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Buddhi Yoga

The tree of prakruthi (nature) falls and the branches of desires wither away only when the mind, the root, is destroyed.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Man may be compared to a machine with the intellect, the mind, the senses and the body as its different components. Just as the various parts of the body work in perfect co-ordination with one another to keep the physical mechanism of the body in order, the various faculties in man should work in harmony with one another to ensure that the *Atmic* Radiance is reflected in their functioning and that man's life is full of Divine Light and Joy.

In big factories, the workers in all cadres discharge their duties properly by obeying the instructions of their immediate superior officers. Such

a process is conducive to the efficient running of the organisation. Elaborating on this theme while dealing with *karma yoga* and *karma sanyasa yoga*, the *Gitacharya* addressed Arjuna and said, "The senses control the body and the mind controls the senses. The mind, in turn, is controlled by the intellect. Being closest to the *Atma, buddhi* (intellect) best reflects the attributes of the *Atma*. The influence of the *Atma* directly falls upon the *buddhi* and therefore, the *buddhi* functions as the presiding faculty in man."

The mind generates *sankalpa* (thought), which is checked and allowed to remain by the intelligence in every human being, the intelligence alone has the power to make decisions and to discriminate between good and bad. Individuals, often, get upset and troubled by the desires that arise in their minds. However, if they follow the dictates of their intelligence, their minds get lulled into submission and their actions result in happiness. Here is a small illustration.

In this gathering, there may be a person who thinks, "Swami's discourse may go on for another half an hour. If I catch a bus after the discourse is over, I might miss the second show of a movie. So it may be better to get up now and go." This is the prompting of the mind. But then, the intellect comes on the scene and counsels. "No, no. Don't leave. An opportunity to listen to Swami's discourse dealing with profound truths relating to the *Atma* and the spiritual life will not come

to you again—it is a rare blessing and should not be squandered away. Stay on and listen to Swami.” The mind, then, follows the decision of the intellect. It must be so if life’s purpose is to be fulfilled.

Buddhi is directly influenced by the *Atma*. Therefore, if the mind follows the *buddhi*, it will be able to lead the senses along the right path. So, Krishna advised Arjuna not to follow the mind, which, left to itself, is prone to succumbing to the pulls of sensory pleasures, but instead, to subjugate it to the intellect.

For going about in a chariot, it is the charioteer who has the most important role to play. Neither the horses that draw the chariot nor even the owner who is seated therein is competent to ensure a safe journey. It is the charioteer alone who can do it. If he is not accomplished, the horses will run berserk and drag the chariot hither and thither. Therefore, the charioteer must be competent enough and experienced to do his job properly. Krishna said, “Arjuna! Your body is a chariot and your senses are the horses; your mind acts as the reins and your intellect is the driver. If you let your intellect guide your life’s journey, you will reach your ultimate destination safely.”

Arjuna emerged victorious in the battle because his charioteer was Krishna, the source of all intellect. To install Krishna as our charioteer is the most sacred and felicitous means by which we can attain the goal of life. If, however, we have an inept person as the

charioteer (as Karna’s charioteer Salya was), we will get discouraged every minute of our lives and eventually lose the battle we wage against our inner foes.

It is only when the mind follows the *buddhi* that inner vision is developed. Inner vision leads to the experience of the Bliss of the *Atma*. External vision, however, subjects man to untold suffering.

Krishna told Arjuna that in this world of objects which we see with our external vision, we perceive two qualities, namely “*kshayasila*” (destructibility) and “*dukhamisrama*” (presence of sorrow). This can be explained by an example. We see a child growing into a man and are happy that he is developing physically, failing to note, however, that the life-span of the child is simultaneously getting reduced. This gradual ebbing out of the life within man as he keeps growing is attributable to “*kshayasila*”. Similarly, we see a bud blossoming into a flower and enjoy its fragrance without recognising the fact that in a few hours the flower will fade away. So also, the food that we cook today may be delicious and wholesome if eaten today, but if it is kept for the morrow, it would decompose or go stale. The fruit we eat today may be fresh, sweet, and delightful to the palate, but the very next day, it will become waste matter and will be looked upon with disgust.

Thus, destructibility or impermanence is an inherent characteristic of the material world. So also, worldly objects and relations bring about sorrow along

with joy. The same object may be the source of joy as well as the cause of sorrow. The shadow of sorrow haunts the experience of joy. One may feel happy when he receives the news of the birth of a son but feels miserable when he receives the news of the death of the same son.

Krishna said to Arjuna, “The joy which you seek and the self-realisation which you aim at, are both within you. They cannot be found in the external world. You are as foolish as a person who begs for food on the street even though there are sweets and other delicate dishes in his own home. You think that this world and its objects confer happiness on you. This is an illusion created by your mind. It is only when you follow the intelligence that you will be able to enjoy *Atmananda*”.

Real happiness lies within you. A small illustration. Putting its thumb in the mouth and sucking it, the baby imagines that something sweet is flowing from the thumb, although, in reality, the sweetness comes from the saliva in its mouth. