

BhagavadGita

commentary by

Nithyananda

Sincerity

- the straight way to liberation



BhagavadGita

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Bhagavad Gita Demystified

Nithyananda

Discourses delivered to Swamis and Ananda Samajis
of the Nithyananda Order all over the world

Beyond Scriptures

Sincerity: Straight Way to Liberation

CHAPTER 17

Living is about experimenting with truth. It is about having the courage to experiment with truth. Just to read or listen, thinking one has understood is meaningless. The understanding must be applied with courage.

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Bhagavad Gita: A Background

Bhagavad Gita is a sacred scripture of the *Vedic* culture. As with all scriptures, it was knowledge that was transmitted verbally. It was called *sruti* in Sanskrit, meaning something that is heard.

Gita, as Bhagavad Gita is generally called, translates literally from Sanskrit as the 'Sacred Song'. Unlike the *Veda* and *Upanishad*, which are self-standing expressions, Gita is written into the Hindu epic Mahabharata, called a *purana*, an ancient tale. It is part of a story, so to speak.



As a scripture, Gita is part of the ancient knowledge base of *Vedic* tradition, which is the expression of the experiences of great sages.

Veda and *Upanishad*, the foundation of *sruti* literature, arose through the insight and awareness of these great sages when they went into a no-mind state. These are as old as humanity and the first and truest expressions in the journey of man's search for truth.

Unlike the *Vedas*, which were internalized by the great sages, or the *Upanishads*, which were the teachings of these great sages, Gita is part of a story narrated by Vyasa, one of these great sages. It is narrated as the direct expression of the Divine.

No other epic, or part of an epic, has the special status of the Gita. As a consequence of the presence of Gita, the Mahabharata epic itself is considered a sacred Hindu scripture. Gita arose from the super consciousness of Krishna, the Supreme God, and is therefore considered a scripture.

Mahabharata, literally the Great *Bharata*, is a narration about the nation and civilization, which is now known as India. It was then a nation ruled by King Bharata and his descendants. The story of this epic is about two warring clans, Kauravas and Pandavas, closely related to one another. Dhritrashtra, the blind King of Hastinapura and father of the 100 Kaurava brothers was the brother of Pandu, whose children were the five Pandava princes. It is a tale of strife between cousins.

Pandu was the King of Hastinapura. A sage cursed him that he would die if he ever entered into physical

relationship with his wives. He therefore had no children. Vyasa says that all the five Pandava children were born to their mothers Kunti and Madri through the blessing of divine beings. Pandu handed over the kingdom and his children to his blind brother Dhritharashtra and retired to meditate in the forest.

Kunti had received a boon when she was still a young unmarried adolescent, that she could summon any divine power at will to father a child. Before she married, she tested her boon. The Sun God Surya appeared before her. Karna was born to her as a result. In fear of social reprisals, she cast the newborn away in a river. Yudhishtira, Bhima, and Arjuna were born to Kunti after her marriage by invocation of her powers, and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva were born to Madri, the second wife of Pandu.

Yudhishtira was born to Kunti as a result of her being blessed by Yama, the God of death and justice, Bhima by Vayu, the God of wind, and Arjuna by Indra, God of all divine beings. Nakula and Sahadeva, the youngest Pandava twins were born to Madri, through the divine Ashwini twins.

Dhritharashtra had a hundred sons through his wife Gandhari. The eldest of these Kaurava princes was Duryodhana. Duryodhana felt no love for his five Pandava cousins. He made many unsuccessful attempts, along with his brother Dushashana, to kill the Pandava brothers. Kunti's eldest son Karna, whom she had cast away at birth, was brought up by a chariot driver in the palace and by a strange twist of fate joined hands with Duryodhana.



Dhritharashtra gave Yudhishtira one half of the Kuru Kingdom on his coming of age, since the Pandava Prince was the rightful heir to the throne that his father Pandu had vacated. Yudhishtira ruled from his new capital Indraprastha, along with his brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Arjuna won the hand of Princess Draupadi, daughter of the King of Panchala, in a *swayamwara*, a marital contest in which princes fought for the hand of a fair damsel. In fulfilment of their mother Kunti's desire that the brothers would share everything equally, Draupadi became the wife of all five Pandava brothers.

Duryodhana persuaded Yudhishtira to join a gambling session, where his cunning uncle Sakuni defeated the Pandava King. Yudhishtira lost all that he owned - his kingdom, his brothers, his wife and himself, to Duryodhana. Dushashana shamed Draupadi in public by trying to disrobe her. The Pandava brothers and Draupadi were forced to go into exile for 14 years, with the condition that in the last year they should live incognito.

At the end of the 14 years, the Pandava brothers tried to reclaim their kingdom. In this effort they were helped by Krishna, the King of the Yadava clan, who is considered the eighth divine reincarnation of Vishnu. However, Duryodhana refused to yield even a needlepoint of land, and as a result, the Great War, the War of Mahabharata ensued. In this war, various rulers of the entire nation that is modern India aligned with one or the other of these two clans, the Kauravas or the Pandavas.

Krishna offered to join with either of the two clans. He said, 'One of you may have me unarmed. I will not take any part in the battle. The other may have my entire Yadava army.' The first offer was made to Duryodhana, who predictably chose the large and well-armed Yadava army, in preference to the unarmed Krishna. Arjuna joyfully and gratefully chose his friend and mentor Krishna to be his unarmed charioteer!

The armies assembled in the vast field of Kurukshetra, now in the state of Haryana in modern day India. All the Kings and Princes were related to one another, and were often on opposite sides. Facing the Kaurava army and his friends, relatives and teachers, Arjuna was overcome by remorse and guilt, and wanted to walk away from the battle.

Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is the content of the Bhagavad Gita. Krishna persuaded Arjuna to take up arms and vanquish his enemies. 'They are already dead,' says Krishna, 'all those who are facing you have been already killed by Me. Go ahead and do what you have to do. That is your duty. Do not worry about the outcome. Leave that to Me.'

The Gita is the ultimate practical teaching on the inner science of spirituality. It is not as some scholars incorrectly claim, a promotion of violence. It is about the impermanence of the mind, body, and the need to destroy the mind, ego and logic.

Sanjaya, King Dhritharashtra's charioteer, presents Gita in eighteen chapters to the blind king. All the Kaurava Princes as well as all their commanders such as Bhishma,



Drona and Karna were killed in battle. The five Pandava brothers survived as winners and became the rulers of the combined kingdom.

This dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna is a dialogue between man and God or *nara* and *Narayana* as they are termed in Sanskrit. Arjuna's questions and doubts are those of each one of us. The answers of the Divine, Krishna, transcend time and space. Krishna's message is as valid today as it was on that fateful battlefield some thousands of years ago.

Nithyananda explains the inner metaphorical meaning of Mahabharata thus:

'The Great War of Mahabharata is the fight between the positive and negative thoughts of the mind, called the *samskaras*. Positive thoughts are the Pandava princes and the negative thoughts are the Kaurava princes. Kurukshetra or the battlefield is the body. Arjuna is the individual consciousness and Krishna is the enlightened Master.

The various commanders who led the Kaurava army represent the major blocks that the individual consciousness faces in its journey to enlightenment. Bhishma represents parental and societal conditioning. Drona represents the conditioning from teachers who provide knowledge including spiritual guidance. Karna represents the restrictive influence of good deeds such as charity and compassion, and finally Duryodhana represents the ego, which is the last to fall.

Parental and societal conditionings have to be overcome by rebelling against conventions. This is why traditionally

those seeking the path of enlightenment are required to renounce the world as *sannyasin* and move away from civilization. This conditioning does not die as long as the body lives, but its influence drops.

Drona represents all the knowledge one imbibes and the teachers one encounters, who stop short of being able to take us through to the ultimate flowering of enlightenment. It is difficult to give them up since one feels grateful to them. This is where the enlightened master steps in and guides us.

Karna is the repository of all good deeds and it is his good deeds that stand in the way of his own enlightenment. Krishna has to take the load of Karna's *punya*, his meritorious deeds, before he could be liberated. The enlightened Master guides one to drop one's attachment to good deeds arising out of what are perceived to be charitable and compassionate intentions. He also shows us that the quest for and experience of enlightenment is the ultimate act of compassion that one can offer to the world.

Finally one reaches Duryodhana, one's ego, the most difficult to conquer. One needs the full help of the Master here. It is subtle work and even the Master's help may not be obvious, since at this point, sometimes the ego makes one disconnect from the Master as well.

The Great War was between one hundred eighty million people - one hundred ten million on the Kaurava side representing our negative *samskaras* - stored memories - and seventy million on the Pandava side



representing our positive *samskaras* – stored memories - and it lasted eighteen days and nights. The number eighteen has a great mystical significance. It essentially signifies our ten senses that are made up of *gnanendriya* - the five senses of perception like taste, sight, smell, hearing and touch, and *karmendriya* - the five senses initiating action like speech, bodily movements etc., added to our eight kinds of thoughts like lust, greed etc. All eighteen need to be dropped for Self-realization.

Mahabharata is not just an epic story. It is not merely the fight between good and evil. It is the dissolution of both positive and negative *samskaras* that reside in our body-mind system, which must happen for the ultimate liberation. It is a tale of the process of enlightenment.

Mahabharata is a living legend. Bhagavad Gita is the manual for enlightenment.

Like Arjuna many thousand years ago, you are here in a dialogue with a living enlightened Master in this book. This is a tremendous opportunity to resolve all questions and clear all doubts with the Master's words.

Introduction

In this series, a young enlightened Master, Paramahansa Nithyananda comments on the Bhagavad Gita.

Many hundreds of commentaries of the Gita have been written over the years. The earliest commentaries were by the great spiritual masters such as Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, some thousand years ago. In recent times, great masters such as Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharishi have spoken from the Gita extensively. Many others have written volumes on this great scripture.



Nithyananda's commentary on the Bhagavad Gita is not just a literary translation and a simple explanation of that translation. He takes the reader through a world tour while talking about each verse. It is believed that each verse of the Gita has seven levels of meaning. What is commonly rendered is the first level meaning. Here, an enlightened master takes us beyond the common into the uncommon, with equal ease and simplicity.

To read Nithyananda's commentary on the Gita is to obtain an insight that is rare. It is not mere reading; it is an experience; it is a meditation.

Sankara, the great master philosopher said:

'A little reading of the Gita, a drop of Ganga water to drink, remembering Krishna once in a while, all this will ensure that you have no problems with the God of Death.'

Editors of these volumes of Bhagavad Gita have expanded upon the original discourses delivered by Nithyananda through further discussions with Him. For ease of understanding for English speaking readers, and to cater to their academic interest, the original Sanskrit verses in their English translation have been included as an appendix in this book.

This reading is meant to help every individual in daily life as well as in the endeavour to realize the Ultimate Truth. It creates every possibility to attain *nithyananda*, eternal bliss!

Swami Picture

Sincerity: Straight Way to Liberation

In the seventeenth chapter, Krishna straightaway gives the methodology or technique to imbibe whatever He speaks in *Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga*, the Yoga of Discerning the Three-Fold Faith. After all the words that Krishna expressed in earlier chapters, no new teaching is given here. All that Krishna has spoken and taught so far is a prelude to what He is speaking now. Here, Krishna speaks about sincerity.

Let me explain the meaning of the word *shraddha*. Please understand that



shraddha is not faith; always the word *shraddha* is translated as faith. That is not correct.

No! *Shraddha* means faith plus the courage to experiment with the truth. *Shraddha* means faith plus the courage to experiment with what we believe in. With *shraddha* we will never fail. Understand that there is a possibility that we may fail with faith. When we have faith without the courage to experiment with the truth, it is like going to a restaurant, reading the menu and then just leaving. We miss eating. We never taste the food. We never experience it. However, when we have *shraddha* with sincerity there is no chance of missing the truth. A person never misses when he has *shraddha* with sincerity.

Lord Krishna explains and now puts all His emphasis on *shraddha*. After sixteen chapters of teachings, He has nothing new to add. He has said whatever can be said. He has explained all the seven layers of energy. In the fourteenth chapter, He started with *Guna Traya Vibhaga* - the three *gunas* (attributes) of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Then in the *Purushottama Yoga* He explained the causal layer and the engrams or engraved memories. The deeper layers of the cosmic and *nirvanic* bodies are explained in the sixteenth chapter.

Krishna elaborates on the attributes of divine and demon, the ego or no ego, 'you' or 'me'. He clarifies whether our life should be centered on the attitude of 'me, me, me' or the attitude of 'you, you, you'. The root cause of our identity that separates us from our core, which is divine, is explained in the sixteenth chapter.

Now Krishna comes to the seventeenth chapter, *Shraddha Traya Vibhaga*. Nothing more needs to be added. Whatever can be said has been expressed. Now all we need is *shraddha*. If somebody has had a good feast, just like 'house full', his stomach is also full. All he needs is an antacid, 'Digene'. Throughout the chapters Lord Krishna has given Arjuna a beautiful spiritual feast. All Arjuna needs is 'Digene' to digest the whole thing and enjoy. This chapter is 'Digene'. The whole emphasis is on *shraddha*: honesty, truthfulness and straightforwardness.

We may question, 'Why would He devote one full chapter for *shraddha*?' Please understand that we invariably miss enlightenment because of this subject, *shraddha*. Let me be very clear, it is not that we don't know the truth that Lord Krishna speaks. We know whatever Lord Krishna speaks of and all that He has spoken so far. We know it all. It's not that we don't know. Yet why have we not become Krishna?

We miss one thing - *shraddha*. That's the only thing we need. Our problem is not that we don't know. Our problem is that we know too much and we are unable to digest it.

Swami Vivekananda says beautifully that instead of knowing the whole library, we should just know five concepts. And experiment with these five concepts with *shraddha*. Let the five concepts become your life. That is enough. Nothing else is necessary. Instead of having the whole library in your head, have the five concepts in your heart. Here, Krishna emphasizes the importance of *shraddha*: how *shraddha* and **only** *shraddha* can transform



your whole life. Understand, whatever you believe, if you have *shraddha*, if you have sincerity in the concept, you will achieve the ultimate. Even if you believe in atheism, there is no problem.

Many people have achieved God and attained the truth through the path of atheism. Buddha never spoke of God. He never spoke about God. Yet not only did He become enlightened, thousands attained enlightenment because of Buddha. In modern times,

J. Krishnamurthy did not mention God in his philosophy. He was a great, enlightened Master. He radiated enlightenment. In the same way, many other Masters, such as George Gurdjieff, became enlightened with no concept or idea of God. What you believe is not important. How intense you are is important.

People use the title *Mahatma* to describe Mahatma Gandhi because he was intense in whatever he believed in. He was sincere to the core. Whatever he believed in, he experimented with the truth of it. The title of his autobiography, *Experiments with Truth*, depicts his life. He experimented with the truth. He allowed the truth to work on him. He worked with the truth. Working with the truth is what I call sincerity. Sincerity is not just listening, reading or believing in the truth. Sincerity is working with the truths. It is straightaway executing them, experimenting with them and having the courage to play with these truths.

Both meditation and gambling require courage. We need courage for gambling. And we also need courage for meditation. We have doubts. Meditation is the

ultimate gamble. With ordinary gambling, we gamble with money. In meditation we gamble with our ego. We gamble with our whole being. But one thing is for sure in the gamble of meditation: if we lose, we win. Only losers win in this game.

In ordinary gambling, the more we get, the more we win. In the gamble of meditation, when we put the ego at stake, we win the whole game. We put our whole ego at stake. Spiritual life needs courage. That is why Swami Vivekananda calls his spiritual disciples '*dheeraha*'. *Dheera* means someone who is courageous, who is courage personified.

We might ask, 'why do spiritual people need courage?' For spiritual life, don't we need to be silent? No! Spiritual life calls for courage. To experiment with these truths, we need courage. In the past sixteen chapters we have heard many different teachings, different understandings and so many different techniques. We have heard everything. All of this can help transform our life only if we have the courage to experiment with them. Otherwise they add more weight to our head; that's all.

Please understand that if we receive these teachings and store them in our head, we gain more head weight, nothing else. Now we think, 'I know the Gita.' However, we cannot merely read certain books, we must experiment with them. We need to experiment with Gita. We need to experience it.

For example, if we eat too much food and are unable to digest it, what happens? We vomit. We have a stomachache and vomit. Similarly, if we hear all these



things and we don't experience it, we will get a headache. We will catch people and vomit all these things on them. Please be very clear that unless we have sincerity, unless we experiment with these truths, listening to these truths is dangerous.

Now I am giving one more step. Here it says, 'If you don't practice, listening to these truths is dangerous.' We may ask, 'Why?' Because now, by and by, even after so many days of listening or reading these great truths, we will start hallucinating that we know, without knowing. That is the most dangerous game.

Never, never, never get caught in this game!

Spiritual life needs courage, sincerity, and the consciousness of *dheeraha*.

A small story:

The great Master, Dakshinamurthy Swamigal, lived in Tamilnadu, South India, near a place called Thiruvaroor. Let me share a historical incident from his life.

A poet from the king's court met Dakshinamurthy Swamigal and was inspired by his presence. Consequently, the poet wrote one thousand songs in the *bharani* style in the saint's honor. *Bharani* is a special style of poetry involving one thousand verses. The rule is that only someone who shows courage and power and kills one thousand elephants in war is qualified to have such a song written about him. Here, this poet was so inspired by the Master's

presence that he simply wrote the songs about this saint on the spot.

The king also considered himself to be *bharani*. I don't know if he killed one thousand elephants in war. He may have just paid a poet to write one thousand songs about him!

Suddenly, one day in court, out of ego and pride, the king announced, 'I am the only *bharani* in this whole country, in this whole region!' One of his poets stood up and said, 'No king, you are wrong. Dakshinamurthy Swamigal is also a *bharani*. One of your court poets has sung a *bharani* about him.'

The king's ego was hurt. He said, 'What? Who is this person deserving *bharani*? Bring him here.' The poet said, 'No, no, he is a beggar. He will not come.' Beggars can never be forced. We can never force homeless people. We can force anybody to do what we want, except a homeless person because he has no desire. We can't do anything about him. As long as someone has some desire, he obeys the social system. However, we can't do anything about a homeless person. He does not care for name, home, fame or security. He does not care about anything. We can do nothing. We cannot bind him. In this case, this man was a beggar and a *swami*. They could not bring him to the king.

The king felt deeply offended. He said, 'What? For a beggar, *bharani*! What fool sang the songs? Call him to me right now.'

The poet was summoned to the court. The king



said, 'Fool, how dare you sing *bharani* for a beggar.' The poet replied, 'O King, please forgive me. Before you say anything, before you abuse that Master, it would be nice if you would go to see him.'

The king said, 'What kind of advice are you giving me? Tomorrow morning your head will be cut off.'

That was the king's usual trend, straightaway violence. Only foolish people immediately express violence. When they can't behave in an intelligent way, when they don't know the truth and they don't have enough energy to convince the other person of the truth, they take to the sword.

On the other hand, throughout the history of Buddhism or Hinduism, they never converted anyone with the sword. They had intelligence. They converted through logic, analysis and convincing the other person of the truth.

For example, great Masters like Sankara and Mandana Mishra had different views on a particular subject, still they did not fight with each other. Sankara did not say, 'If you don't convert to *Vedanta*, I will kill you.' They sat together and analyzed what they knew. It was a loving discussion. It was a beautiful thing. Sankara and Mandana Mishra sorted out their differences with deep respect by discussing without rancor.

The person who acted as judge in the discussion was Mandana Mishra's wife. What a beautiful, loving atmosphere it must have been! Can you believe that the

wife of one of the competitors was the judge? Never. And here, Sankara appointed Mandana Mishra's wife as the judge. Bharati judged the discussion between Sankara and Mandana Mishra. And finally, Bharati passed judgment in favor of Sankara. She said that Sankara won the debate. The whole thing happened out of love. There was no violence, no cutting, no killing, nothing. It was just a simple discussion.

Throughout the history of eastern religions, there was never any cutting or killing. They never converted through the sword because they did not believe in killing. They had enough intelligence to express the concept. And one more thing, the loser automatically joined the group of the person who expressed the truth more clearly.

When Sankara convinced Mandana Mishra, Mishra dropped everything and surrendered his life to Sankara. He became a disciple of Sankara and took the spiritual name Sureshwaracharya. He followed the path of Sankara's teachings. People who use the sword prove that they are idiots. Because they lack intelligence, they must attack. Many religions convert people through the sword because they do not have enough clarity or courage to share the truth. We can never achieve anything by the sword. Only destruction is possible through the sword, never construction.

The king, foolish as he was, straightaway said, 'Kill him. Tomorrow morning the poet should be killed.' The poet replied, 'I have no problem. I have experienced truth through this Master. I am ready to



die; however, if you are really intelligent, meet this Master at least once. Don't punish me until you have seen him. Then I will be ready to die.'

The king agreed, 'All right, I will see him. If he is not a real *bharani*, we will kill him also.'

The king set off to meet the Master with all his paraphernalia: *ratha* (chariots), *pada* (foot soldiers), *gaja* (elephants), *sena* (armies) and all his warriors. Kings always travel with their paraphernalia because they lose their identity without their paraphernalia. In contrast, Dakshinamurthy Swamigal was a *paramahansa*, an enlightened Master. Masters always live by themselves. They do not need any paraphernalia. This Master was an *avadhoot*, which means he never wore clothes. The king found him sitting under a big banyan tree. Without any paraphernalia, this beggar was sitting under the banyan tree and the king arrived with his paraphernalia to see him.

So this was the scene: this simple beggar sat in a corner without any clothes. He was merged in bliss and peace and completely lost in Existence, in *brahmajnana* (knowledge of Brahman). He sat in intense silence and peace. This silence penetrated anyone in his presence. The king appeared with his warriors and entire army to confront this *yogi* who sat in profound silence.

The king jumped down from his chariot and advanced towards the Master. The Master did not

move. There was no movement in him even after seeing the king and his army and hearing all the commotion. He opened his eyes and looked straight into the king's eyes. It was the first time someone looked straight into the king's eyes. The king had always looked at others and they had always put their heads down. For the first time somebody looked straight into the eyes of the king. After a few seconds, the king put his head down. The king clearly felt something happening inside his being. He felt like a mere beggar in the Master's presence. He did not know how to act. He did not know how to react. It was a strange situation. He was at a loss. He could not decide what to do. He felt overwhelmed.

Dakshinamurthy Swamigal signaled the king to sit down. There were no words from the Master. He simply made a sign asking the king to sit. All the ministers and the army dropped their weapons and also sat in silence. In ten minutes the whole army was sitting down. It is impossible to make an army sit. Even the leader of the army can't make the army sit. That is why they say we must continuously give a job to the devil. If we don't give any job to the devil, it will eat us. We cannot make the army keep quiet. Here the whole army sat in silence.

One hour passed. Then two hours were over; three hours; then the evening also got over; one day over. The Master, the king and the whole army sat in silence. Not a single word was exchanged. There



were no instructions, nothing. They did not even greet each other. They were merely sitting. Two days over, three days over. Now the Master thought, 'This is too much. The poor guy and his entire army have been simply sitting for three days without food and without toilet visits. These guys must return to their kingdom, to the palace. The king must take care of the country. He has been just sitting here for three days.

The Master opened his eyes and said, 'Now you can go.' The king fell flat at the Master's feet, did *namaskar* (obeisance) and came out of the forest.

Then the king summoned the poet and said, 'What thousand elephants? You may sing for the Master praises for the one who has killed ten thousand elephants!'

The poet made a beautiful statement, 'Killing ten thousand elephants is easy. It is not a big deal. You just need the weapons and you simply kill; however, killing one's mind is a real achievement.'

This Master had killed his mind. Not only had Dakshinamurthy Swamigal killed his own mind, he could kill anybody else's mind if they sat in his presence. Killing ten thousand elephants doesn't take courage, but killing your mind requires courage.

