

28. Self-confidence Leads To Self-realisation

The path of karma or work is like a path by which you go on foot. The path of bhakthi or devotion is like a path by which you go on a cart. The path of jnana or wisdom is like a path by which you go on an aeroplane. The path of yoga or concentration is like a path by which you go on a steamer.

Pavitratma Swarupas, students!

The *Bhagavad Gita* has given the three words “*Jnatum, Drashtum, Tatvena Praveshtum*”. The word *Jnatum* means knowing by enquiry. We should enquire about the aspect of “I”. But is mere enquiry of this kind going to give satisfaction to you? By knowing that food is available in the kitchen, your hunger is not

going to be relieved. So also, by knowing the availability of the required things in the market, your need is not going to be fulfilled. Can the darkness in the world be dispelled by merely spreading the news of light? A man who is suffering from disease will never get rid of it if you simply describe to him the qualities of various medicines. You can get some satisfaction only when you administer the required medicine so that the disease can be cured, eat the required food to satisfy the hunger, spread the light to remove the darkness, and so on.

Therefore, while we must first understand the “*Jiveswara prakruthi*” or the nature of “I”, of the “world”, and of “Brahman”, there has to be a second step and that is to visualise all of them. Even this is not final and there has to be a third step of your entering into the whole aspect and identifying yourself with it. You cannot attain the experience of happiness and bliss by mere study and practice. It is only when you identify yourself completely with it that you will be able to experience the full significance of it.

These steps have been referred to as “*Drashtum*” and “*Tatvena Praveshum*”. It means that you have to enquire, visualise and then become one with it. You begin with the quest in the nature and origin of “I”, then attain the experience of its vision and get released by realising the non-difference between the witness and the witnessed.

For this purpose we have to follow certain paths. These have been referred to as the five different *akasa*s

in our *Vedanta*. These five *akasa*s are the *Ghatakasa*, *Jalakasa*, *Daharakasa*, *Chidakasa* and *Mahadakasa*.

Ghatakasa refers to the state in which man is engrossed in the body consciousness. He thinks of his physical bearing, his age, his appearance and his form. For example, when you enquire from an individual as to when he arrived here, he would normally specify the day and the time of his physical arrival. This reply signifies his false identification of self with the body. Here the self remains chained to the gross body.

Whereas in the state of *Jalakasa*, he makes a distinction between the body and the self. If an individual gets a stomach ache, then he will say, “I am having terrible pain in my stomach” It is apparent at that stage that when he says “my stomach”, he considers his stomach and as such his body as distinct from the mind. In *Jalakasa* the self remains chained to the subtle body.

On the other hand, when you reach the state of *Daharakasa*, you start enquiring about the nature and origin of “I”, distinguishing it from the body and ultimately apprehending that this “I” arises from your innermost being. This kind of enquiry can be compared to an enquiry that one makes about worldly matters in the state of wakefulness. During wakeful awareness all your organs like the eyes, the limbs of the body and even your mind are active. You travel with your body, you see with your eyes and you experience with your mind. Therefore *Daharakasa* corresponds to wakeful experiences.

Chidakasa corresponds to subtle experiences, wherein the Self remains the witnessing consciousness. In that state, you are above and apart from your body and your life. It can be compared to a dream state. In a dream you may feel that someone has come and cut off your head. You yourself are seeing the head being separated from the body. In that situation, you are quite apart from the body. Your life has not gone although your head has been separated. You are only witnessing the subtle drama.

The same can be illustrated thus: if you cause a hurt with a knife to another person, it can be looked upon as an offence. But if you dream of having cut off the head of a judge, and even after waking up you confess it to the judge, he is not empowered to take any action. Therefore in the realm of dreams, you only remain an onlooker.

Lastly *Mahadakasa* signifies ones ability for equal-mindedness. In this mental state, you develop the sameness of attitude towards heat and cold, light and darkness, sorrow and pleasure. This state is not above the mind, as in deep meditation the mind itself ebbs away, whereas *Mahadakasa* is a state wherein you achieve mental equilibrium. *Mahadakasa* is also known by the name of *Kootastha lakshana*. This can be illustrated by an example. You are yourself singing a song and are listening to the sound, and if you meditate upon the origin of this sound then that can be referred to as “*Kootastha lakshana*.”

It is in this context that Arjuna enquired from Krishna about the relative importance of *deha*—body, and of *dehi*—indweller; about the devotee of the formless and a devotee of the one with a form. The arguments relating to the relative greatness of these two aspects have gone on endlessly. Between the *Upasana* of a specific object and the *Upasana* of the infinite without any attributes, we also have a mixture of both. These three are known as—*Saguna*, *Saguna-Nirguna* and *Nirguna*. These three, however, are only different methods and the ultimate goal is the same. If you wish to understand easily the difference between these three methods, you can compare the *Upasana* of a specific object to a cloth, the intermediate mixed method to the threads or fibres that go to make up the cloth, and the *Upasana* of the unseen or the attributeless infinity to the cotton which is the very base of thread and cloth. From cotton we get the thread; and from the thread we get cloth; but if we pull out all the threads from the cloth, then the cloth itself disappears. In essence there is nothing except cotton in all these.

Here is an example. If I show you a pillow and ask you about the external covering on it, you will say that it is cloth. If I ask you what is inside, you will say that it is cotton. For *Vedanta*, both are the same and both are cotton. Thus, in all these three paths there is only one common feature and that is *prema*. Once you fill your heart with *prema*, it really does not matter what path you adopt. It will become possible for you to reach

the destination. This *prema* has also been referred to as *Priya*. This is a feeling caused in you when you look at an individual whom you like. After a feeling of *Priya*, you wish to make him more attached to you. That attempt is called *Modamu*. When you bring that object closer to you and experience it, we call it *Pramodamu*. The combined action by which you see an object, get it close to you, and enjoy the bliss called *Pramodamu*, will be referred to as *Kootastha*.

