

19. The Yoga of Samathvam

God is a word on the tongue for all

But, what do they gain therefrom?

Until they grow godly goodness

How can they see the word as Vision?

THE Reality which sustains the Cosmos and the Cell is one one, the all-pervasive Consciousness, named *Brahmam*. When this infinite vastness is spoken of in relation to Cosmos (*Jagath*, the Superflux), It is the *Paramatma* (the Overself) and it is the *Atma* (the Self) when it is conceded as the core of individual beings. All three are one entity, but they 'appear' different and delude the short-sighted. This characteristic is known as *Maya*. The Reality is *Sath* (Existence, Is-ness), *Chith* (Knowledge, Awareness, Consciousness) and *Ananda* (Bliss). The appearance or the power of diversification uses the three *gunas* or modes to embody itself differently. The *gunas* are *satwa* (serenity), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia). *The gunas* urge man towards either knowing or desiring or working.

When the "urge to become," namely *Maya* impels *Brahmam* to project itself, it appears as Eswara or God when associated with *satwa guna*, as *Jivi* (man and living beings) when associated with *rajo guna* and as *Prakriti* (Nature) when associated with *tamo guna*. *Brahmam* is the basis of all three, just as the rope is the basis of the snake for which it is mistaken. *Maya* is the mirror in which *Brahmam* is reflected as Personalised God, Man and Nature. We are able to know *Brahmam*, through Nature, which is saturated with it or identifiable with it.

God can be known through His words

The snake is the product of the mind. The external is the creation of the internal. *Brahmam* has manifested Itself as all this. How can an image occur with no object? How can a person be a father without a child? God created the world; the world conferred on God the glory of 'Creator'. Man, through his yearning, imagination and intensity endows God with a form and name, and a large bunch of attributes from which he hopes to benefit. But, God is above and beyond human traits and characteristics known as *Gunas*. Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, "I have no need to engage myself in any activity.

But yet, I am busy acting, in order to promote the well-being of the world and its inhabitants." Through His works, He can be known. The Gita refers to each of its chapters as a *Yoga*. *Yoga* means union, union of the self with its source. How do the eighteen chapters, each a *Yoga*, help man to fulfill the destiny? The Gita provides the answer.

"Samathvam Yogam uchyathe" (equal-mindedness, equanimity, sense of balance, unaffectedness is what *yoga* means). We can distinguish five fields in the attainment of this *Samathvam* (equal-mindedness).

***Samathvam* in five fields of activity**

(1) *The field of natural ups and downs (Prakrithika)*: One has to welcome both summer and winter, for they are both essential for the process of living. The alternation of seasons toughens and sweetens us. Birth and death are both natural events. We cannot discover the reason for either birth or death. They simply happen. We try to blame some person or some incident for the

injury or loss we suffer but the real reason is our own *karma* (action). When the background of the event is known, the impact can be lessened or even negated.

(2) *The field of social ups and downs'* One has to welcome with equal-mindedness fame and blame, respect and ridicule, profit and loss, and such other responses and reactions from the society in which one has to grow and struggle. Fortune is as much a challenge to one's equanimity as misfortune.

(3) *The field of knowledge with its ups and downs'* Until the summit of knowledge wherefrom one experiences the One which has become this vast make-believe, there are many temptations and obstacles that lead the seeker astray. The student is inclined to give up the climb altogether when he feels exhausted or when he feels that he has reached the summit. The Gita defines a *Pandit* or learned man as a *Samadarsi*--he who has gained the awareness of the same One in all beings. The Jnani has gained *Samathva* when he is convinced of the One being the Truth of all and when his thoughts, words and deeds are guided by that conviction.

(4) *The field of devotion with its ups and downs:* Here too there is a great deal of rascality and fanaticism, prejudice and persecution, which arise out of ignorance of the One, the sameness of the God whom all adore, through various rites and rituals, modes and methods. There is only One God and He is Omnipresent.

(5) *The field of activity with its ups and downs* must be sanctified by divinising the purpose. When work is sublimated into worship, defeat and disappointment will not dishearten. Success will not promote pride; it will lead to humility and gratitude for grace. Work performed as duty, as due from us to society brings the reward of joy, for we have utilised the knowledge and skill, endowed by God through society, for serving society itself.

The Samathvam (equal-mindedness) that can sweeten and lighten life is best exemplified in Radha and her devotion to Krishna. It is the awareness of the unity of the river and the sea, the individual self with the Omniself, the Atma with the *Paramatma*. Reaching the Source is the Destiny; desire to flow steadily and straight towards the Source is Devotion. The pang of separation, the agony arising from neglect, the yearning to overcome obstacles, the joy of contemplation, the ecstasy of self-annihilation--these add up to the supreme identification of Radha with her Lord, Sri Krishna.