All we need for the real spiritual life is courage and sincerity to experiment with the truth. We typically lack that quality. We listen to everything. Wherever there are

discourses and lectures, we go and listen to anyone who speaks. We read all the books. When it comes to facing the reality of putting this knowledge to test, there is no action. 'For practical purposes, Master, we must have our possessions. Otherwise how can we survive in this world?...' You just compromise.

Compromising is cowardice. Please understand that the person who compromises *never* experiences anything in his life. Not only the spiritual life, even in the very life. We can never experience life itself.

Sincerity to experience a single truth is enough. Nothing else is necessary. We don't need to do big, big things. Please be very clear, we can't call somebody a big person if he does something big. What he does is unimportant; *how* he does it is important.

As an example, the great saint Nammalvar, who lived in Tamilnadu, made garlands for Vishnu throughout his life. He did nothing else. He picked flowers from a garden, made garlands and gave it to God. All he did was make garlands. He became enlightened. So many enlightened Masters did not do big, big things. They did small things in a big way. They had a deep trust.

Another enlightened person did not even do that. He did not make garlands to offer God. Instead he threw a stone towards the Shiva *lingam* everyday. His name was Sakyanayanar (Sakya refers to the clan of the Buddha, and Nayanar is a name for devotees of Shiva). Somehow he became a Buddhist monk. Because he was a Buddhist monk, he could not worship the Shiva *lingam* in public.



Yet he had tremendous respect and devotion for Shiva.

In Buddhism, at least one son from every family is given to the monastery at a young age. They bring him up and make him a Buddhist monk. Like that, Sakyanayanar was given away to a monastery. Still, he had a deep devotion to Shiva. Everyday he went near the Shiva temple. It was not even a regular temple, just a small Shiva *lingam* under a tree. From a distance he took a stone, visualized it as a flower and threw the stone at the Shiva *lingam*. If someone observed him and asked, 'What are you doing?' he said, 'I am only throwing stones at the Shiva *lingam*, throwing stones towards Shiva.' He would throw these stones and then leave that place.

One day when he threw the stone, an old man suddenly appeared and asked, 'What are you doing?' The monk replied, 'I am only throwing stones at the *lingam*.' The old man said, 'No, the way in which you throw shows your devotion. You may be throwing stones, but the way in which you are throwing shows devotion. Tell me who are you?'

Sakyanayanar replied, 'Somehow I was born in a Buddhist family, yet I am deeply devoted to Shiva. Everyday I come and offer my being to him by throwing a stone. Immediately the old man turned around, gave *darshan* (vision) as Shiva and blessed him with enlightenment.

Understand that what we do is unimportant. Even if we sweep our home, even if we just clean our house, it is

okay as long as we do it with complete and intense sincerity in that moment. Live in the moment.

Understand that spiritual practice does not mean you need to go into a deep forest, hold your nose ten times, and breathe this way and that way. You will only torture yourself. No. Do anything, but do it with intensity and sincerity. May you have courage to express whatever you believe. May you have courage to work and experiment with whatever you believe. Whatever your beliefs, have the courage to experiment.

Don't bother whether the truth you believe is the ultimate truth. You will never know whether it is ultimate unless you have the courage to experiment with it. Without experimenting, you cannot conclude. If you conclude without experimenting, that is prejudice. You cannot conclude without experimenting. All you need is courage to experiment with the truth that you believe.

Tamil has three words for *satya* (truth). One word is *vaaymai*, which means speaking the truth through the mouth. Another word is *unmai*, which is speaking the truth through your mind or heart. The third beautiful word is *maimai*, which means living the truth through your body.

In Tamil, '*mai*' means body. Truth means living the truth through the body. All of us understand speaking the truth through the mouth and speaking the truth through the mind. However, what does 'living the truth through the body' mean? We have never heard this before.



That is where we miss the boat. We continuously think about the truth. We go on contemplating the truth from morning till night. We speak what we think is truth. Nonetheless, we forget one important thing: executing the truth in life, living the truth in life. That is where we miss. Living the truth in life is the essence.

Patanjali gives *satya* as the first instruction in his *Ashtanga Yoga*. In the set of five disciplines called *yama*, the first discipline is *satya*. This *satya* refers to truth in thought, word and action. It is *vaaymai*, *unmai* and *maimai*, all three combined.

People ask me how difficult it is to practice one by one all eight steps of *Ashtanga Yoga* before reaching the final point of *samadhi*. I explain that Patanjali did not outline these as eight steps. These were eight limbs or eight paths to *samadhi*, enlightenment.

When practiced sincerely, any part or even a part of a part can lead to enlightenment. In reality we cannot practice *satya*, unless we are enlightened. We become aware of *satya*, that ultimate truth, upon enlightenment, and not before.

The sincerity with which we practice leads us into enlightenment.

That is why I have said time and again that it is not necessary to have an enlightened Master as our *guru* to become enlightened. Any Master whom we follow sincerely can lead to enlightenment. Even if we truly believe a stone idol will deliver us into liberation, it will enlighten us.

Our approach, our conviction, our courage and our trust elevate us, not the state of our Master.

Shraddha is total conviction in what we are doing. There should be no doubt in our mind about the path that we are following and why. All great Masters had undivided focus in whatever they did. They never swerved from their chosen path no matter what challenges and problems they faced, including threats to their lives.

Shraddha will also deliver whatever else we need, including material benefits as well. Here Krishna speaks of spiritual enhancement. We can use the same technique to achieve whatever else we need. *Shraddha* works equally well in material pursuits. That is what I call Quantum Spirituality. Spirituality is not separate from materialism. Spiritual wellbeing is not divorced from material wellbeing. Material wellbeing is part of overall spiritual wellbeing.

Be very clear, spirituality is not about renouncing everything and going off to a forest or a mountain. If we do this without cleansing our mind, we only live our fantasies in the forest or on the mountain. We need not go anywhere to practice spirituality. We can stay where we are and enjoy whatever we have, without regrets and guilt. All we must do is give up and renounce our fantasies about what we do not have.

To accomplish this, to focus on what we have, to enjoy what we have and to renounce greed and expectation requires courage, determination, single-minded focus and discipline. It requires *shraddha*.



Understand that the ultimate step or the straight way to enlightenment is honesty and sincerity towards our beliefs. Whatever we believe is not the issue. We must have the courage to experiment.

Q: Master, you said that spirituality is no different from materialism. This is not what I have been taught. I shall be grateful if you can explain.

I define spirituality or spiritual wellbeing as the combined wellbeing of body, mind and being. To be spiritually well means you are well physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and materially as well as being fully content with all that you have and all that you experience.

There can be no spirituality in discontent. Unfortunately, all of us are discontent with whatever we have. Whatever we possess, we seek something more, something different. Discontentment is the cancer of our being.

For most of us, there can be no wellbeing without material wellbeing. We need to be comfortable and respected in society. If we transcend that need for name, fame and wealth and seek the life of a monk, it is fine. On the other hand, if we run away from our environment because we are uncomfortable with our poverty or social disrespect, that mindset and discontent follows us wherever we go. Going into the forest will not solve our problem.

Ancient Hindu mythology contains graphic descriptions of how divine beings disturb the meditation of earth-bound sages. The divine beings, the demigods, do not want competition. Hence they divert and disturb the focus of these sages by sending celestial nymphs to create lust in them. For this reason, we have graphic visions of meditating sages trying to cover their eyes as the nymphs dance before them. Usually artistic representations show their fingers spread out and they are peeping!

There is no need for nymphs. Our mind is enough. If we go into the forest to meditate with a disturbed mind, we carry that disturbance from the home to the forest and disturb it. No one needs to send women to disturb us. If it were true that the demigods sent beautiful nymphs to disturb meditators, half the world would be into meditation. It would be a great motivator!

Spirituality is easier for rich people and people in power. They discovered that wealth, fame, and power are transitory. They have experienced the depression of success. They only need to understand that there is something permanent beyond wealth, name and fame.

That is why there were many *rajarishis* in the Vedic culture. These kings were also sages, enlightened Masters. These were the true Masters, not those who sat in forests. These kings, such as Janaka, ruled their kingdom with an undisturbed mind. As householders many of you find your life unbearable. Imagine the plight of a king who must manage millions of householders. Yet, these kings ruled with non-attachment.



Such people do exist even today. Many have created wealth for themselves and others and live in a spiritual mode of 'you'. This attitude separates the spiritually minded person from the non-spiritually minded person. Krishna talked about this in the previous chapter. The shift from 'I' to 'you' makes us spiritual. It is not the shift from enjoyment of material things to discarding them. Poverty does not make us spiritual or enlightened. If that were the case, half the world would be enlightened.

This is why I say time and again that to evolve spiritually we do not need to renounce anything that we have. We need to renounce the attachment to what we have and renounce the fantasies we have about what we do not have.

As long as we are content and comfortable with our home, car, wife and children and we do not fantasize about someone else's home, car, wife and child, we will be spiritually well and happy.

Way to Worship

17.1 Arjuna said: What is the mode of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with sincerity, but without following the scriptural injunctions, O Krishna? Is it in the mode of goodness, aggression or ignorance?

Arjuna asks a beautiful question.

Arjuna asks: 'Krishna, those who discard the ordinances of the scriptures and perform sacrifices, what is their position? Is it *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*? What is the state of people who don't follow the instructions of the scriptures, the ancient books, and



instead worship according to their own beliefs? Is it *rajas*, *tamas* or *sattva*? Are they in a peaceful (*sattvic*) state, restless (*rajasic*) state or an ignorant (*tamasic*) state?

Worship can occur at many levels. Arjuna's question is based upon the three attributes or *gunas*. Worship is also dependent on our energy levels. Many people are comfortable worshipping at the physical level, the gross level, through techniques such as *puja*, going to temples to worship the deities, bathing in holy rivers, etc. From an energy point of view, these are linked to earth or *prithvi* energy and water or *apa* energy.

At another level of energy, one may perform fire sacrifices such as *yagna* or *homa*. These are related to *agni* or fire energy. Typically the energy of the fire is transferred to water pots or *tirtha kalasa* that are placed around the sacrificial fireplace. This water, which is energized by the ritual, is then poured over idols, or sprinkled over people or upon the earth to energize.

The energy of air or *vayu* can be accessed through breathing techniques such as *pranayama*. In the first nine verses of *Shiva Sutra*, Lord Shiva explains about these types of techniques to Devi, His disciple.

It is possible to access the etheric energy or *akasha* through meditation, though this requires understanding and awareness.

Each form of worship or sacrifice is based upon one's aptitude and inclination. Each of these is guided by scriptural instructions as to how to perform the worship, when and where, etc.

Arjuna asks, 'How important is it to follow these instructions? What happens when one follows one's own inclinations and worships?'

This is an interesting question. A saint in Tamilnadu worshipped Shiva with such intensity that he cut out his eyes and placed them on the Shiva *lingam*. Other Masters placed all kinds of material at the altar including raw meat. Ramakrishna placed a thread under the nose of Kali's idol to check whether She was breathing before he offered Her the ritual food.

Many Masters have followed their inclination when worshipping their *ishta devata*, favorite deity. Scriptures never stood in their way of worship. However, these Masters were focused on what they were doing. They had *shraddha*.

Arjuna's query is in this connection.

Q: Throughout the history of mankind there has been strife based upon one's scriptural understanding and differences in understanding. You say all religions have the same fundamentals. Then why is there always this strife and violence?

Religions had the same fundamentals when they remembered the teachings of the founding Masters. They have the same fundamentals even today with a few disciples who still vibrate with the energy of the Masters' words.

All great Masters had just a few disciples. Jesus had twelve. Ramakrishna had twelve and Ramana Maharshi



had about the same. Only Buddha had many more. But these disciples sat with Him face-to-face to imbibe and internalize Him. Buddha forbade any kind of worship. He was remembered through the symbol of the *Bodhi* tree for 500 years following His death. Then the corruption started. They built temples for Buddha. The followers built temples for the being that denied God and temples. How can we call such people disciples, devotees or followers?

Moses met God face-to-face and received the Ten Commandments because of his own experience. Moses had the ability to transmit that experience to a few whom he contacted personally and these people believed him. Beyond that, the Ten Commandments merely became a rulebook to others. It became another set of manuals.

The Ten Commandments as well as the other rules and regulations that followed Moses were no longer the experience and understanding of people upon whom these were forced. Founding Masters never force anyone. They allowed whoever was inclined to follow them. That is why they had few followers. People who followed them lost the meaning of their compassion and merely adhered to their spoken word. Masters spoke from their loving being and followers acted from their foolish heads.

Religions are the rigid heartless structures built by unloving followers. They thrust their partially understood wisdom upon others using fear and greed as their weapons. The wisdom of the Masters must be understood in full. Either it is fully internalized or not understood at all. There is no midway point.

Love is the genesis of all teachings of these great Masters. Compassion was their sign. Unfortunately, religions lost their ability to love. They say they love. They love whoever accepts their religion. This is not love. This is bigotry.

Love is the original religion. It is the root of all spirituality. All other religions are offshoots. Love is the root; all other religions are like leaves or at the most, small branches. Even the greatest religions, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism are big branches, but they are visible.

We can see churches and the temples and we can read the scriptures. Love has no temple and love has no scripture. It is like the roots hidden underneath: it is underground, yet it is the nourishment. Without it, the whole tree dies. Love goes on creating more and more leaves, more and more foliage, more flowers, and more fruits. Love is the original religion. Compassion of the founding Masters is pure love.

We cling to the branches when we follow religions. Branches may look attractive but they are not the source. A Buddha, a Jesus, a Krishna, goes to the roots; from there, he experiences his own reality of God. And the only way to experience God is to go to the roots of life, of Existence.

Find the roots. Be more loving and you will enter the invisible temple. A root contains all the trees in this world and a dewdrop contains all the oceans because the dewdrop contains the secret of all water.



If we understand the dewdrop, we understand everything in the oceans on earth or on other planets. We understand water. Water cannot be anything else; its chemical composition will be the same no matter where it is. That composition is ingrained in the smallest particle.

Man is an atom of love. He contains God because he contains the composition. The composition of man is not physical, chemical or even psychological. Otherwise we would have understood it. The composition of man is spiritual. Nobody can tell us what it is. We must experience it on our own. All other knowledge is transferable: physical, chemical, scientific and psychological. All such knowledge is easily transferable. Only spiritual knowledge is not transferable.

The Master can give a few hints, just hints; and these too will be vague. Then we must find our way carefully, cautiously. Love is just a hint, but if we follow love slowly, very slowly we will be surprised that God becomes more and more of a reality. He is no more a thought, no more an idea, but almost something that we can touch. The deeper we go into love, the closer we come to God. The day we dissolve into love we have arrived home.

Love is the secret of all religion. In spite of this, people are lost in logic and theology. Is logic about God? Theology is as far away from religion as anything can be. There can be no logic about God, only love. God is in poetry, music and in dance, but not in logic.

God is not an idea and cannot be arrived at through logical processes. God is an interior experience, so deeply interior that we must go there alone, absolutely alone.

Bliss is possible for those who know how to love and trust. It is open to those who know how to surrender, how to be loyal and how to be obedient. Bliss is possible when our heart says 'Yes' and when 'No' completely disappears from our being. Because 'No' is darkness, whereas 'Yes' is light. 'No' is ego whereas 'Yes' is egolessness.

'No' is the way of the unconscious man. 'Yes' is the way of the awakened one. Renunciation is a discipline of saying 'Yes' totally to all that is and forgetting the language of 'No'. Then great harmony arises. All conflict disappears. All conflict is because of our saying 'No'. 'No' is fight, war. 'Yes' is love. 'Yes' is deep accord with the totality. Bliss is another name of that accord, that harmony.

One attains bliss if one deserves it, if one is worthy. The way to deserve it is to dissolve, not to be. To be is a hindrance. The ego is the root of all misery. When the ego is absent, bliss reaches us from every nook and corner of Existence, as if it were just waiting for the ego to disappear.

Ego is a closed state of consciousness: all windows and doors are closed. We then lead an insulated, encapsulated life. Ego surrounds us like a capsule. Ego is like the egg; there is not even a small window to allow anything to



enter. Ego is fearful. It closes itself due to fear and shrinks into itself. That is how we create misery.

Bliss is being in the flow with Existence, to be totally with it. Ego is like frozen ice and egolessness is liquid water. Only when we are liquid, do we become part of the ocean. Then we don't have any private goal or destination. Each moment is blissful, incredibly ecstatic. The mind cannot comprehend or conceive it. Mind is part of the ego. It knows how to close; however, it does not know how to open up.

To love means to surrender. It means to renounce. It means that our whole effort will be to open up to Existence, to the flowers, to the bees and to the stars. How do we open to this beautiful music that fills the whole of Existence? How do we open up to this celebration that goes on and on - flowers dancing in the wind and trees enjoying the wind and the stars, always in a state of bliss? Except for man, everything is in harmony.

Man falls out of harmony because he has consciousness.

Consciousness can do two things: it can create ego and it can create egolessness. If it creates ego, we live in hell. If it creates egolessness, we are in paradise. The whole world is in paradise without knowing it. When man enters paradise, he enters with full knowing. That is the grandeur and beauty of man. And that is the danger also. Because out of thousands of people, only once in a

while does someone enter. Others simply keep falling into the trap of the ego.

Be egoless and all the grace of God is yours.

Bliss is by the grace of God. We have forgotten who we are. We are emperors but we dream that we are beggars. We have the whole kingdom of God within our being yet we continue to beg for rubbish, for junk. We keep collecting junk not knowing that we have infinite, inexhaustible treasures within our being. We are oceans, yet we are thirsty because we have become disconnected from our own Selves.

We have become disconnected from our Selves because of our personality. We have become personality but individuality is what we really are. We must move from personality to individuality, from the false, the pseudo, to the real and authentic. The search for the authentic is what surrender is about. And it is easily possible, because no matter how disconnected we are, no matter how we have forgotten it and no matter how long we have forgotten it, it can be remembered in a single moment and immediately we become connected. Faith is the connector.

Religion is belief, not faith. Ordinarily faith and belief are used synonymously. They are not synonyms. They are antonyms. They are opposites. The person of belief is not a person of faith. The person of faith knows nothing of belief. Belief is borrowed from others. Faith is our own experience. Belief is of the head. Faith is of the heart. Belief is close to logic. Faith is of the heart. Belief simply means that we have



repressed our doubt; we have covered a dark hole of doubt with a beautiful belief, but it is there nevertheless.

This is not the way to eliminate doubt. In fact, it is more dangerous to cover it because we become unaware of it and it spreads inside us like a hidden cancer. It is better to be aware of doubt. Then we can do something about it.

To forget it and cover it up is dangerous. It can spread all over our being. Christians, Hindus or Muslims, all of us are believers. Deep down there is doubt. Their beliefs don't make them spiritual.

Up until now this has been history. The beliefs of people have shed more blood on earth than anything else. Christians destroying Muslims, Muslims killing Hindus and so on, so forth. It seems that every religious person is at someone else's neck, ready to kill and murder. The most unspiritual people have been the so-called religious leaders. They kill in the name of God.

Beliefs never make anybody spiritual. They make Muslims and Christians; however, they do not make anybody spiritual. Beliefs simply cover up our face with beautiful slogans while we remain ugly deep down inside. Nevertheless, people who believe in our beliefs, the fellow travelers, respect us. They worship us because they are in the same paper boat that is going to sink. But they support each other.

Someone once asked George Bernard Shaw, 'When there are millions of Christians, how can Christianity be wrong?' He retorted, 'If there are so many Christians, one-third of

humanity, how can they be right?' Truth has never been a quality of the crowds. Rarely has a man arisen, in spite of the crowd, against the crowd, and attained the peaks of truth.

Crowds always live in the valleys. And they help each other. They become props for each other. It helps to live with people who adhere to the same beliefs. It makes us feel protected and secure. Faith is different. There is no need to believe. Don't believe in anything written or spoken, including what I say and write. Live it, experiment with it, internalize it and experience it. When we experience it, it is no longer faith. Then it is trust. This trust alone liberates.

Don't Torture Me

17.2 The Supreme Lord said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three kinds: Goodness, aggression, and ignorance. Now hear about these from Me.

17.3 O Arjuna, the sincerity of each is in accordance with one's own natural disposition. One is known by one's sincerity. One can become whatever one wants to be.

17.4 Men in the nature of goodness worship the deities; those in the nature of aggression worship the demons and those in the nature of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits.



17.5, 6 Ignorant persons of demonic nature are those who practice severe austerities without following the prescription of the scriptures, who are full of hypocrisy and egotism, who are impelled by the force of desire and attachment and who senselessly torture the elements in their body and also Me who dwells within the body.

Krishna explains that how we worship depends upon our natural disposition, the *guna*, attributes that we are born with.

When we are born, we carry within us the *vasana*, the essence of the mental attitude from our past lives. These are the *prarabdha karma*, the *samskaras*, that drive our mental makeup and actions throughout our lives. These carried over *vasanas* determine the *gunas*, the attributes we are born with.

Many believe that there is an avenging angel who sits at the gates of paradise or hell, as the case may be, keeping accounts of all that we have done in our life. It is as if Saint Peter or Chitragupta waits to pounce on us and read out our balance sheet. Do we think they have no other work to do!

All these stories are creations of religious leaders, designed to control us out of fear and greed. Just as we relate fairy tales to our children to keep them quiet, these priests and scholars tell us these stories. Some fairy tales are really horror stories about witches and monsters that eat humans, especially young children. No wonder children become corrupted by fear with these stories fed to them at a susceptible age and at bedtime, a susceptible time.



Hell and heaven are merely stories. Our mind is our hell and heaven. We go through hell in this life, not after this life. The fear of what will happen, the guilt that religion imposes upon us, keeps us in hell. Once we let go of this guilt, we shift into heaven.

Our being, our undying spirit, keeps an account of every thought we have and every move that we make. There is no escape from this account keeper. When we reach the end of the road, when our body dies, the spirit plays back all that happened during the life and goes through the pains and pleasures. According to Krishna, the attitude or last thought with which we left our last life carries over to our next birth and the next body our spirit moves into.

Do not think that we can do whatever we want during our entire life, and then embrace some wonderfully good thoughts at that last breath before we die. Not so! However much we try, we cannot be money-minded all our life and switch to chanting 'Krishna, Krishna' as we take our last breath. What we have been all our life takes hold as we leave.

If all our life we were behind money, we will only chant dollars and cents as we die. Our *vasana* will be about making money and that will be the attitude with which we take birth in the next body. Our spirit looks for a body in an environment that fosters the growth of the *vasana* with which it left the previous body.

If the *vasana* is to make money, it chooses a family, location, and culture in which it can be reborn in order

to be wealthy. If the *vasana* is to serve people, it similarly chooses an appropriate family, location and culture to make this happen.

Hence we are born with a natural inclination based upon our last life and *vasana*. Depending on the *vasana*, we may have the attribute of *sattva*, goodness, *rajas*, aggression, or *tamas*, ignorance as our driving nature.

All societies, religions, faiths, castes or creeds are simply translations of these basic natures or traits and mental conditionings. They are nothing more. After taking birth on planet Earth, we adopt the nature into which we are born that is according to our past *vasana*. In our new birth, we settle into a religious belief dictated by that natural attribute.

However, we do not realize that we are a part of the Whole, a fragment of Existence or the Supreme Consciousness. We do not realize that our true nature transcends all material associations and conditionings. When this relationship with Existence is forgotten, we give energy to our associations in material life. We develop allegiance to some religion. Such an existence is purely materialistic and the association itself is artificial. To come out of this, we must break out of our material bonds and enter the path of Self-realization.

Shraddha here refers to the faith that comes out of good work. Yet pure goodness goes beyond all material acts. It is transcendental. Hence there is nothing like fully good, completely good in material life.



Please be very clear, only a person whose nature is pure goodness can connect with the Divine, with Existence.

