhi! arujhi
parī yahi lekhe.*

“Mother, no one can explain this to me. Whether Rama’s departure is real or a dream, my mind cannot believe it. By their own natural presence Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita stand before my eyes; yet the burning of my heart never ends, for fate has turned adverse. When I behold Raghupati my sorrow vanishes, yet without seeing Him my body cannot remain. Still my life does not depart-listen, friend, I am caught in this perplexity.”

Printed gloss: Mother Kaushalya sees Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita before her and asks Sumitra, “Tell me: if Sri Rama has gone to the forest, why is He before me? And if He has not gone to the forest, why is my mind distressed?” These are Kaushalya’s two states. In both, love increases at every moment.

Within devotional inseparability, when one looks toward oneself there is difference: “I belong to God, and God is mine.” When one looks toward God there is non-difference: “Nothing exists besides the one God.” This non-difference belongs to devotion alone, not to Jnana-yoga. In devotional inseparability the devotee is never separate from God-neither in union nor in separation and longing. In knowledge one realizes one’s true nature, which is a portion of the Supreme: ममैवांशो जीवल्लोके-*mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke*, “A portion of Myself in the world of living beings.”

In Jnana-yoga, the seeker experiences non-difference with the one Reality. But one who carries devotional impressions within finds no contentment in knowledge’s non-difference and therefore attains devotion. In devotion, difference and non-difference then alternate; this is called inseparability. Jnana-yoga, however, contains only non-difference. There the portion of the Supreme has become established in its true nature-how can difference remain? There is unbroken, boundless, limitless joy-only one seamless joy.

Bhakti-yoga, by contrast, contains inseparability. When two become one, there is non-difference; when the one becomes two, there is inseparability. In non-difference, the individual being becomes one with Brahman: what is Brahman in the one form is the individual being in many forms. In inseparability, there is unity with God. Unity between one portion and another is non-difference; unity between the portion and the Whole to whom it belongs is inseparability. In the unity of portion and Whole, love increases at every moment. In such ever-increasing love, the devotee in separation longs for union, and in union becomes silent and still. The Bhagavata describes this state as follows:

वाग्गद्गदा द्रवते यस्य चित्तं रुदत्यभीक्ष्णं हसति क्वचच्चि। वलिज्ज उद्गायति
नृत्यते य मदभक्तयुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति॥

*vāg gadgadā dravate yasya cittam rudaty abhīkṣṇam hasati
kvacic ca; vilajja udgāyati nṛtyate ca madbhaktiyukto bhuvanam
punāti.*

“One whose voice chokes and whose heart melts, who repeatedly weeps and sometimes laughs, who sings aloud without self-consciousness and dances-such a person, joined to devotion for Me, purifies the world.”

Printed gloss: “The one whose speech becomes choked while describing My Name, qualities, and divine play; whose heart melts while remembering My form, qualities, glory, and deeds; who weeps repeatedly, sometimes begins to laugh, sometimes casts aside shame and sings in a loud voice, and sometimes begins to dance-such a devotee of Mine purifies the entire world.”

Vedanta commonly holds that after non-difference nothing remains. If inseparability with Ishvara is accepted after

non-difference, the Vedantic system appears incomplete. To avoid such incompleteness, some Vedantins have called Ishvara imagined, since they see no other way-but they cannot answer whose imagination Ishvara is. They fear that duality might enter their own position. In reality existence is one, nondual; because of our own attachment, a second existence-duality-appears. That second existence means the world, not Ishvara, because the world is “other,” while Ishvara is “one’s own.” To negate the second existence, Vedanta has treated even Ishvara as imagined! The attachment is ours, yet Ishvara is declared imagined. How can the second existence disappear without eliminating our own attachment? Therefore, rather than regarding Ishvara as imagined, one should eliminate one’s attachment. Ishvara is not imagined; He is transcendent.

If all individual beings become one-when the sense of individuality is erased-there is Brahman. One who possesses divine sovereignty and knows the arising, dissolution, and all else concerning every being is “Bhagavan.” These qualities do not belong to the individual being. Therefore, even if all beings become one, the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the cosmos do not belong to them: जगद्व्यापारवर्जम्-*jagadvyāpāravarjam*, “except for the operations of the universe” (Brahma Sutra 4.4.17). The individual being can become one with Brahman, but not with Bhagavan. It cannot have non-difference with Bhagavan, but it can have inseparability from Him. In his commentary on the Eleventh Book of the Bhagavata, Sri Eknath Maharaj calls this very inseparability “devotion of non-difference.”

दवावमिौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च।
क्षरः सर्वाणां भूतानां कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते॥
उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः।
यो लोकत्रयमावशिष्य बभिरत्यव्यय ईश्वरः॥
*dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca;
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate.
uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ;
yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ.*
“There are two kinds of person in this world: the perishable and the imperishable. All beings in their embodied aspect are perishable; the immutable self is called imperishable. But the Supreme Person is distinct; He is called the Supreme Self. Entering the three worlds, the imperishable Lord sustains them.”
Printed gloss: “In this world there are only these two kinds of person: the perishable and the imperishable. The bodies of all beings are perishable, while the individual self is called imperishable.”
“The Supreme Person is other and altogether distinct; He is called the Supreme Self. That imperishable Lord enters the three worlds and nourishes and sustains all.”

The Right Use of the Human Body

The glory of the human body does not lie in its form, but in its capacity for discernment. To understand separately such pairs as the real and the unreal, the insentient and the sentient, the essential and the nonessential, and duty and what is not duty is called *viveka*, discernment. Paramātmā has given this discernment, and it is beginningless. It is therefore not produced; it is awakened. Through satsang it is awakened and strengthened. Even in satsang it awakens only through close attention and deep reflection, not through casual attention. Nowadays one often sees that even those who attend satsang, conduct satsang, and deliver discourses do not understand profound spiritual truths. They do not properly know the distinction between the insentient and the sentient. With a little information they begin delivering discourses. When discernment awakens in someone, a remarkable, transcendent quality comes into that person.

A seeker should first understand the distinction between the body, which is insentient, and the embodied Self, which is sentient. Beginning with the body and the bodiless Self, discernment should extend all the way to the world and Paramātmā. Discernment between the body and the embodied Self is found nowhere except in the human state. The gods possess discernment, but because they are absorbed in enjoyments, it does not function.

प्रकृतिपुरुषं चैव वदिष्यनादी उभावपि (गीता १३।१९)

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api (Gītā 13.19)

Very few people know the distinction between the body and the embodied Self. There is therefore a special need to learn this distinction through satsang. The body is insentient, while the Self,

the Ātmā, is sentient. The Self is a portion of Paramātmā, while the body is a portion of Prakṛti. The sentient and the insentient are distinct. Liberation will belong to the sentient, not to the insentient, because it is the sentient that has accepted bondage. The insentient is constantly changing and moving toward destruction. As many years of our life as have passed, for that many days we have already died. The word “dying” may sound unpleasant, but the statement is true. At birth a certain number of days remained to be lived; that many no longer remain. The days that have passed are dead, and no one knows how many remain. The time in life that has passed away and been destroyed belongs to the insentient domain, not to the sentient. There is no death in the sentient domain. It has no age; it is immortal. The body dies; the Ātmā does not. From the very beginning, therefore, one should understand the distinction between the insentient and the sentient. The sentient domain belongs to Paramātmā, and the insentient domain belongs to Prakṛti. The Gītā says:

“Know both Prakṛti and Puruṣa to be beginningless.” (Gītā 13.19)

Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both beginningless, but of the two, Puruṣa-the sentient-is beginningless and endless, while Prakṛti is beginningless yet finite. Some scholars regard Prakṛti too as endless, but that is a philosophical difference of doctrine. Here one should understand that what knows neither itself nor another is called “insentient,” while what knows both itself and another is called “sentient.” The power to know is sentience; the insentient has no such power.

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च।

अधष्ठिताय मनश्चायं वषियानुपसेवते॥

(गीता १५।९)

śrotram cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca rasanāṁ ghrāṇam eva ca |

adhiṣṭhāya manaś cāyaṁ viśayān upasevate ||

(Gītā 15.9)

मम योनिरिमहद् ब्रह्म तस्मिन्निर्ग्रभं दधाम्यहम्।

(गीता १४।३)

mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbhaṁ dadhāmy aham

(Gītā 14.3)

तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरिहं बीजप्रदः पतिः॥

(गीता १४।४)

tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā

(Gītā 14.4)

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्तसित्त्वस्था मध्ये तषिठन्तरिजसाः।

जघन्यगुणवृत्तसिथा अधो गच्छन्ततामसाः॥

(गीता १४।१८)

ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ |

jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ ||

(Gītā 14.18)

The mind and intellect appear sentient, but they too are insentient. They are illumined by the light of the sentient. We, the Self, are the knower of the body, senses, mind, and intellect. The senses have two divisions: organs of action and organs of knowledge. The organs of action are entirely insentient, while in the organs of knowledge there is a reflection of the sentient. Because of that reflection, the ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose are called the five organs of knowledge. With these organs of knowledge the embodied Self experiences sense objects:

“Presiding over the ear, eye, sense of touch, tongue, nose, and mind, this one experiences the objects of the senses.” (Gītā 15.9)

The knowledge that appears in the organs of knowledge and the inner instrument is not their own; it comes through the sentient. In themselves they remain insentient. If a mirror is held before the sun, sunlight enters the mirror. If that reflected light is directed into a dark room, the room becomes illuminated. Fundamentally the light belongs to the sun, not to the mirror. In the same way, light comes into the senses and inner instrument from the sentient. Even when illumined by sentience, the senses and inner instrument remain insentient. We ourselves are sentient and are portions of Paramātmā. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, “A portion of Me alone in the world of living beings” (15.7). Just as the body is formed from both mother and father, it is not the case that the Self is formed from both Prakṛti and Paramātmā. It is solely a portion of Paramātmā. Bhagavān has said:

“The great Brahman is My womb; in it I place the seed.” (Gītā 14.3)

“For all of them, the great Brahman is the womb, and I am the seed-giving father.” (Gītā 14.4)

That is, Prakṛti is the mother and I am the father who places the seed within her, from which all beings are born. Beings thus contain a portion of Prakṛti and a portion of Paramātmā. The jīvātmā itself, however, is solely a portion of Paramātmā—*mama eva aṁśaḥ*, “a portion of Me alone.” All bodies—those of gods, ghosts, spirits, piśācas, and others—contain both the insentient and the sentient. In the bodies of gods the luminous element predominates; in the bodies of ghosts and spirits the air element predominates; in human bodies the earth element predominates, and so on. Different

elements predominate in different bodies. Although the sentient is principal in every body, by imposing “I” and “mine” upon the body it takes that body to be principal. Taking the insentient body to be principal is the very cause of birth and death: *“Attachment to the guṇas is the cause of its births in good and evil wombs”* (Gītā 13.21). It is through association with the guṇas that the jīva has three destinations. Those established in sattva rise upward, those established in rajas remain in the middle realm, and those established in tamas descend:

“Those established in sattva go upward; the rājasika remain in the middle; those abiding in the functioning of the lowest guṇa, the tāmasika, go downward.” (Gītā 14.18)

In this way one should properly understand the distinction between the insentient and the sentient. The insentient portion, the body, falls away, while we remain. Until liberation, insentience remains with us. Thus when one leaves one body and enters another, the gross body is left behind but the subtle and causal bodies remain. At liberation only sentience remains; insentience no longer accompanies it—that is, the gross, subtle, and causal bodies no longer remain with it. There is, however, a very subtle point here: even after liberation, a residual impression of insentience remains. That impression no longer causes birth and death, but it does produce doctrinal differences. For example, dualism, nondualism, qualified nondualism, pure nondualism, dualistic nondualism, and inconceivable difference-and-nondifference are described here as five principal differences of doctrine found among Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava teachers. As long as doctrinal difference remains, an impression of insentience remains. But when devotion follows liberation, even this subtle impression is erased. In Bhagavān’s

loving devotees no insentience whatsoever remains; only sentience remains. Rādhājī, for example, is wholly made of consciousness.

