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**Re-ligion: The Spiritual Reunion**

*Selfless love is the source of happiness, truth, peace, sacrifice, endurance and all other higher values of life. There is no security and safety without prema, the absolute, unalloyed form of love. O brave sons of Bharath, remember that love is more fundamental than all other moral values!*

**T**he different kinds of lives and living organisms are infinite in number. Nevertheless, reality has three main aspects, namely, the empirical reality, the illusory reality and the absolute reality. These three categories of human existence correspond to three levels of consciousness viz., *jagrata* or the consciousness of wakefulness, *swapna* or the subconsciousness of dreams, and *sushupti* or the unconsciousness of deep slumber. Waves of water are

more real than the surf on the seashore. Similarly, the basic substance of water is more real than waves. Likewise, spiritual life is more real than mundane life; mundane life is more fundamental and more real than the dreams of the subconscious mind. Transparency, sweetness and liquidity are the natural properties of water. The same qualities are, to some extent, imparted to the waves of water and the surf on the shore.

*Sath-chith-ananda* is *kutastha*. *Sath-chith-ananda* represents the integrated reality of truth, consciousness and bliss. *Kutastha* is the immutable and immortal reality. *Sath-chith-ananda* is the omnipresent reality reflected in the subconsciousness of dreams, conscious activities of the mundane world and super conscious experiences of spirituality. Surf comes from waves and waves come from water. Likewise, consciousness follows subconsciousness and subconsciousness follows super consciousness. *Kutastha*, in this context, refers to the unchanging, immutable and eternal principle of spirituality. Who is this unchanging, immutable and immobile being? This is the quintessential principle of *Easwara*, a personified and concretised abstraction, the knowledge of which can be acquired only by apprehending the reality of the Atma. “*Nahi jnanena sadrusam pavitraniha vidyate*,” said Krishna. Nothing as sacred as *jnana* is known.

*Jnana* or spiritual wisdom, enables the *jivatma*, or the individual soul, to merge with the *Paramatma* or

the cosmic soul. Every individual must try and recognise the oneness of the *Atma* and the *Paramatma*. This is the full essence of the spirituality expounded by Krishna. You may master any number of skills and talents. But if you cannot comprehend the unity of the *Atma* and the *Paramatma*, you will end up as a hopeless nihilist.

What is the good of acquiring all sorts of knowledge?

Who can alter the line of destiny on man's brow?

“If you fill your head with all sorts of evil ideas, you will be robbed of your discrimination and intelligence.” The Telugu poet Vemana has thus composed a number of couplets and quatrains which succinctly summarise a whole system of philosophy and a complete code of morality.

“Why do you load your stupid pate with all kinds of learned lumber? Why do you kill yourself with too much learning? Try and understand that eternal truth which will make you immortal.”

“You may learn all arts and sciences. You may call yourself a versatile genius and an all-knowing polymath. But still you will only be a learned fool if you do not know your Self.”

“A mean-minded man without moral scruples may read but he can never give up his meanness.”

“You may read all the books in the world. You can only become a hair-splitting and pettifogging *pundit*. With the aid of books you can never acquire spiritual wisdom and integrated knowledge. Such bookish learning may enable you to eke out your livelihood. But books can never reveal to you a vision of your own divine *Atma*.”

Stricken by poverty, once Narada had to face a number of difficulties. He became a victim of acute mental depression. He had mastered all the sixty-four arts of antiquity. But he had no peace of mind. At last, he went to Sanatkumara, who diagnosed Narada's ailment and prescribed for him the path to self-realisation. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna reveals to Arjuna the esoteric but simple path to self-realisation for the attainment of abiding peace and everlasting bliss.

Sanatkumara initiated Narada into the spiritual experience of identifying the individual *Atma* with the universal *Paramatma*. This is the most sublime *mantra* for spiritual liberation. The immediate, intimate and intuitive apprehension of the immanent effulgence of divinity pervading the microcosm and the macrocosm is the highest liberating experience.

“The microcosm and the macrocosm are suffused with the same creative energy of *Paramatma*. This mystical energy is known to the wise. Shut the doors of outward perception and look inwards. Transcend the barriers of thought. Travel along the mountain path of

life and reach the peak and listen to the primordial sound of the *Pranava*. Come out of the dark night of the soul and divine grace will descend on you.”