An enlightened Master goes beyond the three *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. He transcends these attributes because he burns out all his *vasanas*, *samskaras* and *karmas*, of which these *gunas* are a product. An enlightened Master has no bondages. He is not bound by desires, greed, fear or attachment. He is beyond the illusion of material existence. He dissolves into the Cosmic Energy when he chooses to leave the body and it perishes.

When the energy of an enlightened Master is reborn on this planet, when it takes human form, it is imbued with some *sattva guna*, since all beings in physical form must by nature have an attribute.

Such a being is an incarnation, an *avatar*. Upon realization of the being's enlightened state, that *avatar* reverts to its transcendental state of being without attributes or *guna*. In some cases, the *avatar* continues upon this planet to fulfill the mission that *Parashakti* has sent that energy to accomplish. In other cases, upon realization of its true nature, the energy reverts to its original cosmic state.

The classic examples of these two different events are Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Both were enlightened Masters who reappeared upon this planet on the mission of *Parashakti*. Ramakrishna continued after realization of his state of enlightenment. However, Vivekananda, as

predicted by his Master Ramakrishna, left his mortal body once He realized his enlightened state.

If a *tamasic* person becomes enlightened, he goes through the stages of *rajas* and *sattva* before the realization happens. The transition may happen quickly but it must happen. Valmiki was a robber who terrorized and killed. His nature was deep *tamas* with a layer of *rajas*. When he caught hold of Narada and demanded money, Narada offered him the name Narayana. The moment the robber uttered the name of the Lord he was transformed. He shifted to *sattva* and became the enlightened Master who wrote the Ramayana epic.

Krishna says our style of worship depends upon our nature. A person established in *sattva* worships *devatas* (deities, gods) who are peaceful. A person established in *rajas* worships *yakshas* (supernatural beings) and *rakshasa* (demons). A person established in *tamas* (ignorance) worships *pretas* (spirits of the dead) and *bhootas* (ghosts).

Please understand, whatever is your ideal, whatever you hold in high esteem, whoever you follow, what you worship, that is your nature and that decides your quality. I tell youngsters how to decide their quality. Observe their rooms. Do they have a Swami Vivekananda poster or an actor's poster? Based on that, we can decide their hero.

If we have Swami Vivekananda's photo on the wall, he is our hero. We continuously think of him. We want to become like him. We want to live like him. If we have an actor's photo, we want our hairstyle to be like his.



We want to look like him. We want to dress like him and we'll work out to look like him. We do everything to become that actor.

If we worship the right ideal, we are established in *sattva*. If we have Swami Vivekananda's poster in our room, we are in *sattva*. If we have an actor's photo or poster in our room, we are in *rajas* and *tamas*. *Tamas* is like watching a violent fighting show. Everyday the shows go on, fighting with each other, beating and kicking like monkeys. I can never understand this. Fighting is a perversion.

Please understand that this fighting is a perversion. I cannot imagine thousands of people sitting and watching them fighting. How perverted we have become. Please be very clear that if you continuously sit in front of the TV and watch fighting, you are established in *tamas*.

Krishna says that based upon our ideal, our *guna* (attributes) can be described.

In the last verse, He says please do not punish your body. You not only punish yourself, but you also punish me. I reside in you!

The scriptures do not recommend severe austerities and penances. Walking on fire and too many other things are unnecessary. When I make you do these things once in awhile, it is to make you break the pattern that you have always lived your life in. You should not subject yourself to these as daily rituals, 'Every morning when I wake up, I should walk on ten feet of fire, no!'

Krishna says there is no need for all these things. People perform them out of pride and ego, merely to show, 'I did all these things.' They are done out of pride and egoism. They are done out of lust and attachment. People who do this, for example, sit for years on a bed of nails or sit with one hand raised. All these painful contortions are foolish. These people torture their bodies and the material elements as well as the *Paramatman* (Supreme Consciousness) dwelling inside them. Beautifully Lord Krishna says, 'Please do not torture the *Atman* inside your body. Don't abuse your body because the body is the temple of God.

By torturing the temple of God, you torture the *Paramatman* residing inside. He says that those who torture the *Paramatman* inside the body are demons. Ravana did *tapasya*. He cut off his heads and put them into the fire. This is a demon's *tapas*, torturing the body and torturing the *Paramatman* residing in the body. There is no need to do self-torture. Krishna says, 'Don't torture yourself.' God never asked you to torture yourself. These people wanted to destroy somebody. That is why they did these violent things. The entire purpose of this penance and self-torture was to boost the ego, to seek power.

No *shastra* expects or teaches us how to kill others, torture others or do black magic to others. The other day I spoke about somebody *yantras* as a remedy. *Yantra* is a metal plate with diagrammatic representation of powerful *mantra* that is sanctified through rituals. After that lecture someone told me, 'I bought a *yantra*, but



when I wanted to return it to the person I bought it from, he threatened to curse me.'

You need to understand that only an enlightened man can curse. Only he has that power. But, an enlightened person will never curse. Please be very clear that only an enlightened person can make his curse effective. Others cannot. It is not that anybody can curse and it will become reality. No, only an enlightened person can curse and an enlightened person will never curse. If he curses, he is not enlightened. *Nobody* can curse you. If he is not enlightened, don't be concerned about it. It will never work because for a curse you need *satya-sankalpa*, the backing of truth.

Only the words of a person who has achieved the Ultimate Energy become reality. I will say again that only an enlightened person can curse, and an enlightened person will never curse. Because the enlightened person is in Universal Consciousness so cursing another person is the same as cursing himself!

Never be afraid of curses! Nobody can curse others. One thing is sure, if someone curses, he hurts himself more than he hurts others. Never be afraid of curses.

Spiritual relationships can never exist out of fear or greed. Never be obedient to somebody out of fear. No, simply throw things out if it is forced on you out of fear. Never be afraid of anything. Nobody can curse you. An enlightened man can curse, but he will never curse. Understand these two statements. A curse is never possible. Just be liberated from the fear of life.

Here Krishna says that there is no need for all this penance. Out of pride and ego you cheat yourself with all this penance but you never achieve anything. The person who does these things out of ego and pride is a demon, a *rakshasa*.

A demon is in deep *tamas*, in ignorance. All that drives such a person is the boost to his ego without consideration for himself and others. Such a person is a spiritual cipher.

Q: Master, you said that vasanas make the spirit choose a new body to be reborn in. Why is there a difference in attitude between siblings? One may be money-oriented, another service-oriented, a third may be power-crazy. And all three are different from their parents. Why is this?

An excellent question!

Earlier I shared the story of attempting to heal the autistic child when I was in the USA a few years ago. The parents were from India, but not from Tamilnadu and none of them spoke Tamil. I'll mention it again since it's relevant to this question.

As soon as I touched the boy, in crude but chaste Tamil he shouted at me to take my hands off him. He did not want to be healed. I was taken aback both with the vehemence with which he said this and also that he spoke in a language that he was unfamiliar with. I asked the boy why.



He said that he made a deliberate choice to be an autistic being since he did not want to be caught in life's responsibilities. He wanted to work out his *prarabdha karma* without having to exert himself.

I responded by saying, 'That is fine, but you are troubling your parents who are good people. Why are you making them suffer?'

He immediately replied, 'Do you think I would enter the body in a family that would not care for me? I was born to them because they are good people and I knew they would take care of me.'

Of course, I did not attempt to heal the boy against the wishes of his being.

The reasons with which a spirit may decide on a body may not be obvious to us. Following birth, the individual also forgets why he chose his body as well as his *prarabdha karmas*. It would be convenient if we remembered what brought us here. Then we could work towards fulfilling those desires. Once fulfilled, our *karmas* would dissolve and our spirit would be free.

Please understand that the entire concept of *karma*, about doing good and bad, is nonsense. It is only to keep you on a tight leash. That is all. If you think that by giving money to the poor, donating to a temple fund or a preacher's hat will earn merit points toward your entry into heaven, you have been fooled.

When people come to the *ashram* and want to donate money, I tell them, 'Do not think that this Nithyananda

will be standing at the gate when you die to make sure you get a heavenly suite. Nothing like that is possible. There is no exchange offer between what you give now and what you get after death. Only your good attitude follows you if you give with an attitude of unconditional help. If not, even that will not follow.'

We do not remember why we came here because when we die the spirit passes through the painful and dark causal layer of energy. In that deep pain, it forgets whatever made it decide on taking the new body. The darkness of the causal layer as the body dies, the coma state, is equivalent to the dark painful passage that the body passes through as it emerges from its mother's womb. This is the point at which the spirit leaves the dying body, its previous abode, and enters the new abode.

It is possible to remember why you came here, your *prarabdha karma* and to have a conscious birth. It happens to enlightened beings. It is also possible for others. I am working on this process. The mother must be trained before the child is born.

In our Nithyananda Spurana Program, conducted by my ordained teachers, *acharyas*, we take you through this journey that the spirit takes as it leaves the body. You get to experience through specially designed meditations each energy layer that the spirit goes through. There are seven layers and seven meditations. When you undertake this journey, all your past *samskaras*, which grow from the carried over mindset, the *vasanas*, get burnt out. You become free. You have a glimpse of the Ultimate.



During one of these meditations, as you meditate in the second *pranic* layer, you understand why you came here. Your *prarabdha karma* stands revealed to you. From then on, if you so choose, you can focus on why you came here. You can work towards liberation.

Remember this, the character of the parents is only partly related to the *vasanas* and *prarabdha karmas* of children. Sometimes it can be supportive in a deeply negative way. Prahlad, a great devotee of Vishnu, was born to Hiranyakashipu who hated Vishnu. But Hiranyakashipu's hatred was superficial. That burning hatred kept him thinking about Vishnu all the time. His ill-treatment of his son, Prahlad resulted in his own liberation. In turn Prahlad, who himself was an evolved soul, was liberated.

Devotees come to me from all over the world, from North America, South America, Guadeloupe, France, Australia, Malaysia and so on. I tell them that they would not come had they not been born in India and exposed to the Vedic culture once before. They are coming back to their roots; that is all.

The spirit tries to remember why it came into this life, but does not always succeed. When it leaves this body again, at that point it again remembers its desire. This sometimes happens many times. After many unsuccessful life journeys, cycles of *samsara*, the spirit decides, 'Enough is enough. Now I must seek liberation. I must find my Master and savior.' Sometimes the spirit takes on an incurable ailment that leads them to me. Many disciples

originally came to me for healing, which was solely the excuse that brought them to me. Their beings demanded that they be liberated and caused the body to suffer until they reached me.

Coming back to your question, each sibling may be seemingly different, but a thread underlies their dissimilarities in bringing them into one family. It may be a constructive or a disruptive reason, but the spirit came there for a reason.



Believe and Practice

17.7 Food that we consume is of three kinds, according to the three types of material nature. These are sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hear the difference between these three.

Krishna now speaks about food. Three different kinds of people enjoy three different types of food. Before we discuss these verses, let me explain the three different kinds of *shraddha* based on what we are.

Please understand that one group of people is completely negative. They only doubt and doubt and doubt.



They have decided not to believe in anything. They have decided not to raise themselves in their lives. They are completely dumb. We can't do anything with them. This is the first group.

The second group consists of people who believe, but do not practice. The third group of people believes and practices sincerely.

There are three groups. One group doubts, even the word doubting is too good to describe it. They are prejudiced. This group is in *tamas*. The next group is the believers. They are in *rajas*. The third group is sincere. This group is in *sattva*. Krishna beautifully explains the differences between the prejudiced group, the believers and the sincere group. He then talks about their ways of life, character and how we can achieve the sincerity of *sattva* and imbibe the truths explained in the Gita.

He gives beautiful step-by-step explanations and teachings on how to raise us from the prejudiced level to the believing level, and from the believing level to the sincerity level. All those here are already at the believing level.

If you are prejudiced, you will not sit here everyday. You would merely stand there, listen to two or three words and go away. Many people come just to check out what is going on. They stand here for two or three minutes and look at their watch. And even in those few minutes, their feet shuffle ten times this way and that, and they'll say, 'All right. Enough, I think he is just a young *swami*. What can he say that we do not already know?' They just walk out.



If you are not at least at the level of belief, you will not sit here. Coming regularly and sitting through these lectures shows that you are at least at the level of belief.

Now all you need to do is jump into the level of sincerity. The moment we jump into the level of sincerity, we experience the truth. We become Krishna. We experience Krishna Consciousness. Now we will enter into the technology of experiencing the sincerity, the technology of Krishna Consciousness.

You see, there is an important choice that you must make. Either you should be completely sincere about trusting that what I say is the truth, or be very clear that whatever I am saying is just lies. If you can't practice what I am saying, whatever I am saying is a lie. If you are unable to practice, what is the use of this truth? Whether I am saying truth or not, you will decide. Only you can decide that. No one else can. I cannot decide for you. If you can execute what I tell you, if you are able to imbibe it, I am speaking the truth. If you are unable to do it, what is the use of the whole thing? Nothing, there's no use. For eighteen days, it's a waste of three hours of your time and three hours of mine. That's all. If you don't imbibe, if it does not transform your life then there is no other result except wastage of time. Whatever has happened here is not the truth.

Please be very clear that the result of my words on your consciousness decides whether what I spoke is truth or a lie. If you can experiment with those words, they are true. One more thing you must understand is that you don't need to do it completely or perfectly. Having

the courage to experiment is enough. After my talking all these days, if you say, 'Why not test for two or three days?', if you have that much courage, nothing else is necessary.

If that doesn't happen, my sitting and shouting, talking, talking, talking, is just like an Indian political meeting speaker. If you are in South India, whether you want it or not, you must listen to some political speaker every year, maybe every month. They put the politician on the loudspeaker throughout the city. No one can avoid hearing him.

Let me share a real incident. One day I was traveling from Pudukottai in Tamilnadu to our Bangalore *ashram*. We suddenly started hearing some loudspeaker noise. That guy used slang words, not a single decent word, except two or three, 'hmmm, hmmm.' No other decent words. We couldn't escape from his slang words for ten kilometers, which means half an hour. The roads are also horrible. For half an hour, he was shouting. Unfortunately, we had to drive past the stage where he was speaking. I was surprised that only four ladies were sitting in front of the stage. There were more people on the stage than in the audience.

I asked one *brahmachari* traveling with me what was going on. Fortunately, I had left South India at a fairly young age and wasn't exposed to all of this. I also had no interest in this political stuff.

I asked him, 'What is going on? Why is he using all these slang words?'



The *brahmachari* said, 'What is this, Master? He is speaking decently. Why are you blaming him?'

I asked, 'Is this decency?'

He said, 'Master, you have not heard political meetings. That is why you call this slang. It is decent.'

I asked, 'Then why are there only four ladies in the audience?'

He said, 'Because of the loudspeakers, people can listen to the speech from their homes for a radius of ten kilometers. They don't need to attend the meeting.'

In that political meeting, he told the crowd, 'O dear people who are here, like an ocean you have gathered...'
Only four ladies were listening to him and he called them an ocean. I thought that the four ladies were spitting and creating an ocean! They were chewing betel nut and betel leaves and kept spitting. I thought he was talking about that ocean!

He said, 'You people are here in front of me like an ocean,' and he went on and on. At the homes of these old ladies, there must have been some arguments with their daughters-in-law. Where else could they go? There was some entertainment here.

'Let us go and sit there', they must have decided. 'Maybe at the end of the talk, they will give some clothes or gifts. If we don't get anything, we can remove a few flags and take them home. We can use them to clean the house!' This was why these ladies probably decided to come.

A small story:

At a political meeting a politician caught hold of the mike and started speaking, speaking, speaking, and speaking, went on and on and on. Slowly some people left. Then a few more left. By and by, everyone left except one old man with a shawl. The guy with the mike went on and on and on. Finally, he felt tired. He stopped and thanked everybody for attending.

The man saw this old fellow sitting in front of him and said, 'I am so happy that at least you stayed and are listening to me.'

This old man said, 'No no, I own the mike system. I am waiting to pack up the mike system and take it home.'

The politician said, 'Please forgive me, I did not bring a watch. That is why I didn't know how long I was speaking. At least you could have set a clock in front of me, so I would know when to stop.'

The old man said, 'You forgot your watch, but we put up a calendar for you. You could have at least looked at that!'

These politicians become courageous when they speak, especially when they don't have an audience sitting in front of them. They say whatever they want. When the audience sits at home, there is no danger of anyone throwing stones at them. So the politicians say whatever they want. If there is a crowd in front of them, they



don't speak much. They are careful in case people throw stones or create problems. Otherwise, they go on and on and on. It never ends.

Please understand, our meeting will become one more political meeting if we don't have the courage to experiment with the truth that we learned here. If we don't practice, if Krishna's words don't work on us, if we don't work with these words, this meeting will be another political meeting, maybe a polite political meeting. Please don't make this a political meeting. Let these words penetrate you. May you experiment with the truth. If you don't experiment, at least it will be mentally clear to you that this is not the truth.

You might think, 'This *swami* was simply saying what he read somewhere.' But if you believe this is the truth, you will be here. If you think this is not truth, you will not be here.

You will not come everyday and sit for three hours, even if you do not have any other work to do. You have a TV at home. You could have sat in front of the TV. There are many other places to go to, yet you chose to be here. You chose to listen. This shows that you think there is truth behind these words. So when you think there is some truth, never wait to experiment with the words.

Have courage and experiment. Take one single idea. You don't need to experiment with the whole Gita. Take one single concept and imbibe that to the core. Let your whole being vibrate with that single thought.

Swami Vivekananda says, 'When you commit to a single idea, your blood should boil with that single idea. Even your hair should stand in that direction, your bones, your thoughts, your body and your mind should all stand for it. Your whole being should be directed towards that concept. Only then success is certain.'

Please understand, take one concept and work with it. If you fail, there is nothing wrong. But have courage to work with it. If you succeed, you will know it is the truth, and you will be liberated. You will have bliss. If it fails, you will know that this is not the truth and you will be clear. You can continue your search elsewhere. So be very clear, the basic truth Krishna is telling you is about sincerity.

There are three groups of people. The *tamasic* group is prejudiced, meaning negative. The *rajasic* group believes intellectually. The *sattva* group has sincerity. They not only believe, but they have courage to play with the words and ideas. Please do not miss the courage. Let these words penetrate you.

Q: You tell us to search for bliss. You and Krishna say that sincerity, courage and faith will take us on the path to bliss. But the path to bliss does not seem easy. There are many pitfalls. We do not even recognize bliss when we experience it. How can we cope?

Bliss is not easy. Nothing worthwhile is easy. You must struggle. That is where *shraddha* comes in. Buddha, Christ and Mahavira also struggled.



The word 'Christ' means to be crowned by God. But Christ had to go through a rare crowning ceremony: crucifixion was the first step. That has always been so and will always be: unless one dies, unless the ego dies, God cannot crown you.

You can be crowned only when you are not.

Meditate on that paradox. When you are, you are as far as possible from God; when you are not, you are God. You reach the crown *chakra*, the *sahasrara*. When you are absolutely empty, God fills you from everywhere, from every direction and dimension. You are flooded. That is the crowning.

Unless God crowns a man, man lives in vain. He does not live. He only exists. And to merely exist is to live in hell. On the other hand, to live is a higher state of existence. It is a conscious state of existence. A rock exists. The ordinary man believes that he lives; however, he exists like the rock. Only a Buddha or a Christ actually lives.

How should we live? How can we come to this ultimate glory? We come to it only through disappearance. Be ready to dissolve. Surrendering to the Master is dissolution. Once you are not, everything fits perfectly. A deep harmony arises. When you are not, there are no discordant notes. It is all music and poetry, all celebration.

We continue listening to the outside; hence we keep missing the inner voice. And God speaks from our

innermost core. In the Master we hear the echo of our innermost being. The Master functions as a mirror: he reflects our original face. He says what God wants to say to us because we are not ready to listen to our inner self. By listening to the Master we slowly become aware of the synchronicity between the Master and our inner voice. We become aware that the Master speaks on behalf of our inner self. That is why surrendering to the Master is not surrendering to anybody; it is surrendering to our own center.

We live on the periphery. We live in the mind and the mind is so noisy that it does not allow us to hear the still, small voice within. A Master is needed as a device because we only hear the outside. The Master says from the outside what God has been trying to tell us from the inside forever.

But we don't listen to the inner voice.

By listening to the inner Master, you slowly become conscious. What is happening? The Master says things that you somehow feel to be your own, more your own than your mind and your body. That's why the East calls the Master God. The West is unable to understand this phenomenon. The East knows why the Master is called God. He represents God. He reflects God because he reflects your reality, your true being.

Being with the Master is getting ready to turn in, so that you can close your eyes and look in, so that you can hear what your intuition keeps telling you. And intuition is always right. The intellect may be right or wrong. It is always either-



or and doubt persists. It is never without doubt. But intuition is without doubt. It simply knows. The intuitive person never repents because he never does anything wrong. He simply follows God's voice within him.

It is possible to be blissful without being wise; however, that is not true blissfulness. That is what people call happiness. It comes and goes. It is momentary. And it leaves us in deep frustration and despair. The cost is too much and not worth it.

It is also possible to be wise without being blissful. That type of wisdom is pseudo and false. It is known as knowledge. It is borrowed and so it is a burden. Anything that has not arisen out of our experience is bondage. It can nourish our ego but it cannot reveal our Self. The true seeker must find bliss and wisdom together.

Meditate. On the one hand, you become blissful and on the other hand, you become wise. Both grow simultaneously in a kind of deep synchronicity. In the ultimate state, bliss becomes wisdom, and wisdom becomes bliss.

To be blissful is to be prayerful. All other prayers are formal. You can say beautiful words, but they are only on the lips. Words belong to the mind. The heart knows no words. It is wordless. It is silent. It is full of love, yet wordless. It is cheerful. It can sing, but in silence. It can dance, but in an invisible way.

The head is gross. Hence everything of the head is visible. It is matter. It is machine. The heart is the center of the invisible. It is not matter. It is Consciousness. The

heart knows how to be blissful, how to be longing. Being blissful opens the doors to Divinity.

People typically go to God in despair. That is the wrong moment because when we are in despair we are closed. God is available, but His availability is of no use unless we are available to Him.

People remember God when they are in misery. That is not the right time to remember Him. These prayers are more or less complaints against the misery as well as demands and desires for things to be better. Those are not real prayers. Consequently these prayers go down the drain. They never reach God.

A real prayer has one flavor, that of gratitude. A real prayer has one fragrance, that of immense gratefulness. It knows no demand or desire. And because God has given so much and been so gracious, the heart silently bows down to the Ultimate. That is real prayer, the very essence of prayer!

Be blissful and let that be your prayer. God is not far away. He never has been. He is just around the corner. The moment the heart is ready, He immediately enters. He will not knock on the doors because that is interfering with your freedom. He will not trespass for He respects human dignity. Unless you invite Him, He will wait.

Prayer is a way of inviting Him. And the best way to invite Him is when you are in a dance, when your whole being is singing, when you are joy, when every fiber pulsates with celebration. Then He is ready to come in



immediately. There is not a single moment's gap: instantly it happens.

Fulfill the only condition: be blissful.

Bliss arises from love. Love is the only real poetry. When the heart is full of love, your whole life is transformed from prose to poetry, from noise to music and from discord to harmony.

A heart without love is a desert. The man with a heart without love remains ugly. His approach towards life is prosaic. He has no aesthetic sensibility, no sense to appreciate the beauty of Existence and no awareness to be grateful for all that God has done, for all that the Universe is. Only the poet knows how to praise, how to be grateful, how to dance and sing and how to celebrate life and its tremendous blissfulness.

It is such a sheer joy to be. Just to be is enough. It is more than is needed, yet we need to be sensitive to feel it. We need to grow feelers. Learn to grow feelers so that life is no longer a thought but becomes more a feeling. Once we have moved from thinking to feeling, there is only one more step, and that is from feeling to being; and that is very simple.

The first step is arduous: we must do a lot to move from thinking to feeling. The second step comes almost automatically: there's nothing we need to do for it. From feeling to being, the distance is none at all. It can happen any moment. The poet can become the mystic at any moment. The real problem is how to get out of our thinking and get more and more into feeling.