| योगास्त्रयो मया प्रोक्ता नृणां श्रेयोवधित्सया।*

ज्ञानं कर्म च भक्तश्च नोपायोऽन्योऽस्तु कुत्रचित्॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ११।२०।६)

yogās trayo mayā proktā nṛṇāṃ śreyo-vidhitsuṣyā |

jñānam karma ca bhaktiś ca nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutracit ||

Three yogas have been taught for the highest good of human beings-Karma-yoga, Jñāna-yoga, and Bhakti-yoga. *Karma-yoga proceeds through the insentient, Jñāna-yoga through the sentient, and Bhakti-yoga through Bhagavān. Karma-yoga and Jñāna-yoga are worldly disciplines—"In this world there is a twofold steadfast path" (Gītā 3.3)-but Bhakti-yoga is a transcendent steadfastness. The reason is that the world, the perishable, and the jīva, the imperishable, are both within the worldly domain: "There are these two Puruṣas in the world, the perishable and the imperishable" (Gītā 15.16). Bhagavān, however, is distinct from both the perishable and the imperishable and is therefore transcendent: "But the Supreme Puruṣa is another" (Gītā 15.17). For those attached to the world, who take the world to be principal and give little thought to the Ātmā but nevertheless seek their highest good, Karma-yoga is primary. To perform one's prescribed duties according to one's varṇa and āśrama without desire for oneself, solely for the good of others, is Karma-yoga. Desireful intention brings insentience; desirelessness preserves sentience. Because of desirelessness, the Karma-yogī rises above the insentient portion. Without desirelessness there may be actions, but not Karma-yoga. Action binds a person: "Through action the creature is bound."**

Through desirelessness the pairs of opposites within a person—attachment and aversion, joy and sorrow, and so forth—are destroyed and equanimity arises. With equanimity comes yoga, for yoga itself is equanimity: “*Equanimity is called yoga*” (Gītā 2.48). As desirelessness arises, sentience becomes principal and insentience subordinate. The more desirelessness a person acquires, the more that person rises above the world; the more desireful intention arises, the more that person is bound within the world.

Printed footnote
योगासूत्रयो मया प्रोक्ता नृणां श्रेयोवधित्सया।
ज्ञानं कर्म च भक्तश्च नोपायोऽन्योऽस्तु कुत्रचित्॥
<i>yogās trayo mayā proktā nṛṇāṃ śreyo-vidhitsuṣyā </i>
<i>jñānaṃ karma ca bhaktiś ca nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutracit </i>
“For the sake of bringing about humanity’s highest good, I have taught three yogas: knowledge, action, and devotion. No other means exists anywhere.” (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 11.20.6)

इहैव तैर्जतिः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितिं मनः।

नरिदोषं हि सिमं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणा तै स्थितिः॥

(गीता ५।१९)

ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitam manaḥ |

niridoṣaṃ hi samam brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ ||

(Gītā 5.19)

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परपिन्थनी॥

(गीता ३।३४)

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau |

tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau ||

(Gītā 3.34)

The Gītā says:

“Those whose minds are established in equality have conquered creation here itself. Brahman is faultless and equal; therefore they are established in Brahman.” (Gītā 5.19)

Those whose minds have become established in equality have conquered the world; that is, they have risen above birth and death. Brahman is faultless and equal, and their inner instruments have also become faultless and equal; therefore they are established in Brahman. In reality everyone abides in Paramātmā, because Paramātmā is all-pervading. Not even a space the size of a needle’s point is empty of Paramātmā. Paramātmā equally pervades every place in fullness. Yet even while abiding in Paramātmā, because of attachment and aversion people do not abide consciously in Paramātmā but in the world. They will abide in Paramātmā only when attachment and aversion disappear from their minds. As long as attachment and aversion remain, one may study all four Vedas and six systems of scripture, but liberation will not come. What should one do to remove attachment and aversion? Bhagavān says:

“Attachment and aversion are fixed in relation to the object of each sense. One should not come under their sway, for they are one’s adversaries.” (Gītā 3.34)

The printed gloss reads: “In the object of each sense—that is, in every object of every sense—a person’s attachment and aversion remain established according to attraction and repulsion. One should not come under the power of either, for both are enemies that obstruct one’s spiritual path.”

Attachment arises toward what is agreeable, and aversion toward what is disagreeable. A seeker should not come under their sway. Being ruled by them makes attachment and aversion grow. As long as attachment and aversion remain, birth and death remain. Rising above them brings liberation; love for Paramātmā brings devotion. One may attain devotion after first practising Karma-yoga and Jñāna-yoga, or one may practise devotion from the very beginning.

Karma-yoga and Jñāna-yoga are both means, while Bhakti-yoga is the goal. Some people do not accept this; they regard Karma-yoga and Bhakti-yoga as means and Jñāna-yoga as the goal. But the Gītā regards Bhakti-yoga itself as the goal. According to the Gītā, Karma-yoga and Jñāna-yoga are parallel steadfast paths, while devotion is distinct from both.

श्रवणं कीर्तनं वषिणोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्।

अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनविदनम्॥

(श्रीमद्भा० ७।५।२३)

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam |

arcanam vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam ||

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 7.5.23)

Karma-yoga contains two elements: action and yoga. Jñāna-yoga similarly contains two: knowledge and yoga. Bhakti-yoga, however, does not contain two separate elements. It does have two forms: devotion as practice and devotion as the goal.

“Hearing of Viṣṇu, chanting, remembrance, service at His feet, worship, reverence, servitude, friendship, and complete self-offering.” (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 7.5.23)

Hearing, kīrtana, remembrance, service at the feet, worship, reverence, servitude, friendship, and complete self-offering are the nine forms of devotion as practice. Love-filled devotion that increases at every moment is devotion as the goal: “*He attains supreme devotion to Me*” (Gītā 18.54). Therefore the Śrīmad Bhāgavata says, “*Through devotion that has arisen, devotion [is attained]*” (11.3.31)-devotion is born from devotion; that is, devotion as practice leads to devotion as the goal. Thus a seeker may practise devotion from the very beginning.

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम्।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते॥
(गीता २।४४)

bhogaishvarya-prasaktānām tayāpahṛta-cetasām |
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate ||
(Gītā 2.44)

When does devotion begin? When Bhagavān becomes dear and the mind is drawn to Him. If worldly enjoyments and money are dear, that is the mark of a worldly person bound in the world. If Bhagavān is dear, that is the mark of a devotee. Thus when money and objects cease to seem attractive, the mind will withdraw from them and become absorbed in Bhagavān; then devotion will begin. As long as attraction to enjoyment and money remains, one may speak the loftiest words about knowledge, but bondage remains exactly as it was. A vulture flies very high, yet its gaze remains fixed on a corpse. The moment it sees flesh, its lofty flight ends and it plunges down. In the same way, those who speak loftily and deliver discourses plunge upon money and enjoyments the moment they see them. Just as a vulture savours decaying, foul-smelling flesh,

these people savour money and enjoyments. Therefore the Gītā says:

“For those deeply attached to enjoyment and power, whose minds are carried away by that speech, a resolute understanding is not established in samādhi.” (Gītā 2.44)

The printed gloss reads: “Those whose inner instruments have been carried away by that flowery, outwardly splendid speech—that is, drawn toward enjoyments—and who are intensely attached to enjoyment and prosperity do not possess a single, resolute understanding directed toward Paramātmā.”

| त्रिविधिं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः। *

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत्॥

(गीता १६।२१)

tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanah |

kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet ||

Those steeped in prestige, respect, praise, money, enjoyment, and the like cannot become free. To become free—that is, free from these—they must rise above them. “Enjoyment and prosperity” means both enjoying pleasures and accumulating the materials of pleasure—money, gold and silver, land, houses, and so forth. Those absorbed in these two cannot attain Paramātmā; they cannot even form the resolve, “I must attain Paramātmā.” Those who attend satsang experience that attachment to enjoyment and accumulation diminishes and disappears. Suppose, for example, anger was strong in one’s temperament. The slightest incident would provoke anger; it would come violently and remain for a long time. As satsang continues, the anger diminishes: it does not arise over a trifling matter, it is less violent, and it lasts less long. When many small

irritations accumulate, a sudden incident may still cause a violent flare of anger, but continued satsang erases even this. The nature of anger is to wish harm upon the person at whom one is angry. Through satsang, the wish to harm anyone disappears. If anger ever arises in one who attends satsang, awareness remains present and the anger does not lead to hell. Desire, anger, and greed are the three gates of hell.* People caught in them go straight to hell, with no one able to stop them. In those who attend satsang, however, defects such as desire, anger, greed, and delusion diminish. They do not come under the domination of desire and anger. They do not accumulate wealth through injustice, lying, deceit, fraud, or dishonesty. They take only what is rightfully theirs and do not take what belongs to another. Coming under the sway of desire and anger leads one onto the path of injustice, whose result is hell. Through satsang, however, these defects gradually fade like lines drawn on stone, sand, water, and sky. A line carved in stone never disappears. A line in sand is covered and erased when the wind blows. A line seems to be drawn through water, yet no line is actually formed there. If one traces a line in the sky, only the moving finger is seen; no line forms at all. When defects such as desire and anger do not remain in even the slightest degree, bondage disappears and one becomes established in Paramātmā.

Printed footnote

त्रिविधिं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत्॥

trividhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanah |

kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet ||

“Threefold is this gate of hell, destructive of the self: desire, anger, and greed. Therefore one should abandon these three.” (Gītā 16.21)

वाग्गदगदा द्रवते यस्य चित्तं
रुदत्यभीक्ष्णं हसति क्वचच्चि।
वलिज्ज उदगायत नृत्यते च
मद्भक्तयुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति॥
(श्रीमद्भा० ११।१४।२४)

vāg gadgadā dravate yasya cittam
rudaty abhikṣṇam hasati kvac ca |
vilajja udgāyati nrtyate ca
mad-bhakti-yukto bhuvanam punāti ||

यः सेवते मामगुणं गुणात्परं
हृदा कदा वा यद्विवा गुणात्मकम्।
सोऽहं स्वपादाञ्चतिरेणुभिः स्पृशन्
पुनाति लोकत्रितयं यथा रविः॥
(अध्यात्म० उत्तर० ५।६२)

yaḥ sevate mām aguṇam guṇāt param
hṛdā kadā vā yadi vā guṇātmakam |
so 'ham sva-pādāñcita-reṇubhiḥ sprśan
punāti loka-tritayam yathā raviḥ ||

In this way, defects diminish through satsang. If they do not diminish, one has not found true satsang. Hearing a sacred account of Bhagavān from anyone brings benefit. If the speaker is a loving devotee, something extraordinary arises. But a metaphysical exposition is beneficial only when heard from a liberated, truth-knowing great soul. The company of liberated, truth-knowing saints and mahātmās brings an extraordinary and substantial benefit. Concerning a loving devotee it is said:

“One whose voice chokes, whose heart melts, who repeatedly weeps, sometimes laughs, and, abandoning shame, sings aloud and dances-such a one, joined to devotion for Me, purifies the world.” (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 11.14.24)

The printed gloss reads: “One whose voice becomes choked while describing My name, qualities, and divine play; whose heart melts while remembering My form, qualities, greatness, and divine plays; who repeatedly weeps, sometimes begins to laugh, sometimes abandons shame and sings loudly, and sometimes dances-such a devotee of Mine purifies the whole world.”