God likes all the three paths because the basic idea in all of them is the same. God is concerned only with true devotion. God has no attributes, it is only we who picture God differently according to our individual variations. Take an example of a mother who has three sons. In a state of emergency, the government legislates that from every family one individual has to be recruited for the security of the country. The mother has the same affection for all the three children, yet because of the compulsory legislation, she has to offer one of the three sons. She will allow the eldest son to join the security forces because of his greater maturity.

In the same manner, we are all children of God and He has three types of children. The *Saguna Upasakas*, the *Nirguna Upasakas* and the *Saguna-Nirguna Upasakas*. Here, God will treat the *Saguna Upasaka* as the youngest of the three because of his innocence. The *Nirguna Upasaka* will be treated as one who has gained spiritual maturity. For God, the *Saguna*

Upasaka is a small child while the *Nirguna Upasaka* is a grown up child and the *Saguna-Nirguna Upasaka* is like the middle one. The *Saguna Upasaka* will surrender himself fully to God, will be happy in uttering the name of the Lord, in contemplating the form of the Lord, in thinking of the *gunas* and attributes of the Lord. Just as a mother looks after every need of the youngest, since he cannot ask for it when he needs it, so also in respect of the *Saguna Upasaka*, God will look after all the needs at the appropriate time and will give him all that he deserves. It is only for a young baby that there is no difference between good and bad. This young baby has no likes and dislikes, does not think of when he has to get food, when he has to get clothing and so on. Its mind is quite pure and is not attached to anything.

The total dependence on God is considered as *Saranagathi* (absolute self surrender).

What is sought to be surrendered is your mind, but when it is itself turbulent and beyond your control, then how can you surrender it? Mind can only be surrendered when it is serene. In that stillness of mind one apprehends the all-pervasive aspect of God. Knowing that God is present in everything, then where is the question of surrendering? Who is to surrender and to whom is he to surrender? It is only when you have the idea of duality that this word has some significance. If you reach the stage of non-dualism in your mind, then there is nothing to surrender.

Love is an indispensable factor in reaching the state of non-duality. The gopikas and the gopalas realised this oneness and were never bothered about the troubles created by their bodies, by their minds and by their families. They were having God alone in their mind. On one occasion, Radha prayed to Krishna and said, “Oh Krishna! according to circumstances, maybe you have now taken the birth of a human being but it is not possible for anyone to say what form you will take or at what time. I only wish to become one with you and identify myself with you at all times.” We may ask how this is possible. Here is the reply. “If you become a flower, I will become a bee and go around you. If you become a tree, I will become a creeper and wind around you. If you become the endless sky, I will become a shining little star and be in you. If you become a mountain, I will become a small rivulet and flow close to you. If you become a big ocean, I will become a river and flow into you.” In this way, Radha prayed that she be given an opportunity to become one with the Lord.

It is difficult to express with the mere meekness of words the sacred devotion of the gopikas. In our own country, there are some who give a wrong meaning to this sacred aspect. Such people are unfortunately on the increase. The vision of such people is always half closed. There are, however, wise people who open up the flower of their heart and are receptive to the idea of God and the nature of divinity. Performing your daily work

sincerely, filling your hearts with love, and feeling the presence of divinity amounts to true surrender.

There are three categories of human beings. There are those who have faith in God, there are those who have no faith in God and there are those who are indifferent. For instance, in a bush there is a flower, its fragrance prompts those who have faith in God to search for its source. These can be termed as *asthikas* or believers. Then there are those who enjoy the fragrance but do not bother to question about the source, these can be termed as the believing non-believers. There are yet others who are neither looking for the flower nor perceiving its fragrance. They may be termed as non-believers. We presume that the non-believers are those who have no faith in God, but in fact it is not true. There can be no one who has no faith in himself. All people who have faith in themselves are believers. Without having belief, you cannot have disbelief.

People who have no faith in God say, “There is no God”. In that sentence, we first make a positive statement, “There is” and then we say, “no God”. People who are stronger in their disbelief say “God is no where”. In this sentence, there are four words God, is, no and where. In these, take the words “no” and “where” and move the letter “w” from the beginning of “where” to the end of “no”. The sentence will now read “God is now here”. In this change, we have not brought in a “w” which is not there nor have we removed a “w” which is

there. We have only rearranged the letters. “God is now here” represents the feeling in one’s mind and “God is no where” represents the feeling in another’s mind. Such reflections have nothing to do with the existence or non-existence of God.

For an individual suffering from jaundice, everything looks yellow. This is only a temporary disease, but it deflects his true vision. To one who is suffering from malaria, even a sweet *laddu* will taste bitter. This is the result of temporary sickness in him. So also, lack of faith in God is a disease. Here is an example. In a marriage feast, everyone sits in a line for food and they begin to serve some *laddus*. After some have been served, a few may say that they do not want *laddus*, not because they do not like them, but because they have a sugar factory inside themselves as they are diabetics. The *Nasthikas* are like this. They are suffering from the disease of non-belief, and therefore they say that they have nothing to do with God. In fact, they do want to know about Him. Some other people, however, even though they have no disease say that they do not want the *laddus* just because they want to imitate others who are saying so. As in this analogy, seeing some people say that there is no God, several other foolish people also say that there is no God. This is a ludicrous situation. Either you should surrender to God or you should be able to follow your own dictates, but you should not reveal your hollowness by merely imitating others. You should develop self-confidence and

with that you will get self-satisfaction. Once you acquire self-satisfaction, you will be able to show self-sacrifice and this will result in self-realisation. Self-realisation thus ultimately depends on the base of self-confidence.