Love more. Feel more. Enjoy more so that you can feed your heart. Watch the sunrise, sunset, clouds, rainbows, birds, flowers, animals, rocks, and people - look into their eyes. It is such a multidimensional Existence. Look into every dimension as a poet: to praise and to feel. Be ecstatic!

Much is going to happen. So get ready! And don't be afraid when it happens. The only barrier is fear. When things start happening, we become fearful. We are moving into the unknown. And the mind wants to cling to the known because the mind is clever with the known. With the unknown, the mind has nothing to say. With the unknown, the mind is at a loss as to what to do. It loses its expertise. It is shocked into silence when it encounters the unknown.

The mind is a great expert as far as the familiar and the known are concerned because mind is memory. It can give all kinds of information about the known. It is like a computer: first we feed the information to the computer. Then the computer is ready to give the information back. It can only feed back what we have fed to it, nothing more. There may be new combinations of the old inputs but nothing is original.

Mind knows no originality. On the other hand, the mind can pretend with the known. It can feel great. It is an expert.

A child asked his mother, 'What is an expert?' The mother said, 'The expert does the same thing that women do, but when we do it, men call it nagging.'

Mind is a great expert, a great nagger. It keeps goading and nagging, 'Do this. Do that.' It opens many

alternatives and constantly persuades you, seduces you and corrupts you, 'Go this way. Purchase this. Enjoy that.' It keeps you occupied with the known.

The work that a disciple enters into is with the unknown, the uncharted, and the unmapped territory; so fear will be there. That is the only barrier. In spite of it, we should go on. Let fear be there. It will hang around for awhile. When we do not listen to it, it will leave us. It is a great day when fear of the unknown leaves us. From then on growth becomes simple, easy and spontaneous.

This committed journey leads to bliss, eternal bliss, *nithyananda*.

We Are What We Eat

17.8 The foods that promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy are juicy, smooth, substantial and nutritious.

Such foods are liked by persons in the mode of goodness.

17.9 People in the mode of aggression like foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry, and burning, and cause pain, grief, and disease.

17.10 People in the mode of ignorance like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refuse and of impure energy.



Krishna talks about the nature of food consumed by people of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* temperaments.

He explains what kind of food these people like, what kind of lives these people lead and what kind of understanding these people experience in their lives. The most important thing is what kind of understanding they acquire. See, the same words can be understood in many different ways.

The other day, I related the story of a scholar who narrated the story of Harishchandra, a king who sacrificed his wife and child in order to keep his word. At the end of the story the Bhagavatham narrator asked two people, 'What did you understand from the story?'

One person said, 'Even if you die, you must speak the truth.'

The other person said, 'If it is an emergency, you can sell your wife. There is nothing wrong with that!'

From the same story, two different understandings arose. In the story of the great king Harishchandra, he gave away his kingdom, sold his wife, and allowed himself and his son to be killed in order to fulfill his promise and to uphold the truth of his commitments. We need to understand the word in the context of its spirit.

A small story:

A monk was sent to Alaska to spread God's word. Before going, the Pastor Father blessed him and said, 'Your rosary and wine will take care of

you. Don't worry.' A rosary is the prayer beads and wine is given as offering at prayer symbolically representing Christ's blood and sacrifice. 'Rosary and wine will take care of you.'

After one year, the Pastor Father visited the monk to supervise how the mission was going. The monk received him with honor.

The Father asked, 'How is the mission?'

The monk said, 'Father, just as you said, the rosary and wine are taking care of me. If it were not for them, I would have died in the cold.'

In the course of their conversation the monk asked, 'Father, would you like a cup of wine?'

Father replied, 'Why not? Please get it.' The monk turned towards the kitchen and said, 'Rosary, bring a cup of wine!'

Words can easily be misunderstood. Please don't miss the essence of the word. It is easy to miss the spirit behind words, the truth behind words and their true meaning. Experiment with courage. And if you can't, if this is not the truth for you, forget about it. At least you will be free to search somewhere else.

If you think that it is the truth and you don't execute it or experiment with it in your life, then drop it! Otherwise it will become a habit to listen to the truth and not practice it. This becomes a mental setup. It is a *most* dangerous mental setup. People ask me, 'Master,



should I renounce everything to become enlightened? Should I become a *sanyasi*, a monk?

I tell them, 'No. There's no need. Just do one thing. Don't have the mental setup of receiving the truth and not practicing it, that's all.' That is the most dangerous thing that can happen to any being. Please be very clear, receiving the truth and understanding it intellectually without having the courage to practice it is the worst possible mental setup. That is the worst devil or demon that can catch you. So at least have the courage to decide, 'This is not for me because this is not truth.' If you believe this is the truth, then have the courage to experiment with it.

You have heard many things. Krishna does not say anything new in this chapter. He only says one thing, 'Be sincere.' Sincerity is the straight way. I tell people, 'Honesty is the basic spiritual virtue. Sincerity is the basic spiritual virtue.' First be a gentleman, and then you can be a spiritual man. Gentleman means to be honest to what you believe, truthful to the core. Never do anything without being clear about the truth, and never stop doing anything if you know it is the truth. The scientist is courageous enough to go after the truth. Wherever the research takes him, he is ready to experiment.

In the same way, you must become an inner scientist, a spiritual scientist. You must have the courage to go after the experience within the words. You must be able to play with them.

A small story:

An enlightened Zen Master and his disciple went to the river to bathe. Suddenly, the disciple fell into the river and shouted, 'Master, save me, save me.'

The Zen Master said, 'You are *Atman*, save yourself. You are God, save yourself.'

The disciple shouted, 'Master, first save me, then you can teach me philosophy. Then you can teach me meditation. First, please save me.'

The Master replied, 'Stand up and save yourself.'

The disciple shouted, 'No, No, Master, save me. Then you can teach me.'

The Master shouted back, 'Fool, I am telling you to stand up.' The disciple became frightened. Just out of fear, he simply stood up, and realized that the water was up to his knees!

When you stand up, you understand the whole *samsara sagara*, the ocean of life. Whatever you consider the great worries of your life are not even up to knee level. They are just up to ankle level. Because you are lying down, because you never stand up, you think you are drowning. You think you are going to die.

I tell you from my personal experience, if you stand up, you will realize the water is only knee-deep. Whatever you regard as the *samsara sagara* is only knee deep. It is nothing. There is no way it can affect you. But you need courage to stand up.



For example, if the disciple had decided, 'No, no, I am drowning and instead of pulling me out and helping me, Master is teaching me impractical things. What kind of Master is this?' If he were blaming the Master, he would have gone with the river.

If he had the courage even for one minute, the guts to experiment with the Master's words, he would be saved. You need the guts. That is called *viraha*, the courage to stand up and see the truth by yourself. It is having the courage to experiment. Nothing will be lost. If something can be lost, it is better to lose it as soon as possible. May you be rid of that thing or situation. If something can be lost by practicing the truth, may it be lost as early as possible. The earlier it is lost, the better for you.

May you flood your being with truth. Whatever cannot stand, whatever can be washed away, let it be washed away. May it be lost from your being as early as possible.

Krishna explains here about the energy of various food substances. Generally, all food that is not from plants i.e., from animal origin has negative energy. Food that is hot and spicy tends to aggravate desires. Vegetarian food that is fresh and not spicy is ideal for spiritual practices.

In our Nithya Spiritual Healing system, it is essential that the Healers become vegetarians and give up substances such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc. I have nothing against alcohol or meat. I have no theories about cruelty about animals and so on. Plants also have life, just perhaps not at the same frequency level. So if one argues

from the point of cruelty or *himsa*, eating vegetables also goes against *ahimsa*.

The Nithya Spiritual Healing system is based on deep meditative techniques. For the meditative energy to be effective, negative energy substances cannot be used. I have seen that these meditations do not go together with meat as well as tobacco and alcohol. If Healers eat meat, smoke or drink, they are affected physiologically and psychologically.

Many people complain that this condition is restrictive. What can I do? To satisfy especially the Western followers who wish to become Healers, I have modified the system for self-healing, which allows them to eat meat, drink or smoke. But the interesting development is that many of these Healers drop meat, cigarettes and liquor on their own. After awhile the mind-body system rejects these low energy food substances.

Any serious meditation technique requires one to be in the energy field. The word '*ahara*' used by Krishna can be expanded to mean food for all senses, not merely the tongue. All sensory inputs need to be of the same description that Krishna uses here promoting 'longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy' to aid one's progress in one's spiritual path by the *sattvic* route.

Q: Master, the Vedic science of medicine, Ayurveda recommends food types in line with one's constitution. Are those similar to what Krishna says?



Ayurveda, which literally means the knowledge or science of life, is the ancient Indian system of wellness. *Ayurveda* is essentially about lifestyle and wellness unlike western medicine whose focus is to cure diseases.

The principle of *Ayurveda* is based upon our relationship with the universe. It arises from the fundamental assumption that we are the same energy as the universe. The *Taittreya Upanishad* explains the five elements of energy in the universe and how they are connected. First, ether or *akasha* arose from the universal energy. From *akasha*, air or *vayu* arose. From *vayu* came fire or *agni*. *Agni* gave rise to water or *apa*, from which earth or *prithvi* developed. Herbs and plants grow from earth and support humans, whose energy is the same as the universal energy.

These five elements of the cosmic energy that exist in foods of plants and herbs sustain all living beings. *Ayurveda* connects the source of energies, the energies, the carriers of energies and consumers of energies in a holistic way. Food is therefore an integral part of this system of wellness.

Ayurveda classifies human beings into three types or *doshas*. Unlike *gunas* that are the essential behavioral attributes in which we operate, *doshas* are a combination of the kinds of energies predominant in us. There are three *doshas* called *vatha*, *pitta* and *kapha*. *Vatha*, for instance, is a combination of ether and air in us. *Ayurvedic* diagnosis can tell which constitution we belong to and our physical and mental attributes.

Ayurveda recommends different foods for each constitutional type based upon the tastes such as sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, etc. These are specific recommendations as to what tastes would be healthy for which constitutions and based on this what kind of vegetables and fruits and so on. Even cooking methods are specified that can be used to provide wholesome *ayurvedic* food.

Krishna outlines a more general classification based upon the purity and nature of food. Krishna explains that *tamasic* food, putrid and stale, is forbidden for consumption by Vedic tradition. The injunction is to eat food within a few hours of cooking. After that food should be discarded.

Today we store food in freezers for months! How can we be healthy? Rarely do people eat food within a few hours of cooking. Everything is prepared in advance and then mixed and micro waved. Heaven knows what kind of genetic modification will happen to people who eat only such food.

Eat fresh food. It is not necessary that it be raw as some people claim. Fire and heat are good energy. But you should know what materials should be used as containers. Cooking in plastics can only give you diseases, not energy.

We have forgotten how to prepare food and how to eat food. Soon, children will think that food grows in supermarkets. They have no knowledge about farms and plants. Even our flowers are artificial. We touch them and the plastic cuts our fingers.

To preserve such food, we need chemicals. How can we stay healthy when we ingest chemicals instead of energy?

We eat on the run. I see people in America walking down the street holding a phone to the ear with one hand and shoving a burger into the mouth with the other hand. They call it multitasking. This is the easiest way to stress, depression and disease. The food we disrespect so much eventually abuses us. It settles in places that make us unhealthy. Eating an apple in this manner is bad enough; however, eating a horrible hamburger in this fashion is suicidal.

Eat fresh food in silence and with attention. Pay attention to each morsel of food and eat with gratitude and love. Eating does not need to be a social occasion. It should not be. Enjoy your social interactions before and after meals, not while eating. Be in the present moment while you eat.

What Krishna says makes pure sense for wellness. Natural foods contain their own flavor and goodness. You do not need to add spices and flavoring agents to corrupt their taste. He says eat food as it comes, fresh from the earth, and cooked with the energy of fire. Eat it while it is fresh. You will be in *sattva*. You will be in bliss.

Charity without Expectations

17.11 Sacrifice without expectation of results, as stipulated in the scriptures, with a firm belief and conviction that it is a duty, is in the mode of goodness.

17.12 O Arjuna, that sacrifice that is performed with expectation of result or for show out of pride, is of the nature of aggression.

17.13 Sacrifice that is performed without following the scripture, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantra, sincerity, and gift, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.



Krishna talks about how to give, how to sacrifice and how to serve others.

In the Vedic tradition, sacrifices such as fire rituals, *yagna* and *homa*, etc. were not mere rituals to worship celestial beings not present on planet Earth. They had a far deeper meaning of benefiting the living and the poor.

Every sacrifice had a major element of gifting the deserving poor. Whoever came to such a ritual never went away empty-handed. When the great *rishis*, the Masters, performed rituals, they had nothing to seek. They performed these in line with the truth of their experiences, which were the scriptural understandings. They expected nothing. They performed rituals as a day-to-day living expression. These rituals were conducted so that the celestial beings and nature were pleased and humanity benefited. These were selfless offerings of *sattoa guna*.

Great kings also practiced these rituals. Kings performed *yagnas* to display power and to show that they controlled other kings. These were a display of ego. Kings such as Yudhishtira performed the horse sacrifice, *Ashwamedha Yaga*, and the *Rajasuya Yaga* to announce their supremacy over other kings. However, these were required of kings and were also occasions to give their wealth away generously. These were performed in the mode of aggression, *rajas*.

In another extreme sacrifices were also performed by demonic creatures with no concern except brute strength. These did not involve charity or generosity. These did not follow the scriptural guidelines. These were carried out purely for selfish reasons.

When young Nachiketa's father gave away useless old cows that no longer produced milk, the young lad protested. 'What are you doing?' he asked his father. 'Why are you giving away useless things in a sacrifice meant to give valuable material? If you want to give nothing else, give me away,' Nachiketa said. In deep ignorance and anger, his father offered his son to Yama, God of death as a result.

Please understand that a sacrifice is not measured by how much we give. It is measured by how much we give that we cannot afford to give. It is measured by how much we give when it hurts us to give and without any expectation in return. Such a sacrifice straightaway leads to liberation.

Many people give with wonderful intent. It is not charity if they give part of their wealth without it affecting their lifestyle. It is no sacrifice. Many people tell me, 'Master, I am writing a legal will leaving all my possessions to this *ashram*, temple or your mission.' What is the big deal in giving away after death? You cannot carry it with you anyway.

A sacrifice must hurt to be genuine. It must cause you discomfort and yet be given with total pleasure and without expectations. That is the spirit of genuine surrender. That is the spirit of doing things without expectation of the fruits of action.

I am not denouncing the wonderful charity that many wealthy people give without posing for photographs. They do it with good feelings of helping the



disadvantaged. That mental attitude of giving and sharing what they have with the needy benefits them. That *vasana* of generosity stays with their spirit. There is no doubt.

However, that charity will be in the mode of *rajas*, not *sattva*. When people move from this *rajas* state of giving to the *sattva* state of giving, wealth seeks them out. Lakshmi comes to them without being asked. She knows these people will be the route for benefiting mankind.

There is nothing degrading about wealth and power. These are great energies. Like all great energies, the problem is handling them without letting them go to one's head. As an example, look at the difference between Ravana and Janaka. Janaka was a *raja rishi*, the king who was also a sage. He ruled a kingdom, but treated the power and wealth as if they belonged to someone else. He was a mere keeper, a mere witness. On the other hand, although highly gifted and a great *tapasvi* who undertook many severe penances, Ravana was ruled by his ego and senses. That brought about his ruin.

The universe operates on the principle of abundance. There is no shortage of anything in the universe. What we need, we get. The trouble is that we are dissatisfied with what we need. Our wants are immeasurable. Great Masters have said that it is possible for the universe to fulfill the needs of all the people on planet Earth, but not the wants of one single person. Our greed has no limits.

May you desire to give away, be limitless. May your desire to acquire become zero. You will be amazed at how wealth seeks you.

Q: You say that God is love. Some cultures depict God in a state of anger and fury. Their monks are serious. They seem to have no humor. Can bliss arise out of anger and fury?

No. We mirror our emotions in God and our mythologies depict him as angry, furious or jealous. God is, in one sense, neutral, as Nature is. He does not care whether you are a sinner or saint. Moral conditions are of no consequence in spirituality.

In another sense, God is compassion. When you approach Divinity, you see yourself in others and others in you. At the human level, we term it love. Actually, it is beyond love as we think of it.

Love is the energy that can be transformed into joy. And love is the only energy that we have. There is no other energy available. It is the same energy on different planes.

Sex is the crudest form of love energy and God is the highest form of love energy. However, it is the same energy, crude, gross, subtle, hard, worldly, and spiritual. The same energy moves in all planes. It is like a ladder: one end of the ladder touches the lowest whereas the other end touches the highest.

Without love, life would be impossible. Without love, the universe itself would be impossible. Things would fall apart. Love keeps them glued together.

Throughout the ages one of the most basic insights of all the mystics has been that matter is glued together with



love. An invisible force keeps atoms and molecules together. They do not fall apart. Science has yet to discover that Ultimate Energy. It has detected a few of its manifestations such as gravitation or electricity; however, these are gross manifestations. In spite of that, the day is not far off when science will find that the ultimate source of all energy is love. That will be a great day for humanity. On that day religion and science will commune with each other because their language will be the same, that of love.

Rejoice because love *is* possible. Be joyful because love is your inner potential. You can rise to the ultimate heights. Nothing is impossible for love because love can transform itself into God.

Love is Divine. Lust is animal. Many confuse lust with love. That is one of the greatest calamities. The person who thinks lust is love remains confined to the world of lust and never rises higher than that. He has no idea that there is a higher plane. He remains in the basement of his house. Sex is the basement. It is not the place to live. You can use it for other purposes, but it is not your home: your home is above it.

Man has three planes of being. Lust is animal. Remember it is the crudest form of love. It is not that love is not present; however, it is mixed, muddy, polluted by jealousy, possessiveness and anger. As it becomes more refined, it becomes human love. Human love is less possessive and jealous. Human love has greater understanding. It is more capable of not using the other person as a means. It is more capable of thinking of the other as an end unto itself.

When it is divine, love in its highest form is prayer. Then there is no possessiveness and there is nothing earthly in it. It becomes an absolutely invisible force. And when love becomes prayer we feel contentment for the first time. In contrast, lust always keeps us hankering and desiring for more sensation, for more thrill and for more adventure.

Human love gives us a little bit of satisfaction. But prayer is bliss. It is a cool breeze from the beyond. When it blows, it takes us from the mundane to the sacred. We can open our wings and float with the wind and it takes us to the ultimate goal of life.

Bliss is the way to God. Bliss is the means towards God and it is also the end. It is both the way and the goal. Be blissful so that you can be more blissful. Start by being blissful so that you can end by being totally blissful. And the first step is the last step.

In India people consider the place where three rivers meet as sacred. It is a metaphor because man is a meeting place of three forces: physical, psychological and spiritual. And when these three forces *really* meet, there is great joy and bliss.

Ordinarily we live in compartments: our body lives in one compartment, our mind lives in another and our soul lives in yet another compartment. The body is unaware of the mind. The mind is unaware of the body. The soul is not known to the mind. The body is oblivious of the soul. They *are* together but have not even been introduced to each other.



The first step of meditation is to bring them closer: to introduce them to each other and link them in a deep friendship so that a merger becomes possible. And when all three dimensions merge into one point, the fourth dimension is born. Out of the meeting of the three, the fourth is born. That fourth is God. In India we simply call Him the fourth: *turiya*, the fourth. We don't give Him any name. The other three have names, but the fourth has no name. The fourth is transcendental.

The whole work of spirituality creates an alchemy in which your body melts into the mind, the mind melts into the soul, the soul melts into the mind, and the soul melts into the body. By and by, slowly, very slowly, they become one integrated phenomenon. Hence our work is three-dimensional: we work on the body through many techniques; we work on the mind through many therapies; we work on the soul through many meditations.

Deeds, Words and Thoughts

17.14 The worship of deities, the priest, the guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, living in reality, and nonviolence are said to be austerity of deed.

17.15 Speech that is non-offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular study of scriptures is called austerity of word.

17.16 Serenity of mind, gentleness, equanimity, self-control, and purity of thought are called austerity of thought.

17.17 The above mentioned threefold austerity (of thought, word, and deed),



practiced by yogis with supreme sincerity, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be in the mode of goodness.

17.18 Austerity that is performed for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for the sake of show, yielding an uncertain and temporary result, is said to be in the mode of aggression.

17.19 Austerity performed with foolish stubbornness or with self-torture or for harming others, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

Krishna defines austerity of deeds, words and thoughts.

Tapas or *tapasya* is the austere, simple way of living, the mode of *aparigraha*. It is based upon what one needs and not what one craves for. One who successfully practices this is a *tapasvi*.

Krishna explained earlier and repeats here that *tapasya*, austerity or penance, doesn't mean inflicting pain or torturing oneself and others. This includes not merely physical torture and pain, but also takes into account pain through words and thoughts. Penance undertaken in this manner is abusing oneself and the God who resides within, forgetting that the body is a temple of God.

Penance performed out of foolishness and self-torture destroys or injures others. Please understand, such acts are done out of ignorance. That's what I explained earlier in regards to black magic. No black magic can be done. No evil spirit can be sent. No one but an enlightened

Master can curse, and an enlightened Master cannot curse. He can only bless.

Forget these negative things. Never be concerned about these things. All such actions are out of *tamas*. They never work and they disturb only the person who initiates them. They can never disturb others.

Lord Krishna says that the people who are in *rajas* carry out sacrifices for the sake of respect, honor and worship. When they do penance or sacrifice in this manner, it is unstable. When people don't respect them, they stop doing it. They do it as long as people fall at their feet. If the respect is lost, they stop their *tapasya*.

Penance performed with the view of obtaining any result, even such a noble ideal as enlightenment, is in the mode of *rajas*, aggression or passion. Only when it is in the nature of total surrender, with no expectation of any results, it is in *sattva* and of spiritual value.

When I talk about my *tapas* during my *parivrajaka* days of wandering all over India, I did difficult things. I realize now that many of these could have been dispensed with.

I experimented with ten thousand keys before I found the key to unlock the door to enlightenment. I tell my disciples that they do not need to go through that. There is an easier, faster and simpler way.

As long as I struggled towards enlightenment in my spiritual practices, it eluded me. I was able to realize myself only when I threw away my *mala* that I had



carried for years as well as Ramakrishna Paramahansa's photograph and sat down in meditation, with the feeling 'let what may happen, happen.'

Krishna uses the word *saumyatvam* here beautifully.

We have no exact English translation for this word *saumyatva*. *Saumyatvam* refers to satisfaction and a feeling that is so comfortable. It refers to one whose presence makes you feel totally relaxed, and induces thoughts that calm and center the mind. Please understand *saumyatva* and pleasing words are basic qualities to be practiced by a spiritual person.

Some people become enlightened, yet they can't help others. For example, I saw a great, enlightened *swami* living in the Himalayas who spent the whole day smoking *ganja* (pot). No doubt he was enlightened. He put a copper coin in the *chillum* pipe with which he smoked *ganja*. You will be surprised that when he emptied the *chillum* pipe, a gold coin fell out. I witnessed this happen many times. He sold that coin to buy more *ganja*. He lived in Uttarkashi (in Uttaranchal, North India). Of course, I had great respect for him because he was a *tapasvi*, and he never wore any clothes. He was a *naga sadhu*.

Naga means a *sanyasi* who does not wear clothes. In that cold weather they lived without clothes. They are also called *paramahansa*. *Paramahansa sanyasis* do not wear clothing except to go into the city to spread the divine mission. Otherwise they are not supposed to wear clothes. I too am from that lineage, that *parampara* of *naga sadhus*!

Paramahamsas live like children. When this *swami*, a great *paramahamsa*, emptied his *chillum*, there would be a gold coin in it. I asked him, 'Baba, you are a great *tapasvi*, an *atmajnani* (one who has Self-knowledge) and a *brahmajnani* (one who has knowledge of the Brahman), why are you smoking *ganja* ?'