Jayadeva's portrayal of Radha Bhakti

"Geetha Govindam", the Book of Songs of Govinda (Krishna) by the great mystic and poet Jayadeva of Orissa, is the immortal portrayal of *Radha Bhakti* in its manifold manifestations. Jayadeva could express it with such charm and clarity that even the man behind the plough sang those songs and filled his heart with divine delight. The ruler of the land, Lakshmana Sena, was stricken with envy. He prepared a parallel book of songs and ordered that they be sung, instead of Jayadeva's outpourings, in the temples of the land, including the greatest of them all, the Jagannath Temple at Puri. When his order was receded with universal protest, the king laid both the books at the Feet of Lord Jagannath and the shrine locked and kept under strict vigilance. When the doors were opened in the morning, the king saw the Lord having Jayadeva's *'Geetha Govindam'* in His hand, while his rival book written out of envy and pride was thrown into a far corner. The Lord had announced that He showers Grace on inner purity, not outer pomp.

When one has established himself in equal mindedness, Krishna installs Himself in his heart: His voice becomes the conscience that guides him at every step. Through *Yoga*, fortitude must be

acquired; through *Japa*, sense-control must be earned; through *Sadhana*, the mind should be filled with peace. But, these effects are not noticeable, though the causes are practised. People close themselves in their shrine-rooms and perform *puja*, offer flower and fruit and later, emerge from the place, only to shout and swear, frighten and fight with all and sundry. Man must be a yogi always, under all circumstances (*sathatham* yoginah), says the Gita. This means he will be ever in *Ananda*. Faith in God can ensure equanimity and balance. Knowledge must develop into skill, which must be directed and regulated by a sense of balance. Or else, skill degenerates into 'kill'.

Education for *Samathvam*

There are many assembled here, who have joined the University in search of knowledge and skill. They must endeavour to know the *Atma* resident in them in order that faith in *Atma* can grant them wisdom, which is knowledge of the Highest. Now, seekers of knowledge are concerned only with what they think they are and what others think they are, ignoring the genuine quest of what they really are. Therefore, they are their own enemies! They are caught in the coils of anxiety, fear and misery. They are fascinated by the trivial tinsel that they see. They believe whatever is seen and waste their life struggling, succeeding and losing. *Pasu* {animal} is the name given to such beings who put faith in *pasyathi* (what is seen). People raise the clamour, "I want peace", but they do not discard the "I" (the ego) and the "want" {desire). How then can they get 'peace'? They will only go into 'pieces.'

Though education by itself cannot confer *Atmaananda* on you, you have to acquire education, in order to serve the world. It should not be used for collecting monthly wads of bank notes and for selfish revels. The process of teaching and learning should not be reduced to vomiting what the teacher has learned and the student consuming what has thus been vomitted. It has to be creative, positive, productive.

Crores of rupees are spent on 'research' in this country. When one examines the value of the result achieved, it has to be judged as a big waste. Those engaged in research must try to give back to the country the sum spent multiplied a thousand fold. Or else, it would be tantamount to treason.

Plough and Cattle of Balarama and Krishna

Consider the ideal placed before mankind by Sri Krishna and His brother, Balarama. Balarama had the plough as his inseparable weapon. The plough is not a destructive weapon; it is a tool for the production of food. Krishna tended cattle, also essential for every agricultural operation, from preparation of soil to transporting the grain, after harvest. The message they convey to you is 'Produce, put your knowledge into practice and produce things that can fulfill essential, elevating needs--domestic furniture, agricultural implements, school accessories, home building materials, clothing fabrics, etc., etc. Always question yourself: "What have I contributed to the happy living of my fellowmen?" Expand your heart; let your love enfold more and more of fellowmen. Therein lies divinity.

These are the years when you have to use time most beneficially. Teachers must cultivate knowledge and develop it by sharing it with their students. Students must accept, treasure and expand that knowledge by putting it into practice.

Be proud of your motherland

Earn *Ananda* for yourself, promote prosperity for the country and peace for the world. The motherland should be freed from dependence on others for its welfare and progress. Declare proudly and fearlessly, "this is my mother tongue; this is my motherland. I shall serve her and honour her. I shall preserve and promote the heritage handed over to me."

The name Krishna means, He who attracts, He who cultivated the heart-land, He who is ever in Bliss. Students have to bear this in mind. Krishna draws people into His presence, sows, grows and harvests Love in barren broken hearts and confers supreme delight. Balarama asks for dedication to *Bhoomatha* (The land) and Krishna, to *Gomatha* (The cattle). They have raised agriculture, the process of providing food, to the level of a sacred *sadhana*.

Srinatha, the highly patronised court poet, was brought home in a palanquin borne by palace servants. He noticed the son of Pothana, the author of the immortal Telugu epic 'Bhagavatham', ploughing his bit of land. Srinatha ridiculed him and called out 'Farmer!' The son replied, "This is much nobler than your profession of mendicancy, flattering a human being and feeding on what he drops into your palm."

Maintain selfrespect. Develop self-confidence. Proclaim aloud, "This is my Bharath. The people of Bharath are my brothers." Krishna is worshipped as Gopala. The word 'go' means *jivi* (living beings). So, when you serve fellow-men and other beings with selfless love and total compassion, you are offering to Krishna the worship He accepts most gladly and with full grace.

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Resort to the recitation of the Name when your mind is agitated by fear, anxiety or grief. To make a cup of coffee, it is not enough to have decoction in one cup and milk in another. You have to pour one into the other and mix well. Mix the decoction of the Vairagya (sense-control, detachment) with the milk of Bhathi-Shraddha (Devotion, steadfastness). And you will get the drink that satisfies.

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