“Whoever serves Me in the heart as attributeless and beyond the guṇas, or worships Me as possessing qualities yet beyond material guṇas-that devotee is My own form. Moving like the sun and touching beings with dust sanctified by his feet, he purifies the three worlds.” (Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, Uttara 5.62)

The printed gloss reads: “Whether one worships in the heart My attributeless form, or serves and worships My manifest form beyond the material guṇas, that devotee is My own form. Moving like the sun, he purifies the three worlds by the touch of the dust of his feet.”

The point is that whether someone is a devotee or a knower, the earth becomes pure through the touch of that person’s feet. Just as light appears wherever the sun goes, wherever such a mahātmā goes, the light of knowledge and joy appear. This is because attachment and aversion, joy and sorrow, and all such opposites are entirely absent within. Our endeavour should therefore be to become altogether free of attachment and aversion, desire and anger. Such disorders should not remain in our hearts. Until they

diminish, we should understand that we have not found true satsang. As long as both virtues and faults remain in a person, that person is not yet a seeker. One becomes a seeker only when the faults disappear. Even if another person acts as an enemy, enmity does not arise in the seeker's heart; instead there is laughter and gladness. The seeker does not wish evil even upon one who wishes the greatest evil upon him. Attachment and aversion disappear in all three paths-Karma-yoga, Jñāna-yoga, and Bhakti-yoga. A seeker should therefore keep observing whether his attachment and aversion are diminishing. If they are, he should understand that his practice is proceeding correctly.

A seeker should possess three qualities: do not regard anyone as bad, do not wish harm upon anyone, and do no harm to anyone. If the seeker adopts these three as a rule, the practice will become swift and excellent. By embodying them, one becomes qualified for all three-Karma-yoga, Jñāna-yoga, and Bhakti-yoga. I therefore ask seekers to adopt at least these three. Serve everyone and bring happiness to all. If you cannot bring happiness, at least do not cause anyone pain. One who causes pain to others cannot undertake spiritual practice.

“Brother, there is no dharma like benefiting another, and no baseness like inflicting pain on another.” (Mānas, Uttara 41.1)

The human body has been received for spiritual practice; it is the birth-state suited to practice. Therefore become a true seeker. Become a true participant in satsang. Become established in yoga. Become liberated while living and a knower of Reality. Become a lover of Bhagavān. This opportunity exists only in human birth.



Genuine Faith

The Gītā affirms Bhagavān’s integral form, gives importance to that alone, and regards the fulfilment of human life as lying solely in its attainment. “Vāsudeva is all” (Gītā 7.19)-this is Bhagavān’s integral form. With qualities and without qualities, embodied and formless, two-armed, four-armed, thousand-armed, and other forms; the whole world in the form of substances and actions; every living being and every deity-all are included within Bhagavān’s integral form. Therefore, for one who knows the whole, nothing further remains to be known: *“Having known which, nothing else here remains to be known”* (Gītā 7.2). The principal means of knowing the whole is surrender. Bhagavān therefore brought the Gītā’s teaching to its culmination in surrender: *“Abandoning all dharmas, take refuge in Me alone”* (Gītā 18.66). Throughout the Gītā, Bhagavān calls surrender alone *sarva-guhyatama*, the most secret of all: *“Hear once more the most secret of all”* (Gītā 18.64).

In reality there is only one Existence. The jīva’s existence depends upon the existence of that one Paramātmā, and the world’s existence depends upon the jīva. Both the jīva and the world appear within Paramātmā alone. In the seventh chapter of the Gītā, Bhagavān calls the jīva His higher Prakṛti and the world His lower Prakṛti. Both the higher and lower are Bhagavān’s powers. In calling them His own Prakṛti, Bhagavān means that neither is separate from Him. A power has no independent existence apart from its possessor. The possessor of power can remain without exercising the power, but the power cannot remain without its possessor.

A question now arises: if both the jīva, the higher Prakṛti, and the world, the lower Prakṛti, are inseparable from Bhagavān, why does the world's existence appear separate? Bhagavān answers, *"Know My higher Prakṛti, become the jīva, O mighty-armed one, by which this world is sustained"* (Gītā 7.5). In other words, the jīva itself sustains the world-gives the world its existence and importance. The jīva is a portion of Me, Bhagavān, alone: *"A portion of Me alone in the world of living beings"* (Gītā 15.7). Yet it takes the body, senses, mind, and intellect-which meet and part-to be its own: *"It draws to itself the six senses, with mind as the sixth, which abide in Prakṛti"* (Gītā 15.7). It is only by assuming a relationship with the world that the jīva enters the cycle of birth and death and suffers. This relationship that the jīva assumes with the world is the cause of every womb of birth: *"Understand that all beings have these two as their womb"* (Gītā 7.6). That is, all moving and unmoving beings arise because of the conjunction assumed between these two. The point is that the relationship the jīva joins with the lower Prakṛti is the root defect from which every other defect arises.

"Vāsudeva is all"-everything is Bhagavān-this is the Gītā's supreme principle. Every human being is qualified to realize it. A person of any country, dress, varṇa, āśrama, or sect can become Bhagavān's devotee and realize that Vāsudeva is all. This is because Bhagavān is not attained through the body, but by severing one's assumed relationship with it. To sever that relationship one must know three things: I am not the body; the body is not mine; and the body is not for me. It is a principle that whatever comes and goes is neither one's own nor for oneself. Bhagavān alone is such a companion that He always remains with us and never parts from us. But those entangled solely in things that meet and part, absorbed in

perishable enjoyments and accumulation, fail to attain Bhagavān even though He is always with them; they are repeatedly born and die in the world: *“Failing to attain Me, they return to the path of the mortal world”* (Gītā 9.3).

The world has no independent existence. Through egoism, possessiveness, and desire, the jīva itself has assigned it independent existence. As long as egoism, possessiveness, and desire remain in a seeker, the seeker should accept that the world is in Paramātmā and Paramātmā is in the world. But when egoism, possessiveness, and desire disappear, the seeker’s vision will contain neither Paramātmā in the world nor the world in Paramātmā; only Paramātmā will remain. To see the world in Paramātmā, or Paramātmā in the world, is incomplete faith. To see Paramātmā alone is complete faith.

Bhagavān has said, *“A portion of Me alone in the world of living beings”* (Gītā 15.7). Because the jīva is a portion of Bhagavān, its relationship is solely with Bhagavān and not at all with Prakṛti. It is therefore essential for a seeker to discern precisely between the insentient and the sentient. The seeker should know: our domain is altogether different; we belong to the sentient domain. We have not even the slightest relationship with the insentient domain. Every substance and action belongs to the insentient domain. In the sentient domain there is neither substance nor action. In reality substance and action have no existence at all. Therefore the seeker does not have to become free from substance and action; the seeker is naturally free of them. The seeker is unmanifest, formless, and actionless. “Doing” belongs entirely to Prakṛti; “not doing” belongs to the Self. The Reality of Paramātmā is present exactly as it is; for it, one needs to do nothing. Taking support from doing is taking support from Prakṛti. Once that is relinquished, Reality remains

exactly as it is. In Reality there is neither substance nor action, but only rest.

Bhagavān has said of the jīvātmā, *“Eternal and all-pervading”* (Gītā 2.24), and *“By which all this is pervaded”* (Gītā 2.17). That is, this jīvātmā pervades the whole world; it remains eternally and is present everywhere in fullness. The seeker should therefore cease looking toward the body and inner instrument and become established in the common, all-pervading Existence that is one’s own. What pervades everywhere is the seeker’s true nature; that nature is not located in the body and inner instrument. In the seeker, emphasis should rest not upon “I am” but upon “is.” What “is” is truly one’s own. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, *“There is nothing whatsoever higher than Me”* (7.7), and saints and mahātmās have likewise realized, *“Vāsudeva is all”* (7.19). Bhagavān and His devotees are the only two who benefit the world without cause.* We should therefore accept what these two say. Our own view has no value before theirs. Even if it does not appear so to us, their statement alone is true. We should therefore see the world not as world, but solely as Bhagavān’s form.

Printed footnote

“O enemy of the demons, You and Your servant are the two causeless benefactors of the world through all ages.” (Mānas, Uttara 47.3)

The sāttvika, rājasika, and tāmasika modes-qualities, substances, and actions-seen in the world are also forms of Bhagavān. Although they are Bhagavān’s forms, these guṇas are not what we worship. What we worship is beyond the guṇas. Bhagavān therefore says, *“I am not in them, nor are they in Me”* (Gītā 7.12). The guṇas are not objects of worship because we must rise above all three. A person deluded by the three guṇas does not know Bhagavān, who

transcends them. Those not deluded by the guṇas see Bhagavān everywhere, while one deluded by them sees only the world and not Bhagavān.

One may ask here: how can rājasika and tāmasika modes exist within Bhagavān? The answer is that one house contains both a kitchen and a latrine, and one body contains both higher and lower parts. In the same way, within the one Bhagavān are sāttvika modes as well as rājasika and tāmasika modes.

To regard the world as false and Bhagavān alone as real is also one method, one path of practice. But along this path the world accompanies the seeker for a very long way, because renouncing something leaves behind a subtle existence of what has been renounced. This method therefore brings non-difference from Bhagavān, but not inseparability-the intimacy of belonging. Those who see Bhagavān as the very form of the world become inseparable from Him.



| त्रभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमर्द्धिं जगत्।*

मोहर्तिं नाभजिनातमिमैर्भ्यः परमव्ययम्॥

(गीता ७।१३)

tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat |

mohitaṁ nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam ||

Printed footnote

त्रभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमर्द्धिं जगत्।

मोहर्तिं नाभजिनातमिमैर्भ्यः परमव्ययम्॥

tribhir guṇamayair bhāvair ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat |

mohitaṁ nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam ||

“Deluded by these three modes composed of the guṇas, this whole world does not know Me, who am beyond them and imperishable.” (Gītā 7.13)

How Does the World's Influence Fall Away?

Seekers often complain that although they know nothing in the world is their own, when an object comes before them it still exerts an influence. Two points deserve attention here. First, if an influence arises, do not care about it; simply disregard it. Regard it as neither good nor bad. Desire neither that it remain nor that it disappear. Become indifferent to it. Second, the influence falls only upon the mind and intellect, not upon you. Therefore do not take it as your own.

A relationship is formed with an object through attachment, and a relationship is also formed through aversion. When Bhagavān Śrī Rāma went into the forest, the ṛṣis and sages who became attached to Him were delivered, and the demons who opposed Him were delivered too. Those who felt neither attachment nor aversion were not delivered, because no relationship with Bhagavān was formed. In the same way, if the world affects the mind, do not form a relationship with it through attachment or aversion. Remain engaged in worship and spiritual practice directed to Bhagavān. If the world's influence arises, let it arise; it has nothing to do with you. Disregard it in this way.

Just as you assume no relationship with a dog's mind, assume no relationship with your own mind either. A dog's mind and your mind belong to the same category. If the dog's mind is not yours, neither is this mind yours. The mind is a product of insentient Prakṛti; you are a sentient portion of Paramātmā. Just as the world's effect upon the dog's mind makes no difference to you, the effect upon this mind too should make no difference to you.

The mind is related to Prakṛti; you are related to Paramātmā. If you assume a relationship with the mind, you must then suffer. Whatever actions you perform through the mind and body will necessarily bring their sin or merit upon you. Whatever arises in a dog's mind, what has that to do with you? In the same way, whatever arises in this mind, what has that to do with you? Your relationship is not with body, senses, mind, or intellect, but with Paramātmā. To explain this, Bhagavān says in the Gītā, *"The eternal jīva in this world is a portion of Me alone"* (15.7). Understand this, and it will transform your mental tendencies and your spiritual practice.

You know yourself as "I am." In this, the "I" is insentient and the "am" is sentient. Because of the "I," there is "am." If the "I," the ego, no longer remains, "am" too will not remain; only "is"-pure conscious Existence-will remain. Bhagavān teaches this very point in the Gītā: when the seeker becomes free of possessiveness and ego, the seeker becomes established in Brahman-*"This is the state of Brahman"* (Gītā 2.72).