The star-studded firmament is boundless. Even with the naked eye we can see innumerable stars. There is every reason to believe that the uncharted and unseen universe consists of millions of invisible galaxies. Even with the aid of the most powerful instruments, modern man has not been able to explore the universe in its entirety. The limited human mind can never become omniscient. *Easwara* is the only omniscient Being. Even if you know everything in the world, you will be ignorant if you have not tried to apprehend the essence of *Easwara*.

What you know is very little. What you do not know is enormous. It is impossible to know everything. Instead of trying to know everything, it is better to know that, by knowing which, everything else will be known. Krishna is the divine exponent of this perennial philosophy of life and the science of the self incorporated in the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Yoga* or the science of the self is the foundation of Indian culture. The dissolution of the dichotomy between *jivatma* and *Paramatma*, generated by *karmic* causes, is the essence of Indian culture. Indian culture and Indian philosophy are essentially religious.

The word “religion” contains the prefix “re.” “Re” means doing something again. The other part of the word

connotes “unifying”. Religion may be thus interpreted as reunion, the renunciation of two entities separated by time or the restoration of their original organic unity. *jivatma* and *Paramatma* have lost their fundamental oneness. *Karmic* factors have created a duality between the *Atma* and *Brahman*. The restoration of the primal unity of *Atma* and *Paramatma* through self-realisation is the primary function of religion.

This process of reunification of *Atma* with *Paramatma* is an arduous *sadhana* (Spiritual practice). An analogy might be useful here. The water in the sea evaporates on account of the sun’s heat, forming clouds. These clouds float in the sky until they are again condensed into water drops by cool winds. The vast ocean consists of an infinite quantity of water. A small volume of water becomes a cloud and comes down as rain. This rain water becomes a stream. A number of streams mingle together to become a large river which flows down mountains and through valleys. Finally, the river reunites with the ocean. Similarly, we are alienated from *Easwara*, the repository of illimitable grace. We have gone through many incarnations and the recurring cycles of births and deaths. The journey of the embodied soul follows a similar pattern until it merges with the universal soul.

We are proud of our knowledge, our heritage and our culture. Nevertheless, we behave in an unbecoming manner. Even animals have a sense of decency and

decorum. There are different *varnas* (social groups) in the world. These *varnas* are based on individual and social attributes. We cannot transcend our attributes. It is only *Easwara* who transcends all human attributes.

All *varnas* are based on differences in attributes. Each group has its specific attributes which are collectively designated as *swadharma*. *Swadharma* is not free from desires. It has its own specific aims and objectives. They include peace and prosperity in this world and the delights of heaven. Thus, all rituals prescribed by the various *varnas* are performed for the fulfilment of earthly ambitions and heavenly hopes. *Dharma* based on *varnas* involves an element of selfishness. It is not *Easwara sharma*, which is absolute freedom from selfish desires. You can realise the *Atma* only when you give up all selfish *dharmas* and follow *Easwara dharma*. Selfishness is a beastly quality. Even humanitarianism should be made divine. Love tainted with selfishness is death. The essence of *Easwara dharma* is selfless love. Cultivate the quality of unbounded, selfless love. It is only then that real spiritual wisdom will dawn on you. The cultivation of selfless love is not an easy thing. Indeed, selfishness also is essential in the beginning. Selfishness is perhaps a degenerated and depraved form of self-love. Without *swartha* or self-centred love, you cannot have *parartha* or expansive love. Selfless love is an extended form of selfishness. But you cannot grow spiritually if you are limited to your self. Humanitarianism is an extended

and sublimated form of self-love. You may be born in selfishness, but you should not die in selfishness.

When you are born, you are not born with garlands and necklaces. You have no pearls or diamonds. You have no golden ornaments. But around your neck hangs the garland of your past *karma* and acquired *samskaras* (inborn impulses). And when you die, you do not take anything with you except the consequences of your good and evil actions. You are always decked with the invisible garland of your inexorable *karma*, which pursues and burdens you. This burden of *karma* can be lightened by God's grace and your own realisation of the oneness of your soul with the universal soul. And *karma* can be destroyed by *karma* alone.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is a treasure chest of sublime teachings of perennial spiritual value. Young students must ruminate and contemplate upon them and practise them. We must bring about a spiritual renaissance in Bharath. Lack of integrity and morality is the bane of the modern world. Man does not live by bread alone. We must always remember that money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows. I hope you will follow at least a few of the noble teachings of the *Gita* and follow the path of morality and integrity. I conclude My discourse with blessings to all of you.