He said, 'a big elephant cannot be tied to a small hut. We must make the elephant a little dull and silent. Then he can stay in the small hut. After enlightenment, the *atman* cannot stay in this small body. I must bring it down and make it dull. Then it can stay in this body.' Of course, their smoking is different from an ordinary man's smoking.

Someone asked me, 'Master, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishna used to smoke. Why can't I smoke?'

I explained to him, 'Swami Vivekananda became enlightened before he started smoking. Become enlightened and then you can smoke and do whatever you want. Without achieving what they achieved, doing what they did is wrong.' Please understand that whatever enlightened Masters do is totally different from what you are supposed to do. Actually, they do things opposite of what you are supposed to do. You must do things to elevate yourself. They must do things to bring themselves down.

This *naga sadhu* in Uttarkashi is enlightened; however, he cannot help everybody. His type is such he will not help people. He will not heal somebody. He will not teach somebody and he will not make somebody



enlightened. He does not work with people. He is that type.

On the other hand, some people who experience the truth share the truth with the world. Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda were great souls who shared their experiences for the benefit of others. That was their mission. Bhagavatam says that people who explain or share the truth, such as Krishna, are incarnations.

Sukabrahma was the son of Vyasa, the compiler of the Vedas and author of Bhagavatam and Mahabharata. Sukabrahma *rishi* was an enlightened Master who wore no clothes.

Sukabrahma was questioned, 'What is the difference between enlightened people and *avatars* or incarnations?'

Sukabrahma says beautifully: *soundaryatva*, *tejavastva*, *saarasvatya*, and the power, *lakshmitva*. *Soundaryatva* means that if we see them, we automatically feel like sitting and listening to them. We automatically feel like turning around once more to look at them and see their grace. That which simply attracts our mind is *soundaryatva*.

The next attribute is *tejas*, a sharp radiating energy and clarity. The third is *saarasvatya*. This means that no matter how difficult a concept or idea, they can explain it in a simple way. It merely flows from their tongue where Sarasvati (Goddess of knowledge) is living.

Above all is *lakshmitva*. This means that just by their thought, wealth will be there and the work will happen.

Everything happens according to how they wanted it to happen. When somebody radiates all four of these qualities, he is an incarnation.

Here, Krishna says the same thing. *Soumyatva*, please understand, even for incarnations *soundarya* and *saumyatva* are necessary qualities. Now surely we should imbibe these qualities in our lives.

The *tapas* that is supposed to be done by words, is speaking the truth and speaking pleasing words, *priyahitam cha yat*. Please understand creating a healing effect through words is important. Creating healing feeling through our words is basic for a spiritual practitioner. We should not utter words that hurt others. Our presence should be healing.

Always use pleasing words. Never use sharp or disturbing words.

One more thing, sometimes we don't understand how our words disturb others. We do not know how our words disrespect or emotionally disturb other beings. We must be careful about our speech.

When we sit with somebody, that person should feel, 'Can I sit for a while longer with him? Can I spend more time with him? Can I meet him tomorrow? Will I see him once more?' We should create that healing feeling in the other person. People should wait for us rather than run away. Usually we create a negative effect. We create an uncomfortable feeling. They just run away. A simple, single word if used improperly, can destroy a whole relationship.



Lord Krishna says a spiritual person should use pleasing words and not agitate others. When we do not agitate others, we will not be arrogant. See, this is not even morality, social morality. This is a spiritual practice.

As I explained the other day, the same words we use to hurt others will hurt us as well. We will use these same words towards ourselves as well. This truth is embedded in the science of energy and vibration. So we must be clear about the words we use. Krishna says to study spiritual literature regularly. By regularly studying this great literature, these ideas go again and again into our brain. Consequently, we acquire courage to experiment with the truth. We acquire courage to work with these truths.

I ask you to take up any truth and practice it at least few times. For example, yesterday I told you not to continuously function based on the idea 'me, me, me'. Instead try the idea 'you, you, you'. Try that at least ten times and see the effect in your life. If it does not work out and you throw it away, it's up to you, but at least try it out ten times. You will glimpse the truth expressed by Krishna.

I tell the people who transcribe and edit my discourses and write my biography to be careful about the words and logic that they use. All words must be of a healing nature. This pertains not only to speech but also even more importantly to writing, since we may reach more people through written words. There should be no negativities.

The logic with which we write also must be satisfying, comfortable and easy to read. We cannot even read two pages in some intellectual books. They are so complicated. Philosophers write books for other philosophers. If we are unable to present a concept in a simple way no matter how complex it is, we do not understand that concept and we have no right to write about it.

Intellectuals have two weapons: words and logic. They can be helpful teaching tools if properly used or they can be frightening weapons. It is up to us to choose how to use them, either in the mode of ignorance, aggression or goodness.

I spoke earlier about Masuro Emoto, the Japanese scientist, who has shown the enormous power of spoken words. In his book *Hidden Messages from Water*, Emoto describes his experiments on ordinary water. He spoke to different water samples with different emotions. He then froze and studied the ice crystals. Those samples to which he spoke with love glowed like diamonds. Those samples to which he spoke with hatred seemed grotesque by comparison.

The pictures are on the Internet. You can see them. If words can have such an effect on water, imagine what effect they can have on humans. We are composed almost entirely of water. That is why words hurt so much or they heal so much. Through words we can work miracles.

Krishna talks about austerity in action as well. He speaks about the five conditions that are also in



Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga* as the five disciplines of *yama*, *satya*, *ahimsa*, *asteya*, *aparigraha* and *brahmacharya*. These mean truth in thoughts, words and deeds embodying nonviolence, non-covetousness, simplicity and living in reality with the focus on the Supreme as the ultimate in any kind of penance.

Many feel that the truth must be told even if it hurts. Please understand that if it hurts someone, it cannot be the truth. It is only our perception of truth. It is only a reflection of our ego presented by our mind as truth. We are not in truth if we perceive something with our senses and we draw conclusions with our limited knowledge based upon those perceptions, and then express these as our truth and hurt someone. Be very clear, we are in aggression and ignorance. We are not in truth. We are not in goodness.

Truth is a reflection of compassion. Truth is an expression of compassion. Truth and compassion always go together. For that reason, truth can never hurt.

Q: Master, you have said that the path to bliss is a path of aloneness, not loneliness. Can you explain?

The ancient stories of all nations say that God was lonely. He felt his loneliness and created the world. If I were to write those stories, I would say that God was so full of joy, so abundantly rich that He needed somebody to share it. He needed a whole universe to share it with.

The old stories have errors in them. 'God was lonely. He felt loneliness. He was unhappy being alone so he created the world because He wanted a certain occupation.' This story has a tinge of sadness. So that he could forget His loneliness it is as if the other was needed for Him to become occupied, engaged and involved. People suffering from loneliness must have created these stories! And who has not suffered?

Almost everybody suffers from loneliness at some point. And out of loneliness we seek the other. Buddha did not write these stories. That much is certain. About that I can be absolutely authoritative. Ordinary people who suffer from loneliness wrote these stories. They project their loneliness onto God.

They cannot be happy when they are by themselves. Then they wonder, 'How can God be happy when He is alone?' This is a human projection. They think of God in the same way they think about themselves. They need the other person. They need company. Man needs a woman. Woman needs a man. The other person is a must, otherwise we drown in our own loneliness.

People who didn't know what it is to be God, what it is to be aware and what it is to be awakened must have written these stories. If Buddha had written the stories, they would have a totally different flavor. If a Sufi Master had written them, he would write that God was so happy, joyous, and cheerful and with so much laughter, that He wanted somebody to share it. He simply overflowed and shared it. It was not that He needed the other. He was enough unto Himself, but it



was too much. It was unbearable bliss. Hence He created the world.

The path of aloneness is different from the path of loneliness. Aloneness leads to fulfillment; loneliness leads to disintegration. God created this world out of His aloneness, not loneliness. He felt so full of compassion that He had to share with all beings. He had to gift what He had to everyone.

Everything is a gift out of His abundance. To feel it is to be grateful. To feel it is to be prayerful. Let this be your work upon yourself: feel more and more grateful. Gratitude is the *essence* of prayer. And gratitude is possible only when you see that all is a gift. Each breath is a gift. And what a gift! It is so valuable that there is no way to purchase it. It has no price. You can't purchase life. You can't purchase love. You can't purchase aesthetic sensibility. You can't purchase creativity. You can't purchase intelligence. They are given to us.

Even before you ask for them you are provided with them. Just a little search within and you come upon treasures and treasures. The kingdom of God *is* within you.

How to Give

17.20 Charity that is given at the right place and time as a matter of duty to a deserving candidate who does nothing in return is considered to be in the mode of goodness.

17.21 Charity that is given unwillingly or to get something in return or to gain some result is in the mode of aggression.

17.22 Charity that is given at a wrong place and time to unworthy persons or without paying respect to the receiver or with ridicule is in the mode of ignorance.



Krishna speaks about the concept of *daana* (charity), which I explained.

Charity is sharing. It is not done with the attitude of giving. No, it is done with the attitude of sharing and not expecting *punya* (good result) or some easy route into *Vaikunta* (heaven). Charity is done out of love and gratitude.

‘O God, you have given me so much, now let me share a little bit with society and with the world.’ Charity is the attitude of sharing. Charity that is done out of duty, without any expectation means feeling committed to the whole, to God and with that feeling, giving is a natural commitment. It is given with the attitude that it is my quality and I have to do that. Only then it becomes real *daana*. Sharing at the proper time and place and to a worthy person is charity in the mode of goodness.

There are three kinds of *daana*. Understand, *annadaana* means giving food, clothes and whatever are related for someone’s physical needs. Next is *vidyadaana*. This means not only giving education but also giving whatever someone needs mentally. For example, when somebody is depressed, if you give him or her consoling ideas, that is *vidyadaana*. If somebody does not know how to clean a room, and you teach him or her, that is *vidyadaana*. If somebody does not know how to cut grass, and you teach them, that is *vidyadaana*.

And the third kind is *jnanadaana*, giving spiritual knowledge.

If we give *annadaana*, we satisfy a person for three hours. After three hours, again he needs food. If we give *vidyadaana*, he will have food for himself for one *janma* (life). If we give education, he can earn food for himself. He will make money and buy food for himself. If we give *jnanadaana*, we will satisfy that person for *janma* after *janma*. *Annadaana* satisfies for three hours. *Vidyadaana* satisfies the receiver for one *janma*. If we give *jnanadaana*, it fulfills that person for *janma* after *janma*. He will never fall into depression or the *samsara sagara* (ocean of *samsara*), birth after birth.

Jnanadaana is the ultimate *dhana*.

The western world expresses this moral when they say, 'If a person needs fish and we feed or buy him a fish, he can be satisfied for one meal.' This is *annadaana*. 'If we teach him how to fish, he can manage his whole life without hunger.' This is *vidyadaana*. This is where the western story stops.

In our Healer's Spiritual Initiation, we tell them to stop eating fish! That solves their problem for many cycles of birth. This is *jnanadaana*!

I tell you, understand one thing, even if you have come and sat here accidentally after looking at my pictures, 'I saw a cutout or poster. He is so young. The poster says that he is speaking on Bhagavad Gita. Let me see what he is speaking about.' Even if you have come just to check it out, and you hear the whole Gita, it will help you. At some point, you will remember these truths and execute them. Naturally you cannot be the same person again. At some point when you are about to make a



mistake, you will remember these truths. These thoughts have gone inside you. They will make you correct yourself.

This is *jnanadaana*. The *daana*, the knowledge that you have received now will transform your whole life even if you don't practice it. These words are so powerful that automatically they start working on you. You will not remain the same person. Your depth of depression will be reduced. Your depth of suffering will be reduced. You will feel that you are entering a new life. Your life becomes courageous and a new confidence enters your life. This is *jnanadaana*. This is the ultimate *punya* (virtuous deed), the ultimate *punya* of giving knowledge. No *punya* is equivalent to giving spiritual knowledge.

Giving food bestows three hours of satisfaction. Giving *vidya* or education gives satisfaction for this life. Giving spiritual knowledge satisfies souls *janma* after *janma*. Krishna says when *daana* is done purely out of feeling of sharing, it is *sattvika*, the ultimate good, the ultimate purity.

One more point is that the person who gives loses nothing with *jnanadaana*. With all other *daana*, the person who gives has a little less. In *annadaana*, he who gives will lose and he who receives will gain. In *vidyadaana*, the giver does not lose. He retains the same level. In *jnanadaana*, I tell you a secret, the more you share, the more it grows in you. It is a win-win situation. Here, you receive automatically. It grows in the person who shares.

And I tell you another important secret: don't think you are the only one benefiting. By expressing these things, even I am benefited.

A simple analogy will help explain how this happens. When a woman gives birth to a child, not only the child is born, the woman takes birth as a mother. Until then she is only a woman. Once she gives birth, she is called 'mother'. When a child takes birth, not only the child takes birth, even the mother takes birth. Before that she is not a mother. She is only a woman. The moment she gives birth to a child, both the child and the mother are born. Until that moment, she is not a mother.

In the same way, when you receive spiritual knowledge, not only you, but I too become perfect.

That is why in the Vedic system, they recite the following *mantra* before spiritual lessons:

*Om sahanaavavatu sahanau bhunaktu
saha viryam karavaavahai
tejasvi naavadhitamastu maa vidvishaavahai
Om shanti shanti shantihi*

This *shanti* or peace *mantra* means may we both achieve perfection. May both of us grow. May both of us help each other. May we not have enmity towards each other.

Understand, the *mantra* doesn't say, 'May you learn.' No, it says, 'May both of us learn.' The Vedic system is so humble. To tell you the truth, when I speak, I also learn.

Somebody asked me, 'Master, what are you going to speak about?'



I said, 'Who knows? Just like you, I also sit and listen.'

Here all I have in front of me are *slokas* (verses). I read the *sloka* and say whatever comes forth comes spontaneously; that's all. Just like you, I also sit and listen. Just as you are benefited, I am also benefited. Both of us grow. Only an egoistic person thinks that the disciple is benefited. No! The Master also benefits. He can only become a Master when a disciple happens.

Only when a child is given birth, the woman is called a mother. Only when a disciple becomes enlightened, the *guru* becomes a Master. Otherwise, he is not a Master. If the woman is unable to give birth to a child, she cannot be a mother. Similarly, until you become enlightened, I cannot be called a Master. Be very clear, by sharing this knowledge, I also grow. The person who shares with simplicity and humility, who is very clear and honest about the whole truth of sharing and is not caught in the false ego, his *daana*, his sharing of thoughts is *sattvika* and is related to *sattva guna*.

When you ask questions, if I don't know the answer, I say I don't know the answer. People ask, 'What is this? Master, you are enlightened and you say you don't know.'

I tell them, 'Only an enlightened Master says I don't know. Only he has the courage to accept the truth. If a normal person doesn't know, he minces words. He puts some words here and there and confuses the audience.'

Confusing the audience is not a complicated job. It is easy because the audience is already confused! There is

nothing more to be done. Just use some words, that's all. And it's not a big thing. Only an enlightened person is courageous enough to say, 'I don't know' when he doesn't know.

To answer a question without knowledge doesn't require enlightenment. It needs foolish hypocrisy. We don't need enlightenment for that. The straightforward, honest approach to the truth is what Krishna calls *sattvika daana*.

Here, in whatever way I experience the truth, I simply express it and share it honestly, without reservation. That is *sattvika daana* according to Krishna. And He goes on to explain *rajasdaana* and *tamasdaana*.

Many times charity, the *daana*, is not given voluntarily. Or it may be given to get rid of something or someone. That is why a Hindu wedding is called *kanyadaan*, giving away the bride. The parents are in a hurry to get rid of their responsibility to the unmarried daughter. A thirty-year-old girl sits on her sixty-year father's lap and is given away. Poor father, he must be physically and mentally exhausted!

Earlier I spoke about people who give their property to charitable purposes in their will. What choice do they have? They cannot carry it with them. In many cases they may have fought with their children and decided not to leave them anything. Probably the son or daughter did not listen to their arranged marriage proposal and instead they married after falling in love. Such acts are not acts of charity. They are done with ulterior motives.



If we go into temples in Tamilnadu, we find tube lights that do not emit any light. That is because big bold letters are written on them saying, 'Gifted to this temple by Swaminathan, son of Ramanathan, grandson of Visvanathan' and so on. We will only see black spots, no light. It is more important to show that they have donated a few tubelights than to let people benefit from that light.

There are others whose charity it is better not to accept. Krishna refers to this as giving in ignorance. People will come with money not declared for tax as earned income and gift that to *ashram*. They will use it as a tax saving strategy. What for?

Often close disciples ask why I am not accepting donations from very wealthy people who come to the *ashram* seeking help. I have a policy that unless the person stays with me for a year or more and shows his sincerity in my mission, I shall not accept anything from that person. Why become bonded to people whose motives are not merely selfish but self-defeating?

Parashakti guides the mission and She takes care. What She cannot give, no one else can give. What She decides not to give, who else can give?

Q: Master, what are faith, blind faith and belief? These words are used interchangeably when applied to how we should approach God or Master. But these words do not mean the same, do they?

No, they do not mean the same thing. Belief is also blind faith. It is part of your conditioning. It is unconscious, at least most of the time. It is what you learn from others, especially elders.

Belief comes from the mind, the unconscious mind. So it is blind. But faith is different. Faith grows from the heart. It cannot be imitated.

People ask how they can remember me. I tell them, 'If you think I am your Master and have faith in me, your problem will be in forgetting me, not in remembering me!'

Faith, however, does not mean that you imitate the Master. You can try to imbibe him, you have to commune with him by being open, and you have to internalize him. Whatever then happens let it just happen. But do not force yourself into imitation. Surrender is not imitation.

Each individual is unique; no two individuals are alike. Hence the most dangerous thing in life is to imitate somebody. Imitation means that you will be trying to be like somebody else and this is impossible in the very nature of things. All that you will attain is a phony personality. You will become false. Imitation makes people false.

My disciples are told not to imitate me, not at all. All our Nithya Spiritual Healers who are initiated by me as disciples are taught a formless meditation. In this meditation they start with my form to focus their attention. Then they have to drop my form, which to



them is the focal point of all forms. Even the Master's form is an obstacle to meditation.

By becoming a disciple, you enter a different state. It is not based on beliefs and blind faith. You enter a zone of trust. There are no milestones to measure your progress. There are no prescriptions. There are no guidebooks. It is a path you follow and the destination is wherever the path leads you. Your path is not the same as another disciple's. You are left alone to work out your solution. That is the only way.

Many go through what I call churning. Your conditioning needs to dissolve. So, all old beliefs and value systems come up for review to be re-experienced and relieved. As they surface from the unconscious into the super-conscious state of meditation, those that are not relevant just die out. They burn away in the light of your super-conscious intelligence.

The Master is a guide. He helps you to accept yourself as you are and to accept things around you as they arise. Yes, you can keep on fighting trying to change what happens around you. But that never works. This world is not yours to control. Even the greatest of kings and leaders found that out to their dismay. It is more sensible to accept the world as it is. The change must happen within you. The change that you wish in this world needs to be in you.

When this understanding of acceptance occurs, there will be a great liberation within you. It is a tremendous freedom. It is freedom from time, freedom from mind,

freedom from death. Suddenly you enter into the dimension of eternity; suddenly you become a contemporary of God.

This liberation is an experience that happens. It is not learned. It cannot be taught. Yes, you can listen to my words and imbibe my body language to reach there. The effort must be yours. It is your adventure and discovery. When it happens you sit up in amazement. The world is full of surprises, all pleasant.

A Zen Master was dying. His disciples had gathered. The chief disciple asked the old man, 'Master, where would you like to be buried? Will it be your birthplace or under the tree where you became enlightened or here in this place where are you going to leave your body?'

The Master opened only one eye, winked, laughed and said, 'Surprise me!' He closed his eyes and was gone.

Each moment is a thrill, a surprise. The old man was right; he said 'Surprise me.'

My disciples become aware that they have no identity. They don't belong to any caste, creed, state or nation. They are Divine. They identify themselves with God. They discard the idea of 'I'. They go beyond it. They surpass and transcend it.

We need to go beyond body and mind to realize who we are. Self-enquiry is about transcending what we



perceive as us. It is dropping what we think as identity, our name, the various labels we call ourselves, including our relationships as well as successes and failures. If one is identified with the body then one will be afraid of old age, disease, death. If one is identified with the mind, one is again afraid of growing old, losing one's memory and so on. We are nothing less than pure Consciousness. We are not the body. We are not the mind either. We are mere witnesses and observers of this body and mind.

Our true nature is not uni-dimensional; it is multi-dimensional. It is like nature; like the colors of nature. In nature, light has seven colors and sound has seven notes. When all the seven colors converge in harmony white is born. When all the seven notes of music converge in deep harmony, silence is born, and silence is the ultimate in music.

White does not look like color, neither does silence look like music. White is the ultimate color because it contains all the colors but in such harmony, in such a synthesis, that no color shows up; all disappear into each other. In exactly the same way silence *is* music, the ultimate music, but the harmony is so deep that nothing is heard.

Zen Masters call it the sound of one hand clapping. You cannot hear anything. When you don't hear anything the ultimate music happens. You just need a little more sensitivity, a little more awareness, a little more meditative feeling. When one starts hearing that which cannot be heard, one comes to know that which cannot be known.

Meditation is a method to hear the sound of one hand clapping and to know what is not known. In meditation we find ourselves. This is the space of the ultimate truth about us. We get to know who we are. This knowledge of who we really are is enlightenment. Enlightenment is not a goal; it cannot be a destination, simply because we are already there. We just become aware of who we are. That is all.

I tell my disciples that when they worship, they seek God. They believe in God and seek Him. In meditation, they become God. They trust themselves and become aware. Bliss flowers when belief evolves into unshakeable faith and trust. Gratitude overflows. The Master no longer resides outside. He has moved inside you. The ultimate Master is the *atma guru*, the Self.



Thou Art That

17.23 'Om Tat Sat' is said to be the threefold name of the Eternal Being (Brahma). Persons with good (brahmanic) qualities, the Vedas, and the selfless service (Seva, yajna) were created by and from Brahma in the ancient times.

17.24 Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity prescribed in the scriptures are always commenced by uttering 'OM' by the knowers of the Supreme Being.

17.25 Various types of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are performed by the seekers of liberation by uttering 'Tat' (or He is all) without seeking a reward.



17.26 The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of Reality and goodness. The word 'Sat' is also used for an auspicious act, O Arjuna.

17.27 Sincerity in sacrifice, charity, and austerity is also called 'Sat'. Selfless service for the sake of the Supreme is, in truth, termed as 'Sat'.

17.28 Whatever is done without sincerity, whether it is sacrifice, charity, austerity, or any other act is called 'Asat'. It has no value here or hereafter, O Arjuna.

In conclusion, Krishna moves on to a different plane altogether.

So far He explained sacrifice, austerity and charity. He clarified what needs to be done and how. He spelled out the different modes based on the nature of people in relation to performing sacrifice, austerity and charity.

Please understand that all kinds of food, penance, sacrifice or charity fall into the basic three categories explained by Krishna - *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*. These translate as the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. But the important thing is that as long as they are done in the materialistic world, they are conditioned. When they are done with the attitude of gratitude to the Divine and Existence, only then you encounter spiritual progress or spiritual elevation. Our scriptures explain that anything done in the nature of *rajas* or *tamas* cannot give the ultimate result. Only the act done in the attitude of *sattva* or goodness gives the final result. One who does such acts without this awareness has temporary results but not the final result.



In the days of Mahabharata, sacrificial rituals were a part and parcel of daily life. This is not the case today. The *brahmana* were the keepers of the sacred knowledge that connected the physical ritual with the metaphysical truth expressed by the great *rishis* in the *Vedas*. They were the keepers of the flame, in a real sense, since most Vedic rituals invoked and addressed the fire energy. Sacrifices were directed towards elemental energies and celestial beings. Austerity was directed towards your own self. Charity was directed towards those around you.