Ego is not our true nature. Ego belongs to the lower Prakṛti; we belong to the higher Prakṛti. We are distinct, and ego is distinct. In waking and dream the ego remains awake, but in deep sleep it is not awake; it dissolves into ignorance. Even when ego is absent in deep sleep, we remain. Our true nature is bodiless. Just as Bhagavān is unmanifest,* because we are His portions, we too are unmanifest and formless in our true nature. A portion of an unmanifest form must itself be unmanifest. This body is merely a place for experiencing karmic results. Just as we sit in a kitchen to eat, we dwell in the body to experience the fruits of action. A seeker should therefore clearly understand: I am unmanifest and formless; I am not a human form. The body is not the one that practises. This is

why we say, “I am the same person today that I was in childhood.” From childhood until now the body has changed so greatly that it might not even be recognized, yet we remain the same. “I played as a child; later I studied; I am that same one today.” The body is not the same. It does not remain even for a moment, but changes continuously. What does not change is the seeker; what changes is not the seeker.

Printed footnote

The printed footnote gloss reads: “This entire world is pervaded by My formless nature.”

If a seeker falls from yoga, in the next birth the seeker is born in a prosperous household or in a family of yogīs. The body died and was cremated; who, then, will be born in the prosperous or yogic family? The one distinct from the body will be born there. Firmly accept, therefore, that we are not the body; we are the knower of the body. Without accepting this, spiritual practice will not proceed well and the teachings of satsang will not be properly understood.

The body changes at every moment, but you do not change even when the great creation and great dissolution occur; you remain exactly as you are, one and unchanged: “*They are not born even at creation, nor are they disturbed at dissolution*” (Gītā 14.2).

You have assumed many bodies until now, but every body has fallen away while you have remained the same. The body will be left here, but you will go to heaven or hell; liberation will be yours, and you will reach Bhagavān’s abode. Your Existence, your true nature, is therefore not dependent upon the body. Whether the body remains or not makes no difference to your Existence. There are infinite universes and infinite creations, yet they make not the slightest difference to you. Not even something the width of a hair reaches

you. All these reach only as far as mind and intellect. A product of Prakṛti cannot pass beyond mind and intellect. Thus amid infinite universes, not even a hair's breadth of anything is yours. Paramātmā is yours, and you belong to Paramātmā. Through practice, you-not the body-will attain Paramātmā. While practising, therefore, understand yourself as formless, not as the embodied form. Sitting in a house does not make you the house. The house is distinct and you are distinct; you will leave the house and go. The change occurs for you, not for the house. In the same way, the body will remain here and you will depart. You will experience the fruits of sin and merit; the body will not. You will be liberated; the body will not. The body will become earth, but you will not become earth. The Gītā describes your nature as follows:

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः॥

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते।

तस्मादेवं वदित्वैनं नानुशोचतिमर्हसि॥

(गीता २।२४-२५)

acchedyo 'yam adāhyo 'yam akledyo 'śoṣya eva ca |

nityaḥ sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur acalo 'yaṁ sanātanaḥ ||

avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate |

tasmād evaṁ viditvainaṁ nānuśocitum arhasi ||

“This cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, unmoving, and beginningless. It is said to be unmanifest, inconceivable, and immutable. Knowing it thus, you should not grieve.” (Gītā 2.24-25)

The first printed gloss reads: “This embodied Self cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried. For it is eternal, present in fullness within all, unmoving, stable by nature, and beginningless.”

The second printed gloss reads: “This indwelling Self is not directly visible, is not an object of thought, and is said to be immutable. Knowing the indwelling Self in this way, one should not grieve.”

| ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।*

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतस्थितानि कर्षति॥

(गीता १५।७)

mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ |

manaḥ-ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati ||

Every person wants never to die, to know everything, and to remain happy forever. At root, these three desires are the desire for Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. Yet a person tries to fulfil this real desire with the body's help, because although the Self is a portion of Paramātmā, it takes body, senses, mind, and intellect to be its own.* In reality, however, no one can fulfil this true desire through the body or the world. Because the body is perishable, no one can use it to escape death. Because the body is insentient, knowledge cannot arise through it. Because it changes every moment, no one can become permanently happy through it. Thus the human desire for Being-Consciousness-Bliss can be fulfilled only by becoming unattached and unrelated to the body. The body itself is neither the slightest help nor hindrance to fulfilling this real desire; the assumed relationship with the body is the hindrance.

Printed footnote
ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतस्थितानि कर्षति॥

mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ |

manaḥśaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati ||

“The eternal jīva in this world is a portion of Me alone; it draws to itself the senses, with mind as the sixth, which abide in Prakṛti.” (Gītā 15.7)

Therefore, when every assumed relationship with the body is severed, the seeker becomes unattached to action and substance. Both action and substance are products of Prakṛti. Once unattached to them, the seeker's real desire is fulfilled. With its fulfilment, the seeker becomes established in the true nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Establishment in one's true nature completes the worldly disciplines of Karma-yoga and Jñāna-yoga. Then, by accepting as one's own the Paramātmā of whom that true nature is a portion, and by surrendering to Him, the transcendent discipline of Bhakti-yoga is perfected—that is, supreme love is attained. Human birth finds its fulfilment solely in the attainment of supreme love.* From the very beginning the seeker should therefore accept this truth: I am not the body, the body is not mine, and the body is not for me. I am the higher Prakṛti, the sentient, which is a portion of Paramātmā; the body and world are the lower Prakṛti, the insentient. Even exerting its entire power, the lower Prakṛti cannot fulfil our real desire: it cannot make us immortal, remove our ignorance, or make us happy forever.

Printed footnote

In the perfection of the worldly discipline, a subtle scent of ego may remain; in the perfection of the transcendent discipline, not even the subtlest scent of ego remains.

Question: Even after hearing such teachings in satsang, when we conduct our affairs we become pleased and displeased. What should we do?

Answer: Becoming pleased and displeased in worldly dealings is childishness. When children play, they heap up earth to make hills and houses and draw a line through it: “This much land is mine; that much is yours.” If another child takes some land, they begin fighting: “How did you take our land? It is not yours; it is ours!” An adult comes and asks, “Children, why are you fighting?” They reply, “We drew the line first, so this belongs to us.” The adult suggests an arrangement and both become satisfied. Just then their mother calls, “Children, come! It is time to eat,” and they instantly rise and leave. Now the land means nothing to them. In the same way, we say, “The wealth is ours, the land is ours,” and so on. In reality it is neither ours nor yours. It is only a game, a spectacle. One day we must leave all wealth, property, and land. We will not even remember them. Do we now remember what house or family was ours in the previous birth? Nothing in this world belongs to an individual. Just as a travellers’ rest house exists for everyone, this world exists for everyone. Houses and land remain where they are, while people keep changing. Your attention should turn toward these truths. If those who attend satsang do not attend to them, who will? If you attend satsang yet continue in attachment and aversion, then in reality you have not attended, heard, or understood satsang; not even its breeze has touched you. If attachment and aversion, desire and anger, do not diminish in satsang, how else will they diminish? If no change appears in your feelings and conduct, what satsang have you undertaken? You have merely wasted time. It is impossible to attend satsang and remain unchanged. Genuine satsang necessarily brings change. If there has been no change, true satsang has not been found. If true satsang is found, change cannot fail to occur.



How Does Pride Fall Away?

Concerning pride, the Rāmāyaṇa says:

“Pride is the root of worldly existence, the giver of manifold pain, and the cause of every sorrow.” (Mānas 7.74.3)

Every demonic tendency, vice, and corrupt conduct lives under pride’s shadow. The simple sense of one’s existence-“I am,” the feeling of “I”-is not as blameworthy as pride. The portion of Bhagavān is itself faultless. But seeing oneself as special in comparison with others-“I possess virtues, ability, learning; I am very clever, I am a speaker, I can explain things to others”-is deeply blameworthy. Whether the specialness one sees in oneself comes through worship and meditation, kīrtana, japa, cleverness, or doing good for others, whenever one appears special in comparison with others, that is pride. Such pride is extremely destructive, and escaping it is exceedingly difficult.

Pride may be based upon caste, varṇa, āśrama, learning, or intelligence. It takes many forms. “I have memorized the Gītā; I can teach the Gītā; I understand its meanings especially well”-this too is pride. Pride causes a great fall. It arises solely from taking any goodness, excellence, or distinction to be one’s own. It cannot be removed by one’s own effort, but only by Bhagavān’s grace. The more one strives to remove pride, the more firmly it becomes established. If one adopts some method to erase it, that very method becomes a means of increasing it. Freedom from pride is therefore extremely difficult. A seeker must be very vigilant in this matter.

A seeker should remember that whatever excellence has appeared within is not one's own; it has come from Bhagavān. Regard that excellence as Bhagavān's alone and not at all as your own. Pride can disappear only through the firm conviction that every excellence seen within you has been given by Prabhu.

"No one else can perform kīrtana as I do. There are so many others, but none can do it like me." The moment another is placed before oneself for comparison, pride arises. A seeker should understand: I am not the doer; this is occurring through Bhagavān's grace. The excellence that has appeared is not personal to me. If it were personal, it would remain forever and be under my control. Only through such understanding can one become free of pride.

It is Bhagavān's grace that He does not allow anyone's pride to remain. The moment pride arises, it meets a blow. Through special grace Bhagavān warns, "Regard nothing as your own; I shall do all your work." Bhagavān breaks pride and does not let it endure. This is His great, transcendent, wondrous grace.

One in whom pride remains becomes a demon. Hiraṇyakaśipu, Hiraṇyākṣa, Rāvaṇa, Dantavakra, Śiśupāla, and others were all proud. Because of pride they acknowledged no one-not even Bhagavān. To remove their pride, Bhagavān incarnates and graciously destroys them. In reality Bhagavān does not kill the person; He kills that person's pride. When a boil forms, physicians first bring it to a head and then lance it. In the same way Bhagavān first lets pride grow and then destroys it. In this matter He follows no fixed rule for anyone.

Bhagavān's nature is wondrous. If other people do us even a small good, they make us feel indebted: "I raised you up!" Bhagavān, after

giving everything, says instead, “I am the servant of devotees; devotees are the crown jewel upon My head!” He does not say, “I raised you up,” but becomes the devotee’s servant Himself. More than that, He does not even let the person know, “I gave this to you.” Everything a person possesses-body, senses, mind, intellect, and so forth-has been given by Bhagavān. He gives so secretly that a person takes these things as entirely one’s own: “It is my mind, my intellect, my ability, my strength, my understanding.” Such is the giver’s extraordinary nature that what has been received seems to be one’s own. If your eyes are truly yours, why do you wear spectacles? If weakness enters them, simply correct it. If the body is yours, do not let it become ill or die.

The giver is so wondrous that He never lets it be known, “This was given by Me.” A person therefore assumes, “I am intelligent, I am a speaker, I am learned, I am a writer,” and so forth. One becomes proud: “I perform so much japa, worship, meditation, and recitation.” One should ask: by whose power am I doing this? Where did this power come from? Arjuna was the same and his Gāṇḍīva bow and arrows were the same, yet when bandits carried away the women under his protection he could do nothing: “The cowherd women were plundered; the Arjuna and the arrows were the same.” When Arjuna won the Mahābhārata war, it was not his strength but the strength of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who had become his charioteer. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, *“They have already been slain by Me; become merely an instrument, O Savyasācin”* (Gītā 11.33). The printed gloss reads: “All these have already been slain by Me. O Savyasācin, become merely an instrument.”

ईश्वरस्याप्यभिमनद्वेषतिवाद् दैन्यप्रयित्वाच्च।

(नारदभक्ति २७)

īśvarasyāpy abhimāna-dveṣitvād dainya-priyatvāc ca

The saints have expressed a striking truth: Bhagavān made the world for the human being and the human being for Himself. The meaning is, “If the human being worships Me, I shall give that person every object in the world. Nothing will remain lacking; want will disappear forever.” But instead of worshipping Him, the person becomes proud. Pride is not pleasing to Bhagavān:

“Because even Īśvara is averse to pride and loves humility.”
(Nārada Bhakti Sūtra 27)

The printed gloss reads: “Even Īśvara bears aversion toward pride and love toward humility.”

“Hear Rāma’s natural disposition: He allows no pride to remain in His servant. Pride is the root of worldly existence, the giver of manifold pain and every sorrow. Therefore the treasury of grace removes it, for His affection toward His servant is exceedingly great.” (Mānas, Uttara 74.3-4)

Bhagavān removes pride, yet a person becomes proud again. A lifetime passes in repeatedly becoming proud. Therefore keep calling, “O Lord! O my Lord!” and inwardly remember that whatever excellence has appeared has come from Bhagavān; it is not native to your own house. If you do not accept this, a terrible downfall will follow.

This human birth has been given by Bhagavān alone. Bhagavān has given the human being three powers: the power to act, the power to know, and the power to accept. The power to act was given for benefiting others, the power to know for knowing oneself, and the power to accept for accepting Bhagavān. The mistake occurs when a

person applies all three powers to oneself, and that is why one suffers. The moment strength, intelligence, ability, and the like appear to be one's own, pride arises. Accepting "I am a brāhmaṇa" brings pride in being a brāhmaṇa. Accepting "I am wealthy" brings pride in wealth. Accepting "I am learned" brings pride in learning. Wherever "I"-ness is superimposed, pride appears. Therefore keep calling inwardly to Bhagavān. Ability appears directly within oneself, which makes escaping pride very difficult. A person directly sees, "I am more educated; I know the Gītā; I perform kīrtana," and therefore becomes trapped. If one could see that all this occurs solely through Bhagavān's grace, one would be blessed. Even that awakening occurs only through Bhagavān's grace. Those who have not awakened should evoke compassion. They too will awaken, only later.

Nāradaḥ Mahārāja was Bhagavān's devotee, yet even he became proud-so proud that he cursed Bhagavān Himself:

"Now that You have spoken fine words, You will receive the fruit of what You have done. You deceived me after assuming a woman's body; may You assume that very body-this is my curse. You made my form like a monkey; monkeys will become Your helpers. You greatly wronged me; You will suffer separation from a woman." (Mānas, Bāla 137.3-4)

Nāradaḥ said that monkeys would help Him-"*Monkeys will become Your helpers.*" Was this a curse or a boon? It proved to be a boon. Therefore it is said, "*From a saint no harm can come to a work*" (Mānas, Sundara 6.2). Because of the curse, Bhagavān incarnated and enacted many divine plays; by singing them, people attain their highest good. Nāradaḥ's curse thus became a means of benefiting people. In the same way even Bhagavān's anger is beneficent like a

boon: *“Even the Lord’s anger is equal to a boon.”* Bhagavān and His devotees both benefit everyone without cause:

“O enemy of the demons, You and Your servant are the two causeless benefactors of the world through all ages.” (Mānas, Uttara 47.3)

If a relationship with either of these two is formed in any manner, the result is benefit alone. They bestow grace upon everyone. People say, “Bhagavān sent suffering!” But suffering does not exist in Bhagavān’s treasury; from where could He bring it to give you? Bhagavān and saints give nothing but grace, so their company should never be abandoned. Sins committed in human birth are not entirely exhausted even after experiencing all 8.4 million wombs; a residue remains. Even so, Bhagavān graciously gives the human body again and provides an opportunity for one’s deliverance. But a person takes what has been received as one’s own. Taking an object that comes and goes to be one’s own makes that object impure. The inner instrument therefore becomes pure not by an act of purification but by ceasing to regard it as one’s own. Offer everything to Bhagavān. Regard mind, intellect, senses, body, and all else as Bhagavān’s, and they will become pure and stainless. The moment they are regarded as one’s own, they become impure and pride arises.

Once a famine struck Bankura district. Seth Śrī Jaydayal Goyandka established a rule that anyone could come, perform kīrtana for two hours, and receive rice. The reason was that if money were given, people might buy impure things with it, so rice was given instead. Around one hundred or one hundred and twenty-five such centres were established, where people performed kīrtana and received rice. One day Sethjī went there. At night the Bengali residents

gathered and told him, “Mahārāja, you have kept our district alive. Otherwise people would have starved to death without grain. You have shown great grace.” Sethjī gave a wonderful reply: “You are praising us falsely. Until every rupee we have earned since coming here from Marwar has been spent, we have only returned your own property to you; we have given nothing of ours. If we brought something from Marwar and gave it here, then you could say this. We have not yet given even all the wealth we earned here.” Sethjī did not say this merely out of courtesy, but from his heart. His younger brother Harikrishnadasjī was asked, “You have begun this extensive work of giving rice to everyone. How much money do you intend to invest in it?” He gave a remarkable answer: “Until our condition becomes the same as the condition of those who come asking!” Could an ordinary wealthy person say such a thing? Their minds contained no pride that they were rendering such great help.

We never reflect on how extraordinary Bhagavān’s grace toward us has been. What were we, and what have we become? What has Bhagavān graciously made of us? We neither look, think, nor understand in this direction. If we examine our own lives, we see what we were and what Bhagavān has made us. Gosvāmījī has said:

“Rāma’s name is the wish-fulfilling tree and the abode of blessing in the Kali age. By remembering it, Tulsi was transformed from a hemp plant into Tulsīdāsa.” (Mānas, Bāla 26)

“I was forever a rider upon a donkey, but Your very name mounted me upon an elephant.” (Kavitāvalī, Uttara 60)

How unworthy I was, and how worthy Your grace has made me. Therefore look toward Bhagavān’s grace. Whatever we have become, we have not become through our own intelligence,

strength, learning, ability, or capacity. The moment the thought arises that we became so through our own intelligence or strength, pride appears: “I did this; I did that.” Call upon Bhagavān to escape this pride. We cannot escape by our own power, but only through Bhagavān’s grace. Remembrance of Bhagavān liberates one from every calamity: “*Remembrance of Hari releases one from all misfortunes*” (Śrīmad Bhāgavata 8.10.55). Therefore remember Bhagavān, take Bhagavān’s name, and seek refuge at His feet. Apart from Him there is no protector. Without Bhagavān the whole world is orphaned; through Bhagavān alone the world has a guardian. Every grain entering a turning millstone is crushed, but grains that come close to the central pin around which the millstone turns escape being ground: “A devotee may escape by staying close to the central peg.” Therefore take refuge at Prabhu’s feet and call upon Him. There is no other means of escaping pride.



The Seeker, the Goal, and the Means

नासतो वदियते भावो नाभावो वदियते सतः। (गीता २।१६)

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.

Nothing exists apart from pure Existence. In that Existence there is no “I,” “you,” “this,” or “that.” We merely assume the world to have existence; in reality it does not. Pure Existence “is,” while the world “is not.” What “is not” simply is not, and what “is” simply is:

“The unreal has no being; the Real never ceases to be.” (Gītā 2.16)

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.

The absence of what “is not” is natural and self-evident, and the presence of what “is” is likewise natural and self-evident. That “is” alone is our goal. How could what does not exist be our goal? The “is” is not something to be experienced; it is itself the very nature of experience.

From the standpoint of Reality, a seeker is one who cannot remain without the goal, and the goal is that which cannot remain without the seeker. Neither can be separate from the other, for their existence is one. Nothing can exist apart from “is.” If we truly are seekers, attainment should therefore be immediate. A seeker accepts no existence apart from the goal and takes refuge in nothing else—neither object nor action.

What kind of seeker can remain without the goal, and what kind of goal can remain without the seeker? What kind of child can remain without its mother, and what kind of mother without her child? Our goal has no power to remain apart from us, because fundamentally there is only one Existence. As ocean and wave are the same water,

seeker and goal share the same Existence. “Wave” is only an assumption. So long as there is relationship with the wave-like body, with inertness, there is a seeker. When relationship with inertness is wholly severed, the seeker no longer remains; only the goal remains.

If a seeker remains without the goal, understand that besides the goal he also seeks enjoyment and accumulation; he has granted another thing existence in his mind. If the goal remains without the seeker, understand that the seeker has another goal besides it-enjoyment and accumulation. The more importance the heart gives to the perishable, the less complete the seeking; and by just that measure the goal seems distant. When seeking becomes complete, the goal is attained.

Only by regarding the body as “I,” “mine,” and “for me” does the seeker perceive the goal as unattained. The best means of attainment is to accept no existence apart from the goal. Let the seeker’s vision remain fixed on the fact that the world is not. It was absent before, will be absent afterward, and even now passes into absence at every moment. The world has no state of enduring existence; the stream of creation and dissolution merely appears as stability.

Faith and love for the goal are essential, but they should be placed only in a goal that does not contradict discrimination. Faith and love for something that meets and parts from us contradict discrimination. If either faith or love becomes complete, the other arises naturally. Firm faith gives rise to love. If love does not arise, faith remains incomplete: alongside faith in Paramātmā, there is still faith in the world. With complete faith, no existence apart from the one Existence remains. Deficiency of faith in the goal is also

deficiency in the discipline, shown by desires for things besides the goal. Every other desire is that much deficiency in the discipline.

At the root of every desire lies the one desire for Paramātmā. Our mistake is trying to fulfil this natural longing with the body's help. Neither body nor world is needed in the slightest for attaining Paramātmā, who is within us. He is experienced by doing nothing. A body is needed to do something, but why is it needed to do nothing? Eyes are needed to see something, but why to see nothing? Repetition of the Name, kīrtana, and similar disciplines should certainly be practised, because they develop the capacity to do nothing.

We are portions of Paramātmā; our relationship is with Him alone, not with the body or the sense-objects of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. A seeker should firmly trust the truth, "We belong to Paramātmā." If firm faith is not possible, ask Bhagavān for it. "We belong to body and world" is an error. It may take time to recognize an error as error, but once recognized it takes no time to disappear.

It is a rule that Paramātmā is not attained through the unreal-objects and actions-but through severing relationship with it. To sever it completely, a seeker must accept three things:

1. Nothing is mine.
2. I want nothing.
3. I am nothing.

Consider them deeply. First, "Nothing is mine." Ask what we brought with us and what we shall take away. Reflection shows that we brought nothing and can take nothing. Whatever comes and parts, arises and perishes, arrives and departs cannot be ours, for

the Self neither comes nor parts, arises nor perishes, arrives nor departs. Thus not even a sesame-seed-sized object in endless universes is ours.

Second, “I want nothing.” If no worldly object is mine, what could I need? Only regarding the body as mine creates the wants for bread, water, clothing, house, and so forth. Ask: apart from the body, what do I need? Having accepted “Nothing is mine,” the seeker becomes able to accept “I want nothing.”

Third, “I am nothing.” Everyone sees body and world, but no one has seen the “I.” The body is perceived and the Self is experienced, but the “I” is neither perceived nor experienced; it is merely cognized. Having accepted “I want nothing,” one can accept that the “I” is nothing. The conjunction of possessiveness toward the world and longing for Paramātmā is called “I,” but in reality it is nothing. In deep sleep the Self remains but the “I” does not. Everyone experiences the Self’s presence and the “I”’s absence there.

As soon as “Nothing is mine” and “I want nothing” are realized, the “I” dissolves into pure Existence, the “is.” The conscious portion merges in Consciousness and the inert portion in the inert; nothing remains apart from pure Existence.

नदिरालस्यप्रमादोत्थं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम्। (गीता १८।३९)

nidrālasya-pramādottham tat tāmasam udāhṛtam.