The *brahmana* were expected to lead an austere and charitable life in keeping with the spirit of their profession. In this chapter Krishna elaborates on these concepts so that everyone can move forward on the path to liberation. It is not only for the *brahmana*, it is also for *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *sudra*. Any member of any *varna* (caste) is qualified for liberation if he follows these principles. Liberation has nothing to do with birth.

The prime requirement is sincerity, *shraddha*. *Shraddha* refers as well to the understanding that sacrifice, austerity or charity is not directed towards oneself or a material goal. They are directed to the Supreme Consciousness.

In the last three verses Krishna provides the technique, the *sutra*, to achieve this transfer of focus from self to Self. He provides the method by which anyone can surrender the results of his activities, the fruits of his action, *karma phala*, to the Divine. He provides the tool in the form of the invocation, *Om Tat Sat*.

The three words *OM Tat Sat* are the words of the Divine – *OM iti etat brahmano nedistham namaha* – this shows the first goal, the beginning. *Tat Twam Asi* indicates the second goal, the continuation. *Sat eva saumya* is the third goal or final result. All three combined give the words *OM Tat Sat*.

This is why these words have such great importance or significance. Any person doing charity or work with the attitude of addressing *Om Tat Sat* will be with Existence, the Divine Consciousness.

These three words simply imply: ‘I offer all to that Truth. I surrender everything to that Divine. Let that be Truth.’ This is the *Maha Vakya*, the great truth, handed down by the Master to Arjuna as the technique to ensure sincerity in all activities of sacrifice, austerity and charity.

Please understand that any action, whether penance, charity or sacrifice, has no meaning when the purpose is not to achieve the Ultimate, the Divine.

The final aim in all the Vedas is to gain the experience of Krishna or the Supreme Consciousness. No success, fulfillment or happiness is possible without following this principle.

The *guru* or spiritual Master is the only being who can help you and guide you to make your life successful and fulfilled.

Understand, people are conditioned to worship all kinds of deities or demi-gods or spirits right from birth. This is simply because their nature is from one of the



three *gunas*. Among the three *gunas*, *sattva guna* is considered the best and higher than the other *gunas*, namely *rajas* and *tamas*. But the path of achieving Ultimate Consciousness, the understanding of Krishna, goes beyond and transcends all three *gunas*.

This is where the role of a *guru* or spiritual Master is important. He directs and leads you on the path of proper understanding and for an experience of Ultimate Consciousness. Such an understanding, such a perception, leads to faith and ultimately to love of the Divine. This is the purpose and final goal of life.

Let us all pray to *Parabrahma Krishna* with all sincerity to give us the experience of this chapter of the Gita that leads to the attainment of Ultimate Consciousness, *nithyanandam!*

Q: Master, you said that if we give importance to negative thoughts, samskaras get embedded in the unconscious zone. Please explain. Vaastu consultants recommend changes in home for improving positive energy, balance and if we can't do it, then what?

If you can't do it, then forget about it. What is there?

You see, if you give importance to *vastu*, *vaastu* automatically becomes all right. *Vastu* means Consciousness. Change *vastu*, then *vaastu* automatically changes. *Vaastu* is a great science when you follow it. But nowadays, so many unnecessary rules have been added and it has gone to extreme foolishness. So whatever you

can, do it, otherwise don't bother, just change the *vastu*. That is enough. Changing *vastu* automatically changes *vaastu*.

Just bother about *vastu*, *vaastu* automatically takes care of itself.

I tell people, *vaastu* is one or two volts of electricity. *Vastu* is 1000 volts of electricity. Just change the *vastu* and *vaastu* will change. I have spoken extensively on *vaastu* and the science of outer space and inner space, in the lecture, *From Place to Space*.

If you are interested in *vaastu*, I have given scientific explanations in that discourse. I reveal how *vaastu* is a science as well as how you can change *vaastu* and balance the energies without changing the house. If you have interest in *vaastu*, listen to the discourse *From Place to Space* for more details.

Q: Master, the other day you talked about the question on birth, meditation and liberation, and this whole life cycle of samsara. The answer was not given. Could you please provide the answer?

Understand, I spoke about the question so that *you* would think about that. The question cannot be answered. The question is a technique to create seeking or quest in your being. The question is not supposed to be answered. You must find your own answer. *Atman* or Divine is the answer. However, with this word what have you understood?



Is the questioner here today? Tell me. The reason for birth, meditation and liberation is Consciousness, Divine, God. Now I answered. What have you understood?

Nothing, one more word, that's all. At the most, you can look up the meaning of this word in the Oxford Dictionary and face more confusion, nothing else. Understand, the question cannot be answered. You must experiment with this question. May you contemplate on this question. May you be disturbed by this question. You will achieve the state wherein you will never be disturbed by anything.

Q: Dear Master, will a mother's prayers work for her children?

Not only for her children, it can work for the whole world. You can pray for the whole world. It will work.

Q: How can we differentiate between intuitive and impulsive decisions? In this information age, one's decision directly or indirectly impacts many people. Can you kindly help us understand this?

The moment you doubt whether it is an intuitive decision or an impulsive decision, you can be sure that it is an impulsive decision. Intuition does not leave any doubt.

If your decision within a group is based upon intuition, you have tremendous power to convince and

lead the whole group. You will not only have the decision, you will have the power to execute the decision. You will have both in your life.

Q: All enlightened Masters I have heard about left home for at least a number of years to experience enlightenment. Is this necessary? If not, why did they do it?

They did it to understand that it is unnecessary. What to do? Unless you do it, you don't understand that it is not necessary. People ask me, 'Master, you did so much *tapasya* and became enlightened. Should we also do *tapasya*?'

Please understand, I tell you the honest truth. I did so much *tapasya* because I was a fool. I did not know. So I did it.

For you there is no need.

Understand this simple analogy. There is one lock and ten thousand keys are lying near it. I do not know which key will open the lock, so I work with all ten thousand keys. One by one, I experiment. Suddenly one key opens the lock. Opening the lock does not take time. Experimenting with ten thousand keys took me ten years. Understand that opening took me one second, but experimenting with ten thousand keys took ten years of *tapasya*.

Why should you experiment with the ten thousand keys? Here I am giving you the right set of keys. You



can straightaway open the lock and experience. There is no need to waste your whole life with ten thousand keys. I had to do it because I did not have the right person to tell me, 'This is the key. Take it and open the lock.'

For that reason, I had to play with all ten thousand keys until the lock opened. For you there is no need. Why waste your life playing with ten thousand keys? You neither have the time nor the energy. Here I am, straightaway giving you the key.

I have given you the best keys. Straightaway use them. Open the lock. You will open it in a second. Open the door and enjoy the fresh air that is in your Consciousness.

In these discourses, I have given you at least ten or twelve keys. Take up any key and work with it. You will open the door and experience the Ultimate Truth and enjoy the fresh air.

Q: When everything is Divine in this universe, how can there be good and bad, happiness and sadness, lower level and upper level, jivatma and paramaatma, permanent and impermanent, etc. Is it not true only in the eyes of the perceiver?

True. Only in the eyes of the perceiver is there good and bad. In reality, there is no good and bad. Reality is beyond the duality of good and bad. Be very clear, when you achieve that state, there is no good and bad. There is

something called good and bad only on the normal, material level.

Q: Respected Paramahansa Sri Nithyananda, my love and pranams to you, Kindly answer these questions now or at such time as you feel appropriate. If God is at such a high vibration, as to be unaware of deaths caused by catastrophes, just as an SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) is unaware of the ants it crushes, then does it not follow that God does not hear our cries for help, when we are swept up in these catastrophes. And if that is the case, do our prayers reach God?

(Background: This question arises from an earlier question when a person asked why so many die in natural disasters. Nithyananda replied: Nature is unaware that people are dying in a tsunami or earthquake. It is like you driving a SUV over an anthill. Thousands of ants die. Do you notice? Your frequency is different from the ants. In the same way, Nature's frequency is different from ours.)

Nice question. Understand, when I said there is a difference in the frequencies of ants, man and God, I didn't mean that your prayers don't reach God. But the reactions will not be as you expect.

It is unlike the Vithalacharya Telugu movies where a brilliant laser-like light comes out of the hands of Vishnu or Krishna. Whoosh! It falls on an eighty-year-old woman and she suddenly becomes eighteen and exclaims, 'Ah, what happened to me? I have become a new person.'



Please do not expect that. When I say that God's frequency is different, do not compare it to those kinds of movies where you suddenly open your eyes, and see everything as new.

No! Nothing of that sort will happen. That is what I meant by God's frequency is different from your frequency.

For example, let's say you dream that a tiger is chasing you. In your dream, you are running and shouting, 'Give me a weapon. I must kill this tiger.' It is all very real at the time of the dream to you. To the dreamer it is not merely the mind.

Understand that when you have faith, *Parashakti* responds using the form of the *guru*, the form of the Master.

The Master can also become aware. See, for example, if ten thousand people are having my *darshan* at a time, they see me as if in a vision. I can become aware of that the moment I want to download that information. As of now, I am using the mind for this work of talking to you, not to perceive anything else.

For example, here is a watch and a file on this table. If I look I can see the watch. But I am not looking at the watch right now so I do not know the time. However, at any moment I can see the time.

There are various statues around you in this hall. Because I am seeing you now, I do not see the statues. It is not that I can't see them. In a single moment, I can see them. In the same way, it is not that I can't know about

who is receiving my *darshan*. This moment, if I close my eyes I can know; however, right now I am using my mind to see you.

One more thing, why did I say it is not in the Master's control? Actually your sincerity plays a role. When you are insincere even God cannot help you. For example, if you need to be rescued from drowning, at least you must stretch out your hand. Otherwise, you will pull in the person rescuing you.

Here, understand that your perceived answers are not merely the product of your ideas. No! Your perceived answers are from the Master, from the Divine.

Because of your trust, you get the vision, the *darshan*. Otherwise, people will ask for *darshan* and it will become like a profession. You must have tremendous surrender to experience *darshan*, to have visions.

Masters can know the moment they want to know. It is not that they are unaware of it. So please be very clear, it is a whole, complete and conscious process. The Master is aware, when he wants to know. I generally don't interfere in *Parashakti's* work.

People tell me, 'Master, I saw you in a dream. I saw you in a *darshan*. You healed and helped me.'

I tell them, 'Not me, it was *Parashakti*. It was your faith in the Divine. *Parashakti* used my form to help you.'

As long as I understand, 'I am not', *Parashakti* will use my form to help you. The moment I think 'I am' this form will be thrown in the trashcan.



As long as you are out, God stays in your house. The moment you enter, God leaves. If we don't live in our body, the Divine will live in it, using our form.

I can say only one thing. Because I vacated this house, She is using this house to bless you. That's all.

I have vacated, I have given this house to Her without collecting rent! I have asked Her to stay without asking for rent. So *Parashakti*, the Divine is using this form. Otherwise, it is not done by me.

People tell me, 'I have become all right. I had your *darshan*. You gave me the answer. It is all your grace.'

I tell them, 'No, your deep sincere trust and faith towards the Master, God or *guru* has guided you.'

The other day someone came to me, a person deeply dedicated to Paramahansa Yogananda, a great Master who lived in Los Angeles. This person has been doing Kriya Yoga for many years. Suddenly one day he was sitting and weeping and praying to Yogananda, 'Please show me a living Master.'

He told me, 'Yogananda gave me *darshan* and gave me your website id, Master, www.dhyanapeetam.org. He asked me to go and see the website!'

That's a strange thing. It's a crazy thing! He said, 'I went to your website and saw you. I immediately felt connected and came to meet you.' He told me, 'It is only through your grace that it happened.'

I said, 'No, It was your faith towards Paramahansa Yogananda.'

Your Master shows you the living Master. Sometimes Masters who have left the body guide you to the living Master.

There are so many related incidents. One person was praying to Yogananda, at his *Jiva samadhi* (enlightened Master's burial site), asking him to show a living Master. Suddenly for no reason, we went there. He saw me and came to me. When I put my hand on his head and blessed him, he suddenly entered into ecstasy and tears started pouring. He was in the same mood for hours.

He told me, 'Twelve years ago I meditated with Paramahansa Yogananda's technique the first time. That same experience repeated today.'

Some connection! Masters always guide disciples to living Masters.

I tell people, never think you need to spread me. So many people, my marketing agents, are already there. Paramahansa Yogananda, Ramakrishna and Mahavatar Babaji are driving the mission. Nothing else needs to be done.

Q: If Atman is created, or is swayambhu (self-created), why was the body required for its movement?



Atman is swayambhu. Body is not required for Atman. Please be clear, the body requires Atman. Atman does not require the body. Someone tells Ramana Maharshi, 'Bhagavan, six rupees per month is enough to live in Arunachala. (In those days, six rupees was a big amount). Six rupees is enough per month and I can do atma-sadhana (self-enquiry).'

Bhagavan says, 'Fool, in order to live, even body and mind are unnecessary.' Only body needs *Atman*. *Atman* does not need body.

Q: If Atman is not creating karma, and body is creating karma, then Atman is only the carrier of karma. Is this true?

Atman is not even a carrier of *karma*. The seven subtle bodies that we discussed yesterday are carrying the *karma*. *Atman* doesn't carry *karma*.

Q: Like Arjuna, I have my own battle to fight, but instead of it being the Mahabharata, it is the 'Law School Court Competition'. I know what must be done, but I lack the focus and energy to accomplish that. Do I lack sincerity? How do I build it?

Nice question. Just don't bother. Relax and do it. The Divine will take care. This question is answered for the questioner and not the question.

Q: *Atman is indestructible, so it is everlasting. From where did it originate? If Ishwara/Atman/God is regulating, is it the same Ishwara who made Atman?*

Please understand, *Atman, Ishwara, Paramatman* are different trademarks, that's all. Just like the same pizza is sold in different shops, they are different trademarks. It is the same experience but different words are used such as *Atman, God* or *Paramatman*.

Eat one pizza; that's enough! One Divine experience is enough. Nothing else is necessary.

Q: *Dear Master, I have attended your discourses since Sunday. When I am in your presence I feel blissful. I feel lost in your presence. I feel like I have fallen in love with you, in a pure way. I then go home, and dream of you. It is sometimes hard to distinguish if I am at your discourse or dreaming.*

The problem is that my sensitivity has heightened so much that my emotions are like a seesaw, going up and down constantly. For example, I lose my temper with crazy drivers. I find it hard to have compassion for selfish people. I feel lonely and am unable to fit in with anyone. I find it difficult to have a conversation with people as I did before. These days I feel like being alone and quiet. Does this mean I have too many engrams in my seven bodies?

Also I feel sad that your discourse will be over soon, but my heart feels full of life. How can I deal with these negativities?



Please understand that in the initial level there will be a little struggle. However, when you grow in sensitivity, you will feel compassionate towards everybody. When you also feel compassionate towards selfish people, your compassion is fulfilled.

Accept people as they are, even if they don't accept you as you are. That happens when you grow in maturity.

Of course this is one phase. This is a good phase, nothing wrong. You are growing, but this is not the end. Go deep and you will experience.

Q: You said earlier that smriti is alterable and it changes with time. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna talks about the caste system and who can be a brahmin, etc. But in India we have so many problems with the caste system. So, if smriti is properly interpreted, it should not give rise to any problems. Am I correct?

It is an important question. Let us analyze this.

First, our *smritis*, especially the Bhagavad Gita, state that caste is based upon a person's mental setup and not upon one's birth. It is not based on the *yoni*. It is based on the *karma*.

The system is based on the mental setup of the person, not on the birth.

So why should the caste system be created, even based on mental setup? Human beings cannot live

without a community system. People must feel they belong to a group. We cannot straightaway tell people to feel connected to the whole universe. That happens only after enlightenment. Until that time, they need to feel that they belong to a particular community.

For that reason, the Masters decided, 'Let us create a community system base whereby people will grow.' In India, the community is system based upon wisdom and intelligence. Importance is given to intelligence.

The person who works for the sake of the wellbeing of others, who does his work as a service, is a *brahmin* or *brahmana*. A *brahmin* shares knowledge or wisdom. The person who works out of fear in order to protect himself or people whom he considers his own is a *kshatriya*. The person who works out of greed, to acquire more wealth, is a *vaishya*. The person who works to serve the other groups in order to satisfy his hunger and thirst, also working primarily for himself, is a *shudra*.

This is the way Masters created the community system based upon intelligence and not birth. In the course of time, just like all truths, this truth was somehow lost.

One more thing: For any great experiments, any great innovation, if the next generation does not continue good research and development (R&D), the researches end in failure. Somehow our R&D department was not strong enough. It has failed.

That is the reason we started associating ourselves with birth instead of mental setups. At least our



community was created based upon intelligence, whereas other countries created communities based upon money. One small example: get into a commercial aircraft and cross through the first-class seats to go to the economy class. Tell me, how do the first-class passengers look at us? It is the same way as the fanatic higher-class person looks at a lower-class person.

In every country, the community or caste system exists. Never say that the caste system exists only in India. India bases the societal division upon intelligence. Other countries base it on money and power. That is why many other countries are ready to cut our throats based on money.

In India, the whole importance goes to intelligence. If we want to be considered a higher person, we must study. If we want the highest social respect, we must renounce and become intelligent. That's why in Tamil they say, *thuravikku vaenthanum thurumbu*. 'Even a king will come and touch a *sanyasi's* (sage) feet, even though the *sanyasi* has nothing.' He has one thing: intelligence and wisdom that he shares with the world.

In India, even if the community system has degraded, the original system was created based on intelligence, not money or power. Respect is given to the person carrying the wisdom, the wealth of knowledge, and not outer, worldly wealth. Other countries pay respect to money or power - 'might-is-right' becomes the governing philosophy.

According to any other country's standard, I'm a mere boy with nothing. But according to the Indian standard,

I'm respected and even worshipped. Even top-level political or business people come to me with respect. Why? We are respected because of the enlightenment, wisdom or the service we do based upon the enlightenment.

Our system is created based upon intelligence.

One more thing: just because it is degraded today because of a few people, we cannot condemn the original system. Just because some mistake happened at some point, we cannot condemn the whole system. The system has helped us in many ways.

Now, it is time for the system to die.

But let us clear the system of its corruption with respect and gratitude. Why should we continuously condemn and weaken ourselves? If someone has a tumor in his hand, let us do surgery and take out the tumor. Why should we kill that person? Somehow we acquired the tumor, some misunderstanding. Let us analyze and clear it and use the other parts. There is no need to condemn the whole system.

We need to look into these things with a little more love and compassion.

Please understand: Because one community associated themselves with the scriptures, the scriptures are still alive. They were preserved because one community took the responsibility. They gave up outer comforts. They gave up everything in the outer world. They dedicated their time, energy and effort to recite and preserve the



scriptures. Our scriptures are the oldest scriptures. They are preserved in an authentic way - without any system, any other way to record, any other way to transmit, any other way to preserve - just by repeating and memorizing. Hundreds of thousands of *slokas* (verses), millions of aphorisms, are preserved because of the dedication of one community. Our system is not *entirely* wrong; just a few small corruptions have entered.

All we need is some surgery for the tumor. We need not murder the system. When we have the attitude of murder, we not only kill the system, but we also kill ourselves.

Even though we might not understand, we might not believe, we might not accept, we belong to that system. So, go for surgery and not murder. That is the right attitude.

Q: There are great ideals in spirituality. What bothers me is that I find a divergence between the ideals and daily life. There is not only caste discrimination, but there are also a variety of other discriminations, such as the discrimination against poor people. When a maid comes to work in the house, and she is ten years old and is missing school, my heart aches. That will not happen in the West. I'm not defending the West, but we must be cautious when we make statements about the West. Yes, ours is a great religion. I have great love for it, but have we updated it? Have we moved with time? Whose

responsibility is it to make sure we continuously update the religion? I also find a great love for materialism, which is against the laws of Hinduism. It is not enough for great men like you to practice the religious ideals, but it should be possible for the common man to practice it. How can we say that we have spiritual freedom in the East and not in the West? We need to look at what we mean by spiritual freedom.

First, regarding the statements that you made: are they your conclusions or questions? If it's a question, I'm here to answer. If it's your conclusion, I have no right to answer.

Second: you made a statement about the poor girl working and missing school. Please understand, just because of our religion, our population avoids so much misery and suffering.

Look into the history of the West. Their population is ten times less, yet there is more violence. Our people are silent, beautiful, accepting the poverty, accepting the disease and accepting everything because of our spiritual background.

India is in a much better condition, if we compare the quantity, the volume of the population, the population of the West. If we see all the basic things, we are doing better compared to the West.

One more thing: you said that I must be careful when I make comments. In the beginning I said clearly, when I want to show the uniqueness or extraordinary nature of



the culture, I must compare a few things. Please don't feel hurt.

I have to say a few things when I represent the truth. I'm not here to condemn anything. But I'm here to show the truth as it is, to explain the facts as they are. I say again and again that whatever statements I made are the truth and facts! I'm clear and I reinforce the letter and spirit of the statements that I made in the whole discourse.

The next thing: India handles many problems because the common mass of India follows spiritual principles. Please don't expect the mass of India to become enlightened. I tell you one thing: talk to any farmer in any Indian village. You will find that he knows more about spirituality and religion than any professor of philosophy from another country. Because they practice religion, our people do not rebel. They are nonviolent, even after experiencing suppression, poverty and disease.

In contrast, look at life in the West. For instance, if somebody is homeless, do we go near him? We fear him. We don't even lower our car window. We know he can harm us. But in India if a beggar comes, do we feel disturbed? Do we feel threatened?

In the West, I'm advised: 'if a lower-class guy comes near the car, do not lower your window. He may be violent.' But in India a homeless person is nonviolent. Violence is not associated with poverty. Poverty is not a sin in the Indian constitution, in the Indian system. Poverty is either handled with compassion or it is

neglected. In other systems, poverty is a sin. With poverty, we have no right to exist in the society. If we penetrate deeply and look into social systems, the gangsters and the homeless continuously rebel against rich people. They are continuously into terrorist activities. If we compare on a per-individual basis, we do not see this in India on the scale that we see in other countries. It may be less than one percent.

Rebelliousness against the rich is less in India because of spiritual ideas such as *karma*, accepting life and the whole world is nothing, etc. These concepts are infused into our system more than any other society. Poverty in a way is respected in our country. The educated society respects poverty and a simple way of life.

In India when a beggar stands near us, we give him money or neglect him. We don't disrespect him because he is poor. If we didn't give him money, we feel a little guilty. Either we do something or we carry guilt that we did not do what we were supposed to do. Even that guilt is the offshoot of the spirituality.

I don't think we have this in other countries. In the West, we feel frightened and threatened by someone who is underprivileged. We disrespect the guy because he is poor.

And one more thing: In India, whether we want it or not, whether we believe it or not, these type of ideas are continuously put into our head. We are made to continuously listen to something about spirituality. When we take into account India's large population, we have



surely done a great job. I applaud the job done by our people. I don't think any other country can handle such a variety of languages and cultures.

For such a large population, no other country could manage the peace. No other country could manage the social setup.

Continuously I travel around the world. In the last year, I flew almost two hundred thousand miles. When I visit different countries, I don't find the huge variety of languages, clothes and food that exists in India. The difference between Europe and America is less than the difference between Karnataka and Tamilnadu (neighboring states in India).

India exists as a country without any problems just because of the religious faith and structure.

Please be very clear that we are already doing a good job. Don't think we need to go from bad to good. We must go from good to better. We have condemned ourselves for so long. It is time to stand up! We are not in bad shape. We are in good shape. We just need to get into better shape! Only from good to better and never from bad to good!

We have done a great job!

One more consideration: at least the main problems of caste system do not exist in present-day India. Enough of culture and acceptance has spread around the country. We should not speak about India with data that we have collected about thirty years ago, from a time before we left the country.