Prakṛti consists of object and action. Objects arise and perish; actions begin and end. Reliance on body and other objects is dependence on another, while reliance on action is exertion. Neither is needed for attaining Paramātmā. In the world, doing is primary; for Paramātmā, not doing is primary. Body and world cannot help us attain Him. How could doing attain the Reality that

already pervades everywhere? Doing would instead make Him seem distant.

Body, senses, mind, intellect, ability, and strength all belong to prakṛti; relying on them is relying on prakṛti. How could that attain Paramātmā? Since the body belongs to prakṛti, it is neither ours nor for us. Whatever is done through it should be solely for the world. Repetition, meditation, worship, pilgrimage, vows, and every bodily practice should be done with the intention of benefiting others. Anything for oneself is enjoyment, not yoga. Every bodily action is for the world, since the body is part of the world. Paramātmā alone is for us because we are His portions. Dependence and exertion are thus enjoyment. One who abandons them for refuge in Bhagavān and rest is a yogin; one who adopts them is an enjoyer.

In dependence and exertion everyone is subject to another; in refuge in Bhagavān and rest everyone is free. The former are for the world, the latter for oneself. The deficiency a seeker sees within is proportionate to dependence and exertion. With refuge and rest, human life becomes complete, for Bhagavān alone is always with us and never parts. Action is for attaining the world; rest for attaining Paramātmā. Action diminishes strength, while actionlessness or rest accumulates it; indeed all powers arise from the actionless Reality. A person exhausted by a day's labour regains strength through sleep, but the pleasure of sleep is tāmasic:

“That which arises from sleep, indolence, and negligence is declared tāmasic.” (Gītā 18.39)

nidrālasya-pramādottham tat tāmasam udāhṛtam.

Resting for oneself-that is, doing nothing for one's own pleasure-is enjoyment; resting for Paramātmā is discipline, because He is

supreme Rest itself. Rest should therefore be for Him. To remain continuously established in eternal divine Existence is to rest for Paramātmā. Such rest is not tāmasic; it becomes sāttvic and then transcends the guṇas.

The two most valuable things for a seeker are therefore refuge in Bhagavān and rest. They fulfil the spiritual longing and dissolve worldly desires. If a seeker lacks faith in Bhagavān but has faith in himself, he can take refuge in the Self. If he has faith neither in Bhagavān nor in himself, he can take refuge in dharma-in duty.

“I am Bhagavān’s and Bhagavān is mine” is refuge in Bhagavān.

“Nothing is mine and I want nothing” is refuge in the Self.

“Objects and actions exist only for others’ welfare” is refuge in dharma.

Refuge in Bhagavān is bhakti-yoga, refuge in the Self is jñāna-yoga, and refuge in dharma is karma-yoga. All three release reliance on prakṛti in the form of object and action, allowing one to experience one’s self-evident establishment in pure Existence. Yet refuge in Bhagavān is supreme, because in our essence we are His portions. It grants not only liberation but devotion, the final aim of human life.

Knowing that nothing exists apart from the one “is,” pure Existence, brings liberation; accepting that the “is” is one’s own brings devotion. Only what truly is can be ours. How could what is not be ours? If a seeker refuses to grant existence to the unreal and retains no personal insistence, devotion arises by itself.



Who Is a Seeker?

मया ततमर्दिं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तनि। (गीता ९।४)

mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā.

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्तितोऽयमवकिार्योऽयमुच्यते। (गीता २।२९)

avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate.

यह सद्दिधान्त है कजिो आदौ और अन्तमें नहीं होता, वह वर्तमानमें भी नहीं होता-‘आदावन्ते च यन्नास्तविर्तमानेऽपित्तथा’ (माण्डूक्यकारिका २।६, ४।३१)।

ādāv ante ca yan nāsti vartamāne 'pi tat tathā.

Bhagavān says:

“This entire universe is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form.”
(Gītā 9.4)

mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā.

That which has a form is called a *mūrti*; that which has no form is called an “unmanifest form.” Just as Bhagavān is of unmanifest form, so is the seeker:

“This Self is said to be unmanifest, inconceivable, and unchanging.” (Gītā 2.25)

avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikāryo 'yam ucyate.

Scriptures do not ordinarily say that the seeker is not the body, but in reality this is so. The seeker is a body of inner disposition, a yogin rather than an enjoyer. Enjoyment and yoga oppose one another. A seeker acts not with the intelligence of enjoyment or pleasure but with the intelligence of yoga. Equanimity is yoga-“Equanimity is

called yoga” (Gītā 2.48)-and equanimity is an inner disposition. The seeker is therefore a body of disposition.

The gross body changes every moment. Paramātmā has two prakṛtis: the body is lower prakṛti and the living being higher prakṛti. The higher is unmanifest, the lower manifest. All beings are unmanifest at first, manifest in the middle, and unmanifest at the end.

Printed ruled note
<i>“Beings are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in their middle, O Bhārata, and unmanifest again at their end. Why lament over this?” (Gītā 2.28)</i>
<i>avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata </i>
<i>avyakta-nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā </i>

In a dream, waking precedes it, dream occupies the middle, and waking follows; beings are likewise manifest only in the middle.

The principle is that what is absent at beginning and end is absent in the present too: “What does not exist in the beginning and end is likewise absent in the present” (Māṇḍūkya Kārikā 2.6; 4.31).

ādāv ante ca yan nāsti vartamāne ’pi tat tathā.

Since beings are unmanifest at beginning and end, even while appearing manifest in between they remain truly unmanifest. No two manifest persons are identical, but in the unmanifest all become one. Therefore everyone can attain Paramātmā in the unmanifest. Only what can be attained by everyone is Paramātmā; what some attain and others do not is the world. Paramātmā is attained by the unmanifest and in the unmanifest.

The unmanifest alone is the seeker; the manifest is not, for it does not remain even one moment. “All states except the power of consciousness change at every moment.” Consider the body’s form at birth and today: body and world change ceaselessly. The very mass of change is called the world. How can what changes be the seeker? The seeker is what does not change. When realization comes, the body is not perfected; the perfected one is bodiless. Therefore the seeker must first accept, whether understood or not, that the body is not his true nature.

On the path of knowledge a seeker first understands and then accepts; on the path of devotion he first accepts and then understands. Discrimination is primary in knowledge, faith and trust in devotion. Each path has its marvel. The seeker of knowledge is Brahman from the beginning and never descends below Brahman. But even after perfection and realization of Paramātmā, a devotee does not become Brahman; rather, Brahman comes under the devotee’s sway. After composing all his other works, Gosvāmījī wrote the *Vinay Patrikā*. Like a little child he says there to Mother Sītā:

कबहुँक अंब, अवसर पाइ।
मेरिऔ सुधादियाइबी, कछु करुन-कथा चलाइ॥१॥
दीन, सब अँगहीन, छीन, मलीन, अधी अघाइ।
नाम लै भर उदर एक प्रभु-दासी-दास कहाइ॥२॥
बूझहिँ ‘सो है कौन’, कहबिँ नाम दसा जनाइ।
सुनत राम कृपालु के मेरी बगिरिऔ बनजाइ॥३॥
जानकी जगजननजिन की कयिँ बचन सहाइ।
तौ तुलसीदास भव तव नाथ-गुन-गन गाइ॥४॥
kabahum□ka amba, avasara pāi |

meri-ō sudhi dyāibī, kachu karuna-kathā calāi ||1||
 dīna, saba aṅgaḥīna, chīna, malīna, aghī aghāi |
 nāma lai bhara udara eka prabhu-dāsī-dāsa kahāi ||2||
 būjhihaiṁ “so hai kauna,” kahibī nāma dasā janāi |
 sunata Rāma kṛpālu ke merī bigari-au bani jāi ||3||
 Jānakī jagajananī jana kī kiye bacana sahāi |
 tau Tulasīdāsa bhava tava nātha-guna-gana gāi ||4||

प्रेम भगतजिल बनि रघुराई। अभिंतर मल कबहुँ न जाई॥ (मानस, उत्तरकाण्ड
 ४९।३)

prema bhagati jala binu Raghurāī, abhi-antara mala kabahum□
 na jāi.

“Mother, if ever you find an occasion,
 remind Him of me and begin some compassionate account of me.
 Poor, deficient in every limb, diminished, impure, and steeped in
 sin,

I fill my belly merely by being called a servant of the Lord’s
 maidservant.

When He asks, ‘Who is that?’ tell Him my name and condition.
 On hearing, compassionate Rāma may set my ruined affairs right.
 If Jānakī, Mother of the world and helper of her servants,
 supports my plea,
 then Tulsīdāsa, O Lord, will cross becoming while singing Your
 multitude of virtues.”

kabahum□ka amba, avasara pāi ... tau Tulasīdāsa bhava tava
 nātha-guna-gana gāi.

The point is that even after perfection and attainment of Bhagavān, devotees always regard themselves as small. Seen truly, such devotees alone are real knowers. In the Gītā Bhagavān does not call even the guṇa-transcending great soul a knower; He calls His devotee a knower (Gītā 7.16-18). Nor does He call the follower of knowledge *sarvavit*, knower of all; He gives that title to the devotee: “Knowing Me thus, he worships Me with his whole being, O Bhārata” (Gītā 15.19). Gosvāmījī says:

“Without the water of loving devotion, O Lord of Raghu, the inner impurity can never depart.” (Mānas, Uttarakāṇḍa 49.3)

*prema bhagati jala binu Raghurāī, abhi-antara mala kabahum□
na jāī.*

Without devotion the subtle inner impurity, ego, does not disappear. It does not obstruct liberation, but produces disagreements among philosophers and their systems. When it vanishes, disagreement ends. The devotee is therefore the true knower.

भूमा अचल शाश्वत अमल सम ठोस है तू सर्वदा।

यह देह है पोला घड़ा, बनता बगिड़ता है सदा॥

bhūmā acala śāśvata amala sama ṭhosa hai tū sarvadā |

yaha deha hai polā ghaṛā, banatā bigaṛatā hai sadā ||

The body is not our true nature. It is formed on earth in the mother’s womb, moves about on earth, and at death merges into earth. It has three possible ends: ashes, soil, or excrement. Burned, it becomes ashes; buried, earth; eaten by animals, excrement. The body is therefore not primary; the unmanifest nature is:

*“You are always the infinite, unmoving, eternal, stainless, equal,
and solid Reality;*

this body is a hollow pot, forever forming and breaking.”

bhūmā acala śāśvata amala sama ṭhosa hai tū sarvadā |

yaha deha hai polā gharā, banatā bigarātā hai sadā ||

In truth seekers worship Bhagavān only as the unmanifest. There is a body of five elements and an unmanifest body of disposition; worship and meditation occur through the latter. Worship means love: “Hear, enemy of serpents: there is no worship equal to love” (Mānas, Araṇyakāṇḍa 10, variant reading). Love belongs to the body of disposition. The unmanifest form loves, worships, and becomes absorbed in Bhagavān. To it Bhagavān tastes sweet; His teaching, līlā, and Name all seem beautiful.

Bhagavān says that the individual has eternally been His own portion: “An eternal portion of Myself has become the individual being in the world of living beings” (Gītā 15.7). “My portion alone” means that, unlike the physical body which contains portions of both parents, the individual contains no portion of prakṛti but belongs solely to Him. The body, a portion of prakṛti, remains in prakṛti. Yet the individual, though a portion of Paramātmā, does not remain consciously established in Him; he regards himself as established in the world and identifies with body, senses, mind, and intellect in prakṛti. Hence he cannot understand “I am bodiless.” His greatest error is to regard the momentarily changing body as his permanent form.

अवनिशतिु तद्वद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्। (गीता २।१७)

avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam.

At the Gītā's beginning Bhagavān distinguishes body and indweller to tell every seeker, "You are not the body." In reality the seeker is neither body nor even "indweller"; his nature is pure Existence. "Indweller" is a provisional explanation, just as a person related to wealth is called wealthy. When wealth is gone the person remains though the name "wealthy" does not; when relationship with body is gone, the Self remains though "indweller" does not. The same Self is called knower in relation to field, seer in relation to seen, and witness in relation to witnessed. In truth it is none of these pairs, but only conscious Existence.

Unlike wealth and wealthy person, body and indweller are not of one kind. Attraction of the wealthy to wealth can be real at its level; the Self has no attraction to body, only an assumed attraction. Changes in wealth affect the wealthy, but bodily changes never enter the Self. Separation from wealth makes the wealthy weep; separation from body reveals unbroken, boundless joy. Discriminating wealth from owner does not liberate, but discriminating body from Self does. Losing wealth makes one poor or detached, whereas severance from body makes the Self forever free. The body is the seed of the world: relationship with it is relationship with the whole world; severing it severs all worldly relationship.

We see object and action in the world, both products of prakṛti. Ordinary vision makes object seem primary, but ceaseless change shows action is primary; a mass of action merely appears as an object, and action too changes. Neither is our nature, which is the actionless, objectless unmanifest. As we are distinct from the house we leave behind, we are distinct from the body left behind. Separation reveals an already-existing distinction. We do not truly dwell in the body; we assume that we do. Bhagavān therefore says:

“Know as indestructible That by which all this is pervaded.” (Gītā 2.17)

avināśi tu tad viddhi yena sarvam idaṁ tatam.

The Self is all-pervading, not confined to one body-“eternal, all-pervading” (Gītā 2.24). So long as relationship with body is assumed, one is a seeker; when it is wholly released, one is perfected.

नासतो वदियते भावो नाभावो वदियते सतः। (गीता २।१६)

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.

Scripture says, “Having become divine, worship the Divine.” The unmanifest should therefore worship the unmanifest Paramātmā. The body changes at every moment, but the seeker cannot be that momentarily changing thing. How could it become liberated or eternal? No one can destroy the Self-“No one can bring about the destruction of this imperishable” (Gītā 2.17)-whereas the body cannot remain without destruction. Only the imperishable can be free. Liberation means that the delusion of bondage disappears. Once delusion has vanished it never returns-“knowing which, you will not again fall into delusion” (Gītā 4.35)-because fundamentally it does not exist. Only what is unreal disappears; what truly is never does:

“The unreal has no being; the Real never ceases to be.” (Gītā 2.16)

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ.

The body is merely the abode of experience. As a kitchen is a place for eating, the body is the place where pleasure and pain are experienced; the place is not the experiencer. It is an outer garment. Red, black, or white clothing does not become our identity; male

and female bodies are likewise garments. The Self is neither woman, man, nor neuter. Paramātmā, prakṛti, and the individual are all beyond sex.

Everyone experiences the absence of body, senses, mind, intellect, and ego, but no one experiences his own absence. We transcend whatever absence we experience. Our existence always remains. In deep sleep all those instruments dissolve, yet no one says, “I died in deep sleep and have now returned to life.” We remain even in deep sleep; therefore we later say, “I slept so happily that I knew nothing.” Our being remained exactly as it was. It is not subject to ego, intellect, mind, senses, or body; it is independent. Gross, subtle, and causal bodies may all be absent, but we are not. Our nature is therefore formless. The formed body arises later and disappears. We are formless, yet identify ourselves as formed through the body. This is the root error, for which threefold expiation is required:

1. Admit the mistake: “I erred by taking myself to be the body.”
2. Regret it: “Though born human and a seeker, I committed such an error.”
3. Resolve: “I shall never make this error again; I shall never again regard myself as the body.”

With these three, expiation is complete and the seeker becomes established in his real unmanifest nature.



Liberation Is Natural

प्रकृतिपुरुषं चैव वदिध्यनादी उभावपि

वकिरांश्च गुणांश्चैव वदिधिप्रकृतसिम्भवान्॥ (गीता १३।१९)

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api |

vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś caiva viddhi prakṛti-sambhavān ||

कार्यकरणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते॥ (गीता १३।२०)

kārya-karaṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate |

puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānāṁ bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate ||

Paramātmā equally pervades all. Though present in all, He remains exactly as He is, while the world changes every moment. The Gītā says:

“Know both prakṛti and puruṣa to be beginningless; know also that modifications and guṇas arise from prakṛti.” (Gītā 13.19)

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva viddhy anādī ubhāv api |

vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś caiva viddhi prakṛti-sambhavān ||

Although both are beginningless, changing modifications and qualities arise only from prakṛti; puruṣa, the individual self, is changeless.

“Prakṛti is said to be the cause in producing action through body and instruments; puruṣa is said to be the cause in experiencing pleasure and pain.” (Gītā 13.20)

kārya-karaṇa-kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate |

puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānāṁ bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate ||

Puruṣa is a cause with respect to experiencership, not action. Every experience arises from action. Only when situated in prakṛti does puruṣa experience “the guṇas born of prakṛti” (Gītā 13.21). Apart from prakṛti he is no experiencer. Though situated in the body he is beyond, unattached, unstained, and unrelated to it—“the supreme puruṣa in this body” (Gītā 13.22). Only assumed identity with body makes him agent and experiencer; otherwise he is neither: “Though situated in the body, O Kaunteya, he neither acts nor is tainted” (Gītā 13.31). The sun illuminates all yet does not become the agent of any act. One person reads the Veda in sunlight and another hunts, but the sun shares neither merit nor sin. Likewise, without joining himself to body, puruṣa shares neither.

The individual’s unity with prakṛti is assumed; his unity with Paramātmā belongs to his nature, for he is Paramātmā’s portion. Relationship with body makes him agent and experiencer and sends him into birth and death; without it he is free. In reality he is already free and naturally all-pervading, but he assumes location in one body and enters the cycle. Established in his nonconceptual nature, he remains neither agent nor experiencer even while in a body. Unstainedness is natural to him; adhesion is artificial, but he does not attend to his unstained nature. He does not become free; he is free. As Paramātmā pervades all without agency or experience, so does the individual. His likeness to Paramātmā—“they have attained My likeness” (Gītā 14.2)—is natural and self-evident.

Thus it is not true that we are worldly people presently bound who will someday attain Paramātmā. We already have Him, but through inattention regard Him as unattained. When the assumed notion disappears, freedom remains naturally. Freedom is natural; bondage unnatural. People mistakenly reverse this and suppose liberation requires labour. Yet liberation must be natural, since

once known delusion never returns-“knowing which, you will not again fall into delusion” (Gītā 4.35). If a person were truly bound, he would remain bound forever. Only one who is free can be liberated: while free he assumes himself bound, and when the assumed bond disappears natural freedom is experienced.

Even in apparent bondage the individual is not truly tainted: “Though situated in the body, O Kaunteya, he neither acts nor is tainted” (Gītā 13.31). He remains apart but experiences adhesion instead of separation. Bondage is assumed; freedom is his actual nature. Know that nature, and delusion cannot return.

जड चेतनह गिरंथि परि गिई। जदपि मृषा छूटत कठनिई॥ (मानस, उत्तरकाण्ड ११७।२)

jaṛa cetanahi granthi pari gai, jadapi mṛṣā chūṭata kaṭhinaī.

न ह किञ्चित्क्षिणमपि जातु तषिठत्यकर्मकृत्।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतजैर्गुणैः॥ (गीता ३।५)

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt |

kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ ||

Bondage is adventitious; liberation is self-evident. We remain bound by treating the unnatural as natural and the natural as unnatural. Relationship between inert and conscious is actually impossible, as darkness cannot mingle with light. Consciousness, however, has the power to assume the inert joined to itself. Because consciousness is real, its assumption takes on the force of reality. The inert has no such power; it never called consciousness its own. Consciousness calls the inert its own and thereby becomes bound. Cease doing so, and artificial bondage disappears, revealing natural freedom. Liberation is simple and natural; bondage fabricated and unnatural.

Our nature is naturally free. Prakṛti acts ceaselessly in both manifestation and dissolution, but the Self never acts; through endless ages it remains exactly as it is. It assumes many bodies yet remains apart, and performs many actions in a day while remaining distinct from each. Only because it is separate can it leave one action for another and one body for bodies among 8.4 million species. If its nature itself acted, it would remain forever in one action and one body. Though separate from all, it joins itself to inert body, object, person, and action and appears bound; thereafter release seems difficult:

“A knot has formed between inert matter and consciousness; though unreal, it is difficult to untie.” (Mānas, Uttarakāṇḍa 117.2)

jaṛa cetanahi granthi pari gai, jadapi mṛṣā chūṭata kaṭhinaī.

In reality it was never bound. Everyone should accept that liberation is natural. Bondage is unnatural and achieved through doing; liberation is not. The Gītā says:

“No one can remain even for a moment without action; everyone is helplessly made to act by the guṇas born of prakṛti.” (Gītā 3.5)

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt |

kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ ||

This describes puruṣa situated in prakṛti. In reality puruṣa never acts even for a moment, but after assuming relationship with prakṛti he cannot remain without action. Prakṛti’s activity never ceases, while no action ever applies to the individual self, naturally unattached and unstained. By assuming relationship with prakṛti he mistakenly treats liberation as something produced by effort.

The body is useful only when we act. What use is it if no action is performed? It can serve family, society, or world; it does not exist for oneself. Without gross action the gross body is useless; without thought the subtle body; without stability or samādhi the causal body. None of these actions occurs in the Self, but a person attributes them to himself. That attribution is bondage.

Printed ruled note

When the seeker becomes detached even from stillness and witnesses stillness too, he separates from the causal body and abides as his real nature.

By regarding himself as agent he is bound-“The self bewildered by ego thinks, ‘I am the doer’” (Gītā 3.27); by not regarding himself as agent he is free-“The knower of Reality, joined in yoga, should think, ‘I do nothing at all’” (Gītā 5.8). A man who forms a relationship with one woman becomes related to her entire family-parents, brothers, sisters, and all. Likewise relationship with one body joins one to every action it performs, making them “my actions.” Experience the natural separation from body, and birth and death cease.

कर्म्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव कञ्चित्करोति सः। (गीता ४।२०)

karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ.

While maintaining relationship with body, a person is bound both by acting and by not acting. Once that relationship is severed, he truly does nothing even while acting:

“Though fully engaged in action, he does nothing at all.” (Gītā 4.20)

karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ.

Clarified butter is present in curd, but after it is extracted it no longer mixes with the buttermilk; it remains separate. Likewise, once separated from body, the Self does not merge into it again. Even while apparently joined it was distinct, but assumed itself joined. The inert cannot reach consciousness; consciousness reaches toward the inert, assumes relationship, and attributes the inert's actions and changes to itself. Without that assumed relationship, bondage does not exist and liberation is natural.



We Are Neither Doer nor Experiencer

ईस्वर अंस जीव अबनिासी। चेतन अमल सहज सुख रासी॥ (मानस, उत्तरकाण्ड ११७।१)

īśvara aṁsa jīva abināsī, cetana amala sahaja sukha rāsī.

शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते॥ (गीता १३।३१)

śarīra-stho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate.

Every seeker should establish in the heart that we are all children of Bhagavān—“children of immortality”—because we are His portions: “an eternal portion of Myself” (Gītā 15.7). Our mistake is to call inert body, senses, mind, and intellect our own instead of Bhagavān, whose portions we are. Bondage arises solely from calling inert things ours; cease doing so and liberation is self-evident. If they were ours they would remain with us, but body, senses, mind, intellect, and life-breath all depart. Among endless things in endless universes, not even a hair’s breadth belongs to us.

Something may truly be ours or merely be assumed ours. Body and the rest are only assumed. In a game, king, queen, and soldiers are roles, not realities. Worldly persons and objects are likewise called ours only for practical dealings. Neither gross, subtle, nor causal body is ours. If nothing is ours, what can we need? Bhagavān alone is ours; everything else is encountered and destined to part.