Today, practically every village has an educational and medical facility, as well as some understanding about life. India has improved, especially after the new way of life and social service started spreading around the country, helped by the post-Vivekananda movements that serve the society.

I don't want to go into minute details. Please go into this deeply and see. We don't even hear of many types of crimes. We hear them only where things have become westernized.

In India all the houses are open. Kids move around wherever they want. At least in my village, I used to enter into any house and eat. Hardly a few hundred houses and I could enter any home and eat because that is the way we lived. We can't imagine these things in other countries.

Wherever child abuse and all these things occur in India, it's a lower percentage compared to the total volume of people. And the next thing, these kinds of crimes have increased only where television and Western influences have entered.

In the past and in the present, we have done a great job. Of course we can do better, no doubt, but we don't need to feel worthless. Sometimes, our guilt that we have not achieved what we want is projected on society and we collect data that supports our guilt and projects a picture. If we stand on the platform of truth and analyze, it is always from good to better, not from bad to good.



You say that some ten-year old girl is working, etc. You can collect data from wherever you want. I see many Mexican and other girls working in houses in other countries. Of course, the age is a little higher, that's all!

And you talk about education. Even after education, what do they do? Why are there so many gangsters? Even the idea of a gangster doesn't exist in India. In India a crime is done for the sake of money or benefit. There are three kinds of crimes: crimes done for the benefit of the world, crimes done to have direct benefit by robbing the person and crimes done for no reason other than the sake of enjoyment.

This third-level of crime is practically non-existent in India. We hear about many gangsters and crimes done for the sake of enjoyment in other countries, such as shooting in the highways. I have never heard of such crimes in India. People only shoot and kill for some benefit. But other countries have so much third-level crime because of deep depression and rebellious consciousness, 'Why should the other person have something while I don't?' In India, people don't say: 'Why should he have and why don't I have?' Instead they say: 'How can I have?' The third-level of crime is *tamasic* (indolence) and practically absent in India.

And one more thing: never believe the western media projection of India. The media also plays a major role in creating misconceptions.

For nine years, I walked the length and breadth of India without touching money. Actually this experiment is called

parivrajaka in Sanskrit. It is supposed to be done as a vow by spiritual teachers to understand the common life of the country. You are given a rule that you should not touch money or preserve food for the next meal. For nine years, I lived like this. I'm a healthy young man. Yet for nine years, I did not work for my food, clothes or shelter. I was just claiming that I was meditating and doing research on inner science. I was given food, clothes and shelter with respect.

Where else could this happen? Any other country would have asked me to work or put me in a homeless shelter with disrespect. I was given everything - not just in one village but in every village. I walked from Kanyakumari to Tapovan, from the southern end of India to the north, from Akshardham to Ganga Sagar, from the west to the east. The people of every village had love and respect for our truths, our wisdom and our spiritual practices. Above all, even if they were unable to practice it, they had tremendous respect for people who do. That in itself is a great thing!

When we respect someone who practices, we imbibe truth in our own lives.

The respect for our hero makes us imbibe those qualities in our life. I've seen so much *bhakti* (devotion) in some villages, especially in Gujarat (a state in north-west India). Once I traveled from Akshardham (a town in Gujarat) and I stayed in a village. An elderly lady invited me to her house. Her only property was a cow and a hut. From the cow's milk, she made curds and sold it to support herself. I stayed with her for ten days. She had a small Krishna idol. She lived with that Krishna. She



talked to that Krishna. Everyday she sold her milk and offered the money at Krishna's feet and told Krishna her complaints: 'Today that fellow did not give me the money. He cheated me. Today I got more milk.' She just lived with Krishna!

After ten days, I told her that I was leaving to have the *darshan* (worship) of *Somnath* (Shiva Temple in Gujarat).

She said, 'No, no, why are you leaving? I will not ask you to work. I will always feed you. Please stay with me. You don't need to work.'

See the love!

I became emotional and said, 'Ma, it is because of people like you that India is alive.'

I know the backbone of India. Don't speak from the superficial skin and sweat of India. Speak to me from the backbone! The western media portrays the sweat smell, not the backbone. I have seen this in every village. Every village I walked through or sometimes used a bullock cart (cart drawn by bulls), covering about 30,000 miles! I know the backbone. The media is sensational. They need sensations to show people. I can relate a thousand incidents.

You can quote one ten-year old working without going to school. I can quote millions of people who give education to others who cannot afford it. Only in India, charitable educational institutions give free education to many people. More than forty three percent of education

is given to people by religious charitable institutions. In no other country is so much education given by the charitable institutions!

One thing to note when it comes to percentage is the quantity. Another country's one hundred percent is India's five percent! See the quantity. I know how many thousands of people are given education free of cost in India. At least in the last fifty years, we have done a tremendous job, especially the post-Vivekananda movements. I'm the very proof! How many houses are ready to give food? How many villages are ready to take care of spiritual truths just because of this saffron cloth that I am wearing?

And remember: I may have been a robber or a thief. There were many possibilities because I was new to that village. We have media and televisions in the villages also. The people are aware of criminals coming in disguises and committing crimes. But beyond all these things, the spirit and culture are alive.

I was in the Himalayas one week ago. We saw thousands of *sanyasis* wandering like I did and not caring about the next meal. These people who are taken care of by the society prove that we respect and follow the religious ideals. We have done a great job when we consider the size of the population.

When I return to my country after traveling all over the world, I feel like touching the earth and putting it on my head. I feel gratitude to the culture and the country in which I was born and brought up.



Let me tell you: when premature babies are born, we need an incubator to keep the baby healthy. Like that, India is a spiritual incubator. Indian culture is a spiritual incubator. We may say there are one or two holes here and there but still it is a usable and working spiritual incubator.

Q: I have a comment to make from Vivekananda's words: 'If only we can combine the spiritual wisdom of the East and the material wealth of the West.'

Yes, I'm all for progress but I'm not for condemning!

Please be clear: we have not done anything wrong!

Please understand that only on the full moon can we see the black patches on the moon. We can't see the patches on a new moon. By its own light, the moon shows its black patches. By its own glory, India shows its problems.

Because we have the ideal of perfection, we understand and realize our problems. The moment we understand our problems, we prove that we are great. That is proof that we are intelligent.

Why do we say that we have a problem? Because we have the ideal of perfectionism! That shows we have achieved great things. The idea of perfectionism reaching a billion people is a great job!

Understand: even people in the lowest slum celebrate *Vinayaka Chaturti* and *Durga Puja* (festivals in honor of Hindu Gods). They may not know the spiritual ideal of

Vinayaka (Ganesha, the Hindu deity), but they know there is some Energy greater than us. That is why they have simple rules like bowing down to that Energy, 'We should do this and we should not do that,' etc. Reaching even the most deluded and the lowest rung within a population of a billion people is not a joke. That is a big job! Understand that that itself is a big job!

When I was in Brazil, a Catholic priest from India came to meet me.

I asked him: 'Father, how are you?'

He said: 'Master, if any religion wants to flourish, they must come to India. If they want workers, they must come to India. Whether it is Christianity or Hinduism, we can only get them from India! Brazil has a huge representation of Catholics, yet nobody becomes a monk. Nobody takes up the spiritual life. Rio de Janeiro has only three native Catholic monks and thirty-three Christian priests from Kerala (an Indian state). In India, the spiritual life is in our blood.'

Whether it is Krishna, Shiva or Christ, living the spiritual life is a basic thing. It is in the blood of the population all across the country! That alone shows we have done a big job.

I've seen this in many countries besides Brazil. The fulltime, dedicated monks or spiritual servants are from India.

One more point: only two percent of the Christians in London are churchgoers whereas in India ninety-three



percent of Christians attend church. Even other religious systems are stronger in India because the root, the understanding of following a higher, spiritual life is in our blood. Indian Christians are more dedicated to their beliefs. Whatever our people believe in spiritually, they are dedicated to that. If we penetrate and see the root, we see that our ancient Masters did a tremendous job.

Compared to the volume of people that we are handling, whatever service we do is like mixing *asafoetida* (Indian spice) in the ocean.

Somebody asked me: 'Master, do you think you can change the country by your service? Whatever you do is like mixing *asafoetida* in the ocean. The smell of the ocean will not change. How can you help the whole world?'

I told him: 'I don't know if I can change the whole ocean, but my hand smells beautiful. I'm enjoying that, nothing else can be done.'

Q: Respected Master, I am one of the sheep-lion who has forgotten his lion self. Now I want to roar. How?

Just roar, that's all. There can be no *how*. The moment you ask *how*, you forget you are a lion. Just roar. Nothing else needs to be done.

Let us all experience the sincerity and imbibe, experience the truths of *Parabrahma* Krishna. Let us pray to Him to give us all the sincerity and experience of the

truth that He is teaching through the Gita, to all of us, and let Him make us experience and establish ourselves in eternal bliss, *nithyanandam!*

Thus ends the seventeenth chapter named Sraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga, 'Threefold Faith' of the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.



Scientific Research on Bhagavad Gita

Several institutions have conducted experiments using scientific and statistically supported techniques to verify the truth behind the Bhagavad Gita. Notable amongst them is the work carried out by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, whose findings are published through Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetam.

Studies conducted using meditation techniques related to truths expressed in the verses of the Bhagavad Gita have shown that the quality of life is significantly improved through meditation. These studies have found that meditators experience a greater sense of peace resulting in a reduced tendency towards conflict.

Meditators gain greater respect for and appreciation of others. Their own inner fulfilment increases resulting in improved self-respect and self-reliance, leading to Self Actualization.

One's ability to focus along with brain function integration is enhanced. These have resulted in greater comprehension, creativity, faster response time in decision-making and superior psychomotor coordination.

Stress levels have been shown to decrease with enhanced sensory perception and overall health. The tendency towards depression has been clearly shown to decrease.

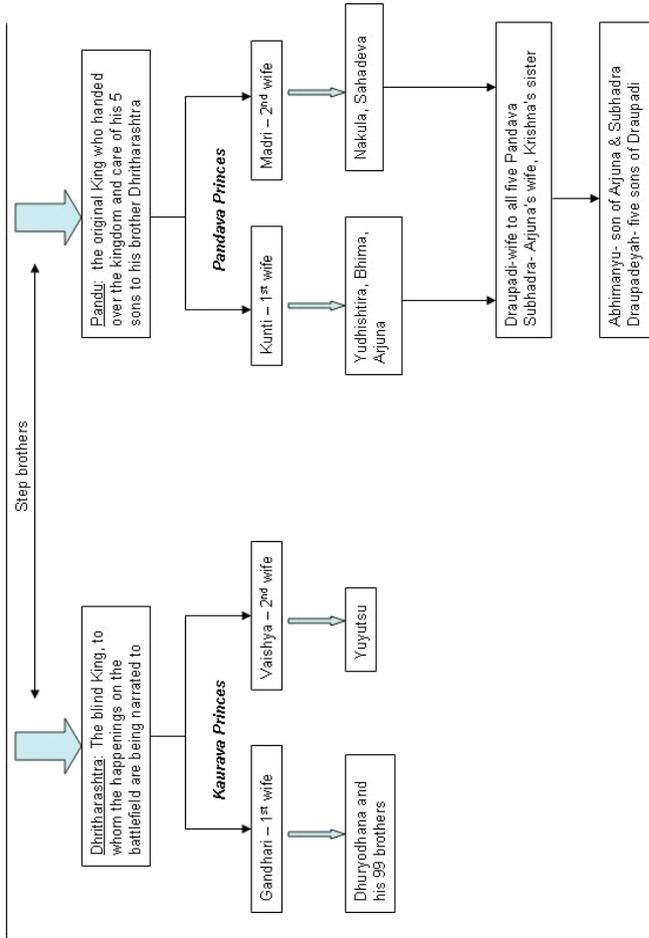
There is enough evidence to show that as a result of meditation, individuals gain a better ethical lifestyle that in turn improves their interaction with others in the community, resulting in less conflict and crime. Group meditation of 7000 people (square root of 1% of world population at the time of the study) was significantly correlated to a reduction in conflict worldwide.

Meditation leads to higher levels of consciousness. Through the research tools of Applied Kinesiology, Dr. David Hawkins (author of the book *Power vs. Force*) and others have shown that human consciousness has risen in the last few decades, crossing a critical milestone for the first time in human history. Dr. Hawkins' research also documents that the Bhagavad Gita is at the very highest level of Truth conveyed to humanity.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work done by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi institutions and Dr. David Hawkins in establishing the truth of this great scripture.



Kuru Family Tree



Glossary of Key Characters in the Bhagavad Gita

Pandava's Side:

- Krishna: God Incarnate; Related to both Kaurava and Pandava; Arjuna's charioteer in the war
- Drupada: A great warrior and father of Draupadi
- Drishtadummna: The son of King Drupada
- Shikhandi: A mighty archer and a transexual person
- Virata: Abhimanyu's father-in-law; King of a neighboring kingdom
- Yuyudhana: Krishna's charioteer and a great warrior
- Kashiraj: King of neighboring kingdom, Kashi
- Chekitan: A great warrior
- Kuntibhoj: Adoptive father of Kunti, the mother of first three Pandava princes
- Purujit: Brother of Kuntibhoj
- Shaibya: Leader of the Shibi tribe
- Dhrishtaketu: King of Chedis
- Uttamouja: A great warrior



Kaurava's Side:

Sanjay:	Charioteer and narrator of events to Dhritharashtra
Bhishma:	Great grandfather of the Kaurava & Pandava; Great warrior
Drona:	A great archer and teacher to both Kaurava and Arjuna
Vikarna:	Third of the Kaurava brothers
Karna:	Pandava's half brother, born to Kunti before her marriage
Ashvatthama:	Drona's son and Achilles heel; Said to always speak the truth
Kripacharya:	Teacher of martial arts to both Kaurava and Pandava
Shalya:	King of neighboring kingdom and brother of Madra, Nakula and Sahadeva's mother
Soumadatti:	King of Bahikas
Dushassana:	One of Kaurava brothers; responsible for insulting Draupadi

Meaning of common Sanskrit Words

For purposes of simplicity, the phonetic of Sanskrit has not been faithfully followed in this work. No accents and other guides have been used.

Aswattama is spelt as also *Asvattama*, *Aswathama*, *Aswatama* etc., all being accepted.

Correctly pronounced, *Atma* is *Aatma*; however in the English format *a* is used both for *a* and *aa*, *e* for *e* and *ee* and so on. The letter *s* as used here can be pronounced as *s* or *ss* or *sh*; for instance *Siva* is pronounced with a sibilant sound, neither quite *s* nor *sh*. Many words here spelt with 's' can as well be spelt as 'sh'.

[In the glossary, however, letters have been indicated in brackets to facilitate pronunciation as intended in the Sanskrit text.]

This glossary is not meant to be a pronunciation guide, merely an explanatory aid. It is merely a compilation of common words.

A(a)bharana: adornment; *vastra(a)bharana* is adornment with clothes

Abhy(a)asa: exercise; practice

A(a)cha(a)rya: teacher; literally 'one who walks with'

Advaita: concept of non-duality; that individual self and the cosmic SELF are one and the same; as different from the concepts of *dvaita* and *visishta(a)dvaita*, which consider self and SELF to be mutually exclusive



A(a)ha(a)ra: food; also with reference to sensory inputs as in *praty(a)ha(a)ra*

A(a)jna: order, command; the third eye energy centre

A(a)ka(a)sa: space, sky; subtlest form of energy of universe

Amruta, amrit: divine nectar whose consumption leads to immortality

Ana(a)hata: that which is not created; heart energy centre

A(a)nanda: bliss; very often used to refer to joy, happiness etc.

Anjana: collyrium, black pigment used to paint the eye lashes

A(a)pas: water

Aarti: worshipping with a flame, light, as with a lamp lit with oiled wick, or burning camphor

A(a)shirva(a)d: blessing

Ashta(a)nga yoga: eight fold path to enlightenment prescribed by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra

A(a)shraya: grounded in reality; *a(a)shraya-dosha*, defect related to reality

A(a)tma, A(a)tman: individual Self; part of the universal Brahman

Beedi: local Indian cigarette

Beeja: seed; *beeja-mantra* refers to the single syllable *mantras* used to invoke certain deities,

e.g., *gam* for Ganesha.

Bhagava(a)n: literally God; often used for an enlightened master

Bha(a)vana: visualization

Bhakti: devotion; *bhakta*, a devotee

Brahma: the Creator; one of the Hindu trinity of supreme Gods, the other two being *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*

Brahmacha(a)ri: literally one who moves with the true reality, *Brahman*, one without fantasies, but usually taken to mean a celibate; *brahmacharya* is the quality or state of being a *brahmachaari*

Brahman: ultimate reality of the Divine, universal intelligent energy

Bra(a)hman: person belonging to the class engaged in *Vedic* studies, priestly class

Buddhi: mind, intelligence; mind is also called by other names, *manas*, *chitta* etc.

Buddhu: a fool

Chakra: literally a 'wheel'; refers to energy centres in the mind-body system

Chakshu: eye, intelligent power behind senses

Chanda(a)la: an untouchable; usually one who skins animals.

Chandana: sandalwood

Chitta: mind; also *manas*, *buddhi*.

Dakshina(a)yana: Sun's southward movement starting 21st June

Darshan: vision; usually referred to seeing divinity



Dharma: righteousness

Dhee: wisdom.

Deeksha: grace bestowed by the Master and the energy transferred by the Master onto disciple at initiation or any other time, may be through a mantra, a touch, a glance or even a thought

Dosha: defect

Dhya(a)na: meditation

Drishti: sight, seeing with mental eye

Gada: weapon; similar to a mace; also *Gada(a)yudha*

Gopi, Gopika: literally a cowherd; usually referred to the devotees, who played with Krishna, and were lost in Him

Gopura, gopuram: temple tower

Grihasta: a householder, a married person; coming from the word *griha*, meaning house

Guna: the three human behavioural characteristics or predispositions; *satva, rajas* and *tamas*

Guru: Master; literally one who leads from *gu* (darkness) to *ru* (light)

Gurukul, Gurukulam: literally 'tradition of *guru*', refers to the ancient education system in which children were handed over to a *guru* at a very young age by parents for upbringing and education

Homa: ritual to *Agni*, the God of fire; metaphorically represents the transfer of energy from the energy of *A(a)ka(a)sa* (space), through *V(a)ayu* (Air), *Agni* (Fire),

A(a)pas (Water), and *Prithvi* (Earth) to humans. Also *y(a)aga, yagna*

Iccha: desire

Ida: along with *pingala* and *sushumna* the virtual energy pathways through which *pranic* energy flows

Ithiha(a)sa: legend, epic, mythological stories; also *pura(a)na*

Jaati: birth; *jaati-dosha*, defect related to birth

Ja(a)grata: wakefulness

Japa: literally 'muttering'; continuous repetition of the name of divinity

Jeeva samadhi: burial place of an enlightened Master, where his spirit lives on

Jiva (pronounced as *jeeva*) means living

Jyotisha: Astrology; *jyotishi* is an astrologer

Kaivalya: liberation; same as *moksha, nirva(a)na*

Ka(a)la: time; also *maha(a)ka(a)la*

Kalpa: vast period of time; *Yuga* is a fraction of *Kalpa*

Kalpana: imagination

Karma: spiritual law of cause and effect, driven by *va(a)sana* and *samska(a)ra*

Kosha: energy layer surrounding body; there are 5 such layers. These are: *annamaya* or body, *Pra(a)namaya* or breath, *manomaya* or thoughts, *vigya(a)namaya* or sleep and *a(a)nandamaya* or bliss *koshas*



Kriya: action

Kshana: moment in time; refers to time between two thoughts

Kshatriya: caste or *varna* of warriors

Kundalini: energy that resides at the root chakra
'*mula(a)dha(a)ra*' (pronounced as *moolaadha(a)ra*)

Maha(a): great; as in *maharshi*, great sage; *maha(a)va(a)kya*, great scriptural saying

Ma(a)la: a garland, a necklace; *rudra(a)ksha mala* is a garland made of the seeds of the *rudra(a)ksha* tree

Mananam: thinking, meditation

Manas: mind; also *buddhi*, *chitta*

Mandir: temple

Mangala: auspicious; *mangal sutra*, literally auspicious thread, the yellow or gold thread or necklace a married Hindu woman wears

Mantra: a sound, a formula; sometimes a word or a set of words, which because of their inherent sounds, have energizing properties. *Mantras* are used as sacred chants to worship the Divine; *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* are approaches in spiritual evolution

Ma(a)ya: that which is not, not reality, illusion; all life is *ma(a)ya* according to *advaita*

Moksha: liberation; same as *nirva(a)na*, *sama(a)dhi*, *turiya* etc.

Mula(a)dha(a)ra: the first energy centre, *moola* is root; *a(a)dhara* is foundation, here existence

Nadi: river

Naadi: nerve; also an energy pathway that is not physical

Na(a)ga: a snake; a *na(a)ga-sa(a)dhu* is an ascetic belonging to a group that wears no clothes

Namaska(a)r: traditional greeting with raised hands, with palms closed

Na(a)nta: without end

Na(a)ri: woman

Nidhidhy(a)asan: what is expressed

Nimitta: reason; *nimitta-dosha*, defect based on reason

Nirva(a)na: liberation; same as *moksha*, *sama(a)dhi*

Niyama: the second of eight paths of Patanjali's *Ashta(a)nga Yoga*; refers to a number of day-to-day rules of observance for a spiritual path

Pa(a)pa: sin

Phala: fruit; *phalasruti* refers to result of worship

Paramahansa: literally the 'supreme swan'; refers to an enlightened being

Parikrama: the ritual of going around a holy location, such as a hill or water spot

Parivra(a)jaka: wandering by an ascetic monk

Pingala: please see *Ida*.

Pra(a)na: life energy; also refers to breath;

pra(a)na(a)ya(a)ma is control of breath

Pratya(a)hara: literally 'staying away from food'; in this



case refers to control of all senses as part of the eight fold *ashta(a)nga yoga*

Prithvi: earth energy

Purohit: priest

Puja (pronounced as *pooja*): normally any worship, but often referred to a ritualistic worship

Punya: merit, beneficence

Pura(a)na: epics and mythological stories such as Maha(a)bha(a)rata, Ra(a)ma(a)yana etc.

Purna (pronounced *poorna*): literally 'complete'; refers in the *advaita* context to reality

Rajas, rajasic: the mid characteristic of the three human *guna* or behaviour mode, referring to aggressive action

Putra: son; *putri*: daughter

Rakta: blood

Ra(a)tri: night

Rishi: a sage

Sa(a)dhana: practice, usually a spiritual practice

Sa(a)dhu: literally a 'good person'; refers to an ascetic; same as *sanya(a)si*

Sahasrana(a)ma: thousand names of God; available for many Gods and Goddesses, which devotees recite

Sahasrara: lotus with thousand petals; the crown energy centre

Sakti: energy; intelligent energy; *Para(a)sakti* refers to universal energy, divinity; considered feminine; masculine aspect of *Para(a)sakti* is *purusha*

Sama(a)dhi: state of no-mind, no-thoughts; literally, becoming one's original state; liberated, enlightened state. Three levels of *samadhi* are referred to as *sahaja*, which is transient, *savikalpa*, in which the person is no longer capable of normal activities, and *nirvikalpa*, where the liberated person performs activities as before.

Samsaya: doubt

Samska(a)ra: embedded memories of unfulfilled desires stored in the subconscious that drive one into decisions, into *karmic* action

Samyama: complete concentration

Sankalpa: decision

Sanya(a)s: giving up worldly life; *sanya(a)si* or *sanya(a)sin*, a monk, an ascetic

sanya(a)sini, refers to a female monk

Sa(a)stra: sacred texts

Satva, *sa(a)tvic*: the highest *guna* of spiritual calmness

Siddhi: extraordinary powers attained through spiritual practice

Sishya: disciple

Simha: lion; *Simha-Swapna*: nightmare

Shiva: rejuvenator in the trinity; often spelt as *Shiva*. *Shiva* also means 'causeless auspiciousness'; in this sense,



Shivara(a)tri, the day when Shiva is worshipped is that moment when the power of this causeless auspiciousness is intense

Smarana: remembrance; constantly remembering the divine

Smruti: literally 'that which is remembered'; refers to later day Hindu works which are rules, regulations, laws and epics, such as Manu's works, *Puranas* etc.