Did you bring any object when you came, or will you take one when you leave? Everything remains here. Habitual use has produced possessiveness and made it difficult to release. In deep sleep the senses and inner faculty experience nothing; on waking we say, “I slept so happily that I knew nothing.” Thus absence of all things and

presence of happiness were experienced without the senses. The individual is naturally happiness itself:

“The individual is an imperishable portion of Īśvara-conscious, stainless, and naturally a mass of happiness.” (Mānas, Uttarakāṇḍa 117.1, as printed)

īśvara amṣa jīva abināsi, cetana amala sahaja sukha rāsi.

Happiness is natural to the individual; pleasure and pain arise only through relationship with the inert. Memories of childhood and youth occur in mind, not in us. Actions of gross body and experiences of gross and subtle bodies do not occur in us. We are apart. Nothing remains with us. We are not body but direct portions of Bhagavān, without agency or experiencership. The Gītā says beautifully:

“Though situated in the body, O Kaunteya, the Self neither acts nor is tainted.” (Gītā 13.31)

śarīra-stho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate.

यस्य नाहङ्कृतो भावो बुद्धिरियस्य न लपियते।

हत्वापि स इमाल्लोकान् न हन्ति न बिध्यते॥ (गीता १८।१७)

yasya nāhaṅkrto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate |

hatvāpi sa imāṁl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate ||

Agency and experiencership belong to body, but we attribute them to ourselves. Bhagavān explains this through space and sun: as space is tainted by no object, the Self is tainted by no body; as one sun illumines the three worlds, the Self illumines all bodies (Gītā 13.32-33). Veda is recited and an animal hunted in the same

sunlight, yet the sun accrues neither merit nor sin because it becomes agent of neither. Bhagavān says:

“One who has no egoistic notion and whose intellect is not tainted neither kills nor is bound, even after killing all these beings.” (Gītā 18.17)

yasya nāhaṅkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate |

hatvāpi sa imāṁl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate ||

As space is not experiencer, neither are we; as sun is not agent, neither are we. Agency and experiencership do not exist in our nature; they alone constitute the world. Without agency and adhesion, the world does not exist. The Self neither acts nor is tainted even in a body. This truth is immediately useful to every seeker. Bhagavān describes our actual condition, not an attainment requiring days, years, or births. Liberation is self-evident while the body lives, not only when it dies-“though situated in the body.”

Only an inner faculty bewildered by ego calls itself agent: “The self bewildered by ego thinks, ‘I am the doer’” (Gītā 3.27). Ego belongs to lower prakṛti. Even amid that bewilderment the Self is truly neither agent nor experiencer. Brahman, individual, and Self are none of them agent or experiencer; the condition is assumed. Bhagavān tells the knower not to think himself agent: “The knower of Reality, joined in yoga, should think, ‘I do nothing at all’” (Gītā 5.8). We, higher prakṛti and portions of Paramātmā, are not bewildered by ego; the inner faculty is. Calling it ours makes us seem agents and experiencers.

If nothing in endless universes is ours, how are body or ego-bewildered inner faculty ours? Hence Bhagavān says, “Though situated in the body, O Kaunteya, he neither acts nor is tainted.”

Reflect in solitude especially on Gītā 13.31-33, 18.17, 3.27, and 5.8; it will greatly benefit you. If I am none of the gross, subtle, or causal bodies, how can agency and experiencership belong to me? This is not your or my assertion but Bhagavān’s word in the Gītā. The wickedest sinner remains a portion of Paramātmā. Firmly accept that we are His portions; Paramātmā is ours, the world is not. A person remains his father’s child while working on railway, in bank, or field. Whatever we do, we remain children of the supreme Father; work does not make us belong to another.

Printed note: cited verses

Because this imperishable Supreme Self is beginningless and without guṇas, though situated in the body it neither acts nor is tainted. As all-pervading space is not tainted because of its subtlety, the Self present in every body is not tainted. As the one sun illumines this entire world, the knower of the field illumines the entire field, O Bhārata. (Gītā 13.31-33)

One who has no egoistic notion and whose intellect is not tainted neither kills nor is bound, even after killing all these beings. (Gītā 18.17)

Actions are entirely performed by the guṇas of prakṛti; the self bewildered by ego thinks, “I am the doer.” (Gītā 3.27)

The knower of Reality, joined in yoga, should think, “I do nothing at all.” (Gītā 5.8)

अपि चैदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृज्जिं सन्तरिष्यसि॥ (गीता ४।३६)

api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛttamaḥ |

sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva vṛjinaṁ santariṣyasi ||

As we can leave a house at once and therefore are distinct even while sitting in it, we remain distinct from the body while living in it. We are neither agents nor experiencers. This only has to be

accepted; no education is required. Every brother and sister can accept, “We are portions of Bhagavān and neither agents nor experiencers.” Prakṛti’s domain and consciousness’s domain are distinct. Agency and experience belong to prakṛti; “neither acts nor is tainted” to consciousness. Previous habit may prevent immediate experience, but this remains true. We are wholly unstained. Liberation does not happen; liberation is. It only needs to be experienced. The Gītā says:

“Even if you are the greatest sinner among all sinners, you shall cross all evil by the boat of knowledge alone.” (Gītā 4.36)

*api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛttamaḥ |
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva vṛjinam santariṣyasi ||*

Even one worse than all sinners can attain knowledge and experience “neither acts nor is tainted,” quite apart from already possessing discrimination, dispassion, and longing for liberation. Whether following knowledge or devotion, first accept, “I am a portion of Bhagavān.” Agency and adhesion are naturally absent in us. Reflect, become quiet, and settle the truth. Even if forgotten it remains true. Forgetfulness occurs in the inner faculty, never in us. Even if we forget and appear agent and experiencer, we are not. Hold only this truth: “Though situated in the body, O Kaunteya, he neither acts nor is tainted.” Correct conviction cuts incorrect conviction; accepting truth requires no labour.



Attaining Paramātmā through Actionlessness

The Supreme Reality equally pervades the entire world: “By Me all this is pervaded” (Gītā 9.4); “I am equal toward all beings” (Gītā 9.29). Whoever seeks Him should contemplate nothing. The all-pervading cannot be made an object of thought. When all contemplation ceases, our position is naturally in Paramātmā. The special discipline is therefore to contemplate nothing-not Paramātmā, world, or anything else. Let the seeker become still exactly where he is, for Paramātmā is there. Action is needed to reach what is distant in place, time, or object. What action could be needed to attain what is everywhere and at every time, in all objects, persons, states, circumstances, and events?

Becoming quiet, peaceful, and free of action is a great discipline unknown to many. Doing attains the world; non-doing attains Paramātmā. The world is action and labour; Paramātmā is actionlessness and rest. Every action begins and ends, but the actionless Reality remains unchanged. All actions arise from and dissolve into it. Action expends strength; actionlessness accumulates it. A seeker should therefore become quiet and thought-free before and after every action. Listening or reading after first becoming quiet deepens understanding; quiet afterward gives power to retain. Action produces inequality, actionlessness equality. No two people act identically, but millions become one in doing nothing. Scholar or fool, rich or poor, sick or healthy, weak or strong, qualified or unqualified-all become one in non-doing, established in Paramātmā. Any thought places us in the world; no thought leaves us in Paramātmā. We are already naturally

established there, but thought conceals the fact. Bhagavān therefore says:

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न कञ्चिदिष्येन्नितयेत्॥ (गीता ६।२५)

śanaiḥ śanair upamed buddhyā dhṛti-gṛhītayā |

ātma-saṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid api cintayet ||

“Little by little let one withdraw through an intellect held by fortitude. Establishing the mind in the Self, let one think of nothing whatever.” (Gītā 6.25)

śanaiḥ śanair upamed buddhyā dhṛti-gṛhītayā |

ātma-saṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcid api cintayet ||

The printed gloss says: “Through an intellect endowed with patience, gradually withdraw from the world; establish mind or intellect properly in the nature of Paramātmā, then contemplate nothing.”

Through sāttvic intellect and fortitude, withdraw gradually from the world of action and object. Do not hurry; haste does not produce excellent discipline. Resolve that nothing exists apart from the one mass of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss, then think of nothing. “Mass” means solid. A stone or glass is solid enough to resist a needle, yet Paramātmā is more solid still: fire enters stone or glass, but no object can enter Him. To contemplate such utterly solid Paramātmā as an object makes a seeker seem more distant from Him. Therefore, abandoning sleep and indolence, cultivate outer and inner quiet exactly where you are. This very easy and excellent discipline brings great peace and destroys all affliction and sin.

Withdrawal means freedom from pairs such as attachment-aversion, joy-grief, and pleasure-pain. Stones, wood, and paper may lie beside a road without concern to us; similarly remain unconcerned and impartial toward every action and object: “For him there is no purpose in what is done, nor in what is not done” (Gītā 3.18). Impartiality is itself an art. A seeker who performs all work impartially becomes unattached to the world. Remain impartial amid gain and loss, respect and disrespect, pleasure and pain, praise and blame, and Paramātmā is attained. Attachment and aversion turn the condition into enjoyment rather than yoga, and an enjoyer does not attain the highest good. Tulsīdāsa therefore says:

तुलसी ममता राम सो, समता सब संसार।

राम न रोष न दोष दुख, दास भए भव पार॥ (दोहावली ९४)

Tulasī mamatā Rāma soṁ, samatā saba saṁsāra |

rāga na roṣa na doṣa dukha, dāsa bhae bhava pāra ||

आरुरुक्षोरमुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते।

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते॥ (गीता ६।३)

ārurukṣor muner yogam karma kāraṇam ucyate |

yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate ||

“Tulsī: possessiveness toward Rāma, equanimity toward all the world; without attachment, anger, fault, or grief, the servant crosses becoming.” (Dohāvalī 94)

Tulasī mamatā Rāma soṁ, samatā saba saṁsāra |

rāga na roṣa na doṣa dukha, dāsa bhae bhava pāra ||

The Gītā says:

“For the contemplative who seeks to ascend to yoga, action is said to be the means; for that same person once established in yoga, tranquillity is said to be the means.” (Gītā 6.3)

ārurukṣor muner yogaṁ karma kāraṇam ucyate |

yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate ||

The printed gloss says: “For a reflective yogin wishing to ascend to yoga, equanimity, performance of duty is the means; once established in yoga, śama, peace, is the means to attaining Paramātmā.”

Śama means doing nothing. Relationship with doing is relationship with prakṛti, and so long as that remains there are unrest, pain, birth, and death. The relationship is erased by non-doing, since both action and object belong to prakṛti. Consciousness contains neither. Action is impermanent; actionlessness eternal. Action begins and ends, but actionlessness remains continuously unchanged. Thus śama-doing nothing-is the means to Paramātmā. Yet if peace is consumed as an experience, Paramātmā is not attained. “I am peaceful” adds ego; “what great peace!” adds enjoyment. Do not mix personality into peace; know peace to exist of itself. Consuming it leads to restlessness or sleep; without consumption it remains. Spontaneous peace without action or pride is yoga, since it has no agent or experiencer. Wherever either exists there is enjoyment, and enjoyment establishes one in the world.

All actions and objects belong to the world and exist for the world. A karma-yogin therefore regards them neither as his nor for himself and devotes them to serving the world. This severs relationship with the world of action and object. Prakṛti is labour; the Supreme Reality is rest. A jñāna-yogin becomes unattached to action and

object and accepts rest—that is, experiences the self-evident establishment in his conscious nature as pure Existence. A bhakti-yogin accepts refuge in Bhagavān, of whom even that conscious nature is a portion. Service and rest bring liberation; refuge in Bhagavān brings love.

It is a principle that the all-pervading Reality cannot be attained through any action. The moment we act to attain it, we place ourselves apart from it. If we perform no action, our position is in that very Supreme Reality. Therefore, while walking or moving, rising or sitting, let the seeker cultivate constant peace.