Straddha: trust, faith, belief, confidence

Sravan: hearing

Srishti: creation, which is created

Sruti: literally 'that which is heard'; refers to the ancient scriptures of *Veda*, *Upanishad* and

Bhagavad Gita: considered to be words of God

Stotra: devotional verses, to be recited or sung

Sudra: caste or *varna* of manual labourers

Sutra: literally 'thread'; refers to epigrams, short verses which impart spiritual techniques

Sunya: literally zero; however, Buddha uses this word to mean reality

Sushumna: Please see 'ida'

Swa(a)dishtha(a)na: where Self is established; the groin or spleen energy centre

Swapna: dream

Swatantra: free

Tamas, taamasic: the lowest *guna* of laziness or inaction

Tantra: esoteric Hindu techniques used in spiritual evolution

Tapas: severe spiritual endeavour, penance

Thatagata: Buddhahood, state of being such...a pali word

Tirta: water; *tirtam* is a holy river and a pilgrimage centre

Trika(a)la: all three time zones, past, present and future;
trika(a)lajna(a)ni is one who can

see all three at the same time; an enlightened being is beyond time and space

Turiya (pronounced *tureeya*): state of *samadhi*, no-mind

Upanishad: literally 'sitting below alongside' referring to a disciple learning from the master;

refers to the ancient Hindu scriptures which along with the *Veda*, form *sruti*

Uttara(a)yana: Sun's northward movement

Vaisya: caste or *varna* of tradesmen

Va(a)naprastha: the third stage in one's life, (the first stage being that of a student, and the

second that of householder) when a householder, man or woman, gives up worldly activities and focuses on spiritual goals

Varna: literally colour; refers to the caste grouping in the traditional Hindu social system; originally based on aptitude, and later corrupted to privilege of birth



Va(a)sana: the subtle essence of memories and desires, *samska(a)ra*, that get carried forward from birth to birth

Vastra: clothes

Vastra(a)harana: removal of clothes, often used to refer to Draupadi's predicament in the

Maha(a)bha(a)rata, when she was unsuccessfully disrobed by the Kaurava prince

Va(a)yu: air

Veda: literally knowledge; refers to ancient Hindu scriptures, believed to have been received by enlightened *rishi* at the being level; also called *sruti*, along with *Upanishad*

Vibhuti (*pronounced vibhooti*): sacred ash worn by many Hindus on forehead; said to remind themselves of the transient nature of life; of glories too

Vidhi: literally law, natural law; interpreted as fate or destiny

Vidya: knowledge, education

Visha(a)da: depression, dilemma etc.

Vishnu: preserver in the trinity; His incarnations include Krishna, Rama etc. in ten incarnations; also means 'all encompassing'

Vishwarupa (*pronounced vishwaroopa*): universal form

Yama: discipline as well as death; One of the eight fold paths prescribed in Patanjali's

Ashta(a)nga Yoga; refers to spiritual regulations of *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non

violence), *aparigraha* (living simply); *asteya* (not coveting other's properties) and *brahmacharya* (giving up fantasies); *yama* is also the name of the Hindu God of justice and death

Yantra: literally 'tool'; usually a mystical and powerful graphic diagram, such as the *Sri Chakra*, inscribed on a copper plate, and sanctified in a ritual blessed by a divine presence or an enlightened Master

Yoga: literally union, union of the individual self and the divine SELF; often taken to mean

Hatha yoga, which is one of the components of *yogasana*, relating to specific body postures

Yuga: a long period of time as defined in Hindu scriptures; there are four *yugas*: *satya*, *treta*, *dwa(a)para* and *kali*, the present being *kali yuga*



Invocation Verses

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतं
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीं

*Om paarthaaya pratibodhitaam bhagavataa naaraayanena svayam
Vyaasena grathitaam puraanamuninaa madhye mahaabhaaratam
Advaitaamrutavarshineem Bhagavateem ashtaadsaadhyayineem
Amba toaamanusandadhaami bhagavadgeete bhavadveshineem*

OM, I meditate upon you, Bhagavad Gita the affectionate Mother, the Divine Mother showering the nectar of non duality and destroying rebirth, (who was) incorporated into the Mahaabhaarata of eighteen chapters by sage Vyasa, the author of the Puraanaas, and imparted to Arjuna by Lord Narayana, Himself.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कम्सचाणूरमर्दनम्
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुं

*Vasudeva Sutam Devam Kamsa
Chaanura Mardanam
Devakee Paramaanandam Krishnam
Vande Jagadgurum*

I salute you Lord Krishna, Teacher to the world, son of Vasudeva and Supreme bliss of Devaki, Destroyer of Kamsa and Chaanura.



Verses Of Gita Chapter 17

अर्जुन उवाच

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः॥१७.१॥

arjuna uvaca

*ye sastra-vidhim utsrjya yajante shraddhayanvitah
tesam nistha tu ka Krishna sattvam aho rajah tamah 17.1*

arjunah uvaca: Arjuna said; *ye:* those; *sastra-vidhim:* the regulations

of scripture; *utsrjya:* giving up; *yajante:* worship; *shraddhaya:* sincerity; *anvitah:* possessed of; *tesam:* of them; *nistha:* faith; *tu:* but; *ka:* what is that; *Krishna:* O Krishna; *sattvam:* in goodness; *aho:* said; *rajah:* in aggression; *tamah:* in ignorance.

17.1 Arjuna said: What is the mode of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with sincerity, but without following the scriptural injunctions, O Krishna? Is it in the mode of goodness, aggression or ignorance?

श्री भगवानुवाच

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु॥१७.२॥



shri bhagavan uvaca
tri vidha bhavati shraddha dehinam sa svabhava-ja
sattviki rajasi caiva tamasi ceti tam srnu 17.2

sri-bhagavan uvaca: Krishna said; *tri-vidha*: three kinds; *bhavati*: become; *shraddha*: sincerity; *dehinam*: of the body; *sa*: that; *sva-bhava-ja*: according to his nature; *sattviki*: nature of goodness; *rajasi*: nature of aggression; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *tamasi*: nature of ignorance; *ca*: and; *iti*: thus; *tam*: that; *srnu*: hear from Me.

17.2 The Supreme Lord said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three kinds: goodness, aggression, and ignorance. Now hear about these from Me.

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स व सः ॥१७.३॥

sattoaanurupa sarvasya shraddha bhavati bhaarata
shraddha mayoyam purusho yo yachhraddhaha savamsaha
17.3

sattva-anurupa: according to the existence; *sarvasya*: of everyone; *shraddha*: sincerity; *bhavati*: becomes; *bharata*: O son of Bharata; *shraddha*: sincerity; *mayah*: full; *ayam*: this; *purusah*: living entity; *yah*: anyone; *yat*: that; *shraddhah*: sincerity; *sah*: that; *eva*: certainly; *sah*: he.

17.3 O Arjuna, the sincerity of each is in accordance with one's own natural disposition. One is known by one's sincerity. One can become whatever one wants to be.

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान्यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः।
प्रेतान्भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः॥१७.४॥

*yajante sattvika devan yaksa raksamsi rajasah
pretan bhutaganams canye yajante tamasa janah 17.4*

yajante: worship; *sattvikah*: those who are in the mode of goodness; *devan*: deities; *yaksa-raksamsi rajasah*: those who are in the mode of aggression worship demons; *pretan*: dead spirits; *bhuta-ganan*: ghosts; *ca anye*: and others; *yajante*: worship; *tamasah*: in the mode of ignorance; *janah*: people.

17.4 Men in the nature of goodness worship the deities; those in the nature of aggression worship the demons and those in the nature of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits.

अशास्त्रविहितं घोरं तप्यन्ते ये तपो जनाः।
दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः कामरागबलान्विताः॥१७.५॥

कर्षयन्तः शरीरस्थं भूतग्राममचेतसः।
मां चैवान्तःशरीरस्थं तान्विद्ध्यासुरनिश्चयान्॥१७.६॥

*asastra-vihitam ghoram tapyante ye tapo janah
dambhahankara-samyuktah kama-raga-balanvitah 17.5
karsayantah sarira-stham bhuta-gramam acetasah
mam caivantah sarira-stham tan viddhy asura-niscayan 17.6*

asastra: not mentioned in the scriptures; *vihitam*: directed; *ghoram*: harmful to others; *tapyante*: undergo



penances; *ye*: those; *tapah*: austerities; *janah*: persons; *dambha*: pride; *ahankara*: egoism; *samyuktah*: engaged; *kama*: lust; *raga*: attachment; *bala*: force; *anvitah*- -impelled by; *karsayantah*: tormenting; *sarira-stham*: situated within the body; *bhuta-gramam*: combination of material elements; *acetasah*: by such a misled mentality; *mam*: to Me; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *antah*: within; *sarira-stham*: situated in the body; *tan*: them; *viddhi*: understand; *asura*: demons; *niscayan*: certainly.

17.5,6 Ignorant persons of demonic nature are those who practice severe austerities without following the prescription of the scriptures, who are full of hypocrisy and egotism, who are impelled by the force of desire and attachment and who senselessly torture the elements in their body and also Me who dwells within the body.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु॥१७.७॥

*aharas tu api sarvasya tri-vidho bhavati priyah
yajnas tapas tatha danam tesam bhedam imam srnu 17.7*

aharah: eating; *tu*: certainly; *api*: also; *sarvasya*: of everyone; *tri-vidhah*: three kinds; *bhavati*: there are; *priyah*: dear; *yajnah*: sacrifice; *tapah*: austerity; *tatha*: also; *danam*: charity; *tesam*: of them; *bhedam*: differences; *imam*: thus; *srnu*: hear.

17.7 Food that we consume is of three kinds, according to the three types of material nature. So are

the sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hear the difference between these three.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥१७.८॥

*ayuh sattva balarogya sukha priti vivardhanah
rasyah snigdha sthira hrdaya aharah sattvika-priyah 17.8*

ayuh: duration of life; sattva: existence; bala: strength; arogya: health; sukha: happiness; priti: satisfaction; vivardhanah: increasing; rasyah: juicy; snigdha: fatty; sthira: enduring; hrdayah: pleasing to the heart; aharah: food; sattvika: goodness; priyah: palatable.

17.8 The foods that promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy are juicy, smooth, substantial, and nutritious. Such foods are liked by persons in the mode of goodness.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥१७.९॥

*katu amla lavanaty usna tiksna ruksa vidahinah
ahara rajasasyesta dukkha sokamaya pradah 17.9*

katu: bitter; amla: sour; lavana: salty; ati-usna: very hot; tiksna: pungent; ruksa: dry; vidahinah: burning; aharah: food; rajasasya: in the mode of aggression; istah: palatable; dukkha: distress; soka: misery; amaya pradah: causing disease.



17.9 People in the mode of aggression like foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry, and burning, and cause pain, grief, and disease.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत्।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥१७.१०॥

*yata yamam gata rasam puti paryusitam ca yat
ucchistam api camedhyam bhojanam tamasa-priyam 17.10*

yata-yamam: food cooked three hours before being eaten; *gata-rasam*: tasteless; *puti*: bad smelling; *paryusitam*: decomposed; *ca*: also; *yat*: that which; *ucchistam*: remnants of food eaten by others; *api*: also; *ca*: and; *amedhyam*: untouchable; *bhojanam*: eating; *tamasa*: in the mode of darkness; *priyam*: dear.

17.10 People in the mode of ignorance like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refuse, and of impure energy.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते।
यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥१७.११॥

*aphalakanksibhir yajno vidhi dristo ya ijyate
yastavyam eveti manah samadhaya sa sattvikah 17.11*

aphala-akanksibhih: without desire for result; *yajnah*: sacrifice; *vidhi*: accordingly; *dristah*: direction; *yah*: anyone;

ijyate: performs; *yastavyam*: must be performed; *eva*: certainly; *iti*: thus; *manah*: mind; *samadhaya*: fixed in; *sah*: he; *sattvikah*: in the nature of goodness.

17.11 Sacrifice without expectation of results, as stipulated in the scriptures, with a firm belief and conviction that it is a duty, is in the mode of goodness

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चैव यत्।
इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम्॥१७.१२॥

*abhisandhaya tu phalam dambharthamapi chaiva yat
ijyate bharatasreshtha tam yajnam viddhi raajasam 17.12*

abhisandhaya: desiring; *tu*: but; *phalam*: the result; *dambha*: pride; *artham*: for the sake of; *api*: also; *ca*: and; *eva*: certainly; *yat*: that which; *ijyate*: is offered; *bharata-srestha*: O chief of the Bharatas; *tam*: that; *yajnam*: sacrifice; *viddhi*: know; *rajasam*: in the mode of aggression.

17.12 O Arjuna, that sacrifice that is performed with expectation of result or for show out of pride, is of the nature of aggression.

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम्।
श्रद्धाविरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते॥१७.१३॥

*vidhihinamasrstannam mantrahinamadakshinam
shraddhavorahitam yajnam tamasam parichakshate 17.13*



vidhi-hinam: without scriptural direction; *asrsta-annam*: without distribution of prasadam; *mantra-hinam*: with no chanting of the Vedic hymns; *adakshinam*: with no remunerations to the priests; *shraddha*: sincerity; *virahitam*: without; *yajnam*: sacrifice; *tamasam*: in the mode of ignorance; *paricakshate*: is to be considered.

17.13 Sacrifice that is performed without following the scripture, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantra, sincerity, and gift, is said to be in the mode of ignorance

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।
ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥१७.१४॥

deva dvija guru prajna pujanam saucam arjavam
brahmacaryam ahimsa ca sariram tapa ucyate 17.14

deva: deities; *dvija*: the priest; *guru*: the master; *prajna*: worshipable personalities; *pujanam*: worship; *saucam*: cleanliness; *arjavam*: simplicity; *brahmacaryam*: living in reality; *ahimsa*: nonviolence; *ca*: also; *sariram*: pertaining to the body; *tapah*: austerity; *ucyate*: is said to be.

17.14 The worship of deities, the priest, the guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, living in reality, and nonviolence are said to be austerity of deed.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥१७.१५॥

*anudvega karam vakyam satyam priya hitam ca yat
svadhyayabhyasanam caiva van-mayam tapa ucyate 17.15*

anudvega: not agitating; *karam*: producing; *vakyam*: words; *satyam*: truthful; *priya*: dear; *hitam*: beneficial; *ca*: also; *yat*: which; *svadhyaya*: Vedic study; *abhyasanam*: practice; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *van-mayam*: of the voice; *tapah*: austerity; *ucyate*: is said to be.

17.15 Speech that is non-offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular study of scriptures is called austerity of word.

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः।
भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥१७.१६॥

*manah-prasadah saumyatvam maunam atma-vinigraha
bhava-samsuddhir ity etat tapo manasam ucyate 17.16*

manah-prasadah: fulfillment of the mind; *saumyatvam*: satisfied; *maunam*: gravity; *atma*: self; *vinigraha*: control; *bhava*: nature; *samsuddhih*: purification; *iti*: thus; *etat*: that is; *tapah*: austerity; *manasam*: of the mind; *ucyate*: is said to be.

17.16 Serenity of mind, gentleness, equanimity, self-control, and purity of thought are called austerity of thought.

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्रिविधं नरैः।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥१७.१७॥



*shraddhaya paraya taptam tapas tat tri-vidham naraih
aphalakanksibhir yuktaih sattvikam paricaksate 17.17*

shraddhaya: with sincerity; *paraya*: transcendental; *taptam*: execution; *tapah*: austerity; *tat*: that; *tri-vidham*: three kinds; *naraih*: by men; *aphala-akanksibhih*: without desires for fruits; *yuktaih*: engaged; *sattvikam*: in the mode of goodness; *paricaksate*: is called.

17.17 The above mentioned threefold austerity (of thought, word, and deed), practiced by yogis with supreme sincerity, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be in the mode of goodness.

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत्।
क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम्॥१७.१८॥

*satkara mana pujartham tapo dambhena caiva yat
kriyate tad iha proktam rajasam calam adhrvoam 17.18*

sat-kara: respect; *mana*: honor; *puja-artham*: for worship; *tapah*: austerity; *dambhena*: pride; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *yat*: which is; *kriyate*: performed; *tat*: that; *iha*: in this world; *proktam*: is said; *rajasam*: in the mode of aggression; *calam*: flickering; *adhrvoam*: temporary.

17.18 Austerity that is performed for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for the sake of show, yielding an uncertain and temporary result, is said to be in the mode of aggression.

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत्पीडया क्रियते तपः।
परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥१७.१९॥

*mudha grahenatmano yat pidaya kriyate tapah
parasyotsadanartham va tat tamasam udahrtam 17.19*

mudha: foolish; *grahena*: with endeavor; *atmanah*: of one's own self;

yat: which; *pidaya*: by torture; *kriyate*: is performed; *tapah*: penance;

parasya: to others; *utsadana-artham*: causing annihilation; *va*: or; *tat*: that; *tamasam*: in the mode of darkness; *udahrtam*: is said to be.

17.19 Austerity performed with foolish stubbornness or with self-torture or for harming others, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥१७.२०॥

*datavyam iti yad danam diyate anupakarine
dese kale ca patre ca tad danam sattvikam smrtam 17.20*

datavyam: worth giving; *iti*: thus; *yat*: that which; *danam*: charity; *diyate*: given; *anupakarine*: to person who does no service in return; *dese*: in place; *kale*: in time; *ca*: also; *patre*: suitable person; *ca*: and; *tat*: that; *danam*: charity; *sattvikam*: in the mode of goodness; *smrtam*: consider.



17. 20 Charity that is given at the right place and time as a matter of duty to a deserving candidate who does nothing in return, is considered to be in the mode of goodness.

यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥१७.२१॥

*yat tu pratyupakarartham phalam uddisya va punah
diyate ca pariklistam tad danam rajasam smrtam 17.21*

yat: that which; *tu*: but; *prati-upakara-artham*: for the sake of getting some return; *phalam*: result; *uddisya*: desiring; *va*: or; *punah*: again; *diyate*: is given in charity; *ca*: also; *pariklistam*: grudgingly; *tat*: that; *danam*: charity; *rajasam*: in the mode of aggression; *smrtam*: is understood to be.

17.21 Charity that is given unwillingly or to get something in return or to gain some result is in the mode of aggression.

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते।
असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥१७.२२॥

*adesa kale yad danam apatrebhyas ca diyate
asat-krtam avajnatam tat tamasam udahrtam 17.22*

adesa: unpurified place; *kale*: unpurified time; *yat*: that which; *danam*: charity; *apatrebhyah*: to unworthy persons; *ca*: also; *diyate*: is given; *asat-krtam*: without respect;

avajnatam: without proper attention; *tat*: that; *tamasam*: in the mode of darkness; *udahrta*: is said to be.

17.22 Charity that is given at a wrong place and time to unworthy persons or without paying respect to the receiver or with ridicule is in the mode of ignorance.

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः।
ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा॥१७.२३॥

*om tat sad iti nirdeso brahmanas trividhah smrtah
brahmanas tena vedas ca yajnas ca vihita* pura 17.23

om: indication of the Supreme; *tat*: that; *sat*: eternal; *iti*: that; *nirdesah*: indication; *brahmanah*: of the Supreme; *trividhah*: three kinds; *smrtah*: consider; *brahmanah*: the brahmanas; *tena*: therefore; *vedah*: the Vedic literature; *ca*: also; *yajnah*: sacrifice; *ca*: also; *vihitah*: used; *pura*: formerly.

17. 23 'OM Tat Sat' is said to be the threefold name of the Eternal Being (brahma). Persons with good (brahmanic) qualities, the Veda, and the selfless service (seva, yajna) were created by and from Brahma in the ancient time.

तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम्॥१७.२४॥

*tasmad om ity udahrtya yajna dana tapah kriyah
pravartante vidhanoktah satatam brahma-vadinam* 17.24



tasmat: therefore; *om*: beginning with om; *iti*: thus; *udahrtya*: indicating; *yajna*: sacrifice; *dana*: charity; *tapah*: penance; *kriyah*: performances; *pravartante*: begin; *vidhana-uktah*: according to scriptural regulation; *satatam*: always; *brahma-vadinam*: of the transcendentalists.

17.24 Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity prescribed in the scriptures are always commenced by uttering 'OM' by the knowers of the Supreme Being

तदित्यनभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः॥१७.२५॥

*tad ity anabhisandhaya phalam yajna tapah kriyah
dana-kriyas ca vividhah kriyante moksa kanksibhih 17.25*

tat: that; *iti*: they; *anabhisandhaya*: without fruitive result; *phalam*: result of sacrifice; *yajna*: sacrifice; *tapah*: penance; *kriyah*: activities; *dana*: charity; *kriyah*: activities; *ca*: also; *vividhah*: varieties; *kriyante*: done; *moksa-kanksibhih*: those who actually desire liberation.

17.25 Various types of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are performed by the seekers of liberation by uttering 'Tat' (or He is all) without seeking a reward.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते॥१७.२६॥

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥१७.२७॥

*sadbhave sadhubhave ca sad ity etat prayujyate
prasaste karmani tatha sacchabdah partha yujyate 17.26
yajne tapasi dane ca sthitih sad iti cocyate
karma caiva tad arthiyam sad ity evabhidhiyate 17.27*

sat-bhave: in the sense of the nature of the Truth; *sadhu-bhave*: in the sense of the nature of devotion; *ca*: also; *sat*: the Truth; *iti*: thus; *etat*: this; *prayujyate*: is used; *prasaste*: auspicious; *karmani*: activities; *tatha*: also; *sat-sabdah*: the sound *sat*; *partha*: O son of Prtha; *yujyate*: is used; *yajne*: sacrifice; *tapasi*: in penance; *dane*: charity; *ca*: also; *sthitih*: situated; *sat*: the Truth; *iti*: thus; *ca*: and; *ucyate*: pronounced; *karma*: work; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *tad*: that; *arthiyam*: are meant; *sat*: Truth; *iti*: thus; *eva*: certainly; *abhidhiyate*: is practiced.

17.26 The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of Reality and goodness. The word 'Sat' is also used for an auspicious act, O Arjuna.

17.27 Sincerity in sacrifice, charity, and austerity is also called 'Sat'. Selfless service for the sake of the Supreme is, in truth, termed as 'Sat'.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥१७.२८॥



*ashraddhaya hutam dattam tapas taptam krtam ca yat
asad ity ucyate partha na ca tat pretya no iha 17.28*

ashraddhaya: without sincerity; *hutam*: offered in sacrifice; *dattam*: given; *tapah*: penance; *taptam*: executed; *krtam*: performed; *ca*: also; *yat*: that which; *asad*—not Truth; *iti*: thus; *ucyate*: is said to be; *partha*: O son of Prtha; *na*: never; *ca*: also; *tat*: that; *pretya*: after death; *no*: nor; *iha*: in this life.

17. 28 Whatever is done without sincerity whether it is sacrifice, charity, austerity, or any other act is called 'Asat'. It has no value here or hereafter, O Arjuna.



Bhagavad Gita

commentary by

N i t h y a n a n d a

Sincerity

- the straight way to liberation
- chapter 17

In the 17th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna emphasizes the importance of *shraddha*: how *shraddha* and only *shraddha* can transform your whole life. He says that *shraddha* is the technique necessary to imbibe His teachings. The word *shraddha* is always translated as faith. That is not correct.

Shraddha means faith plus the courage to experiment with the truth. With *shraddha* we will never fail. Understand that there is a possibility that we may fail with faith alone, but never with faith and courage together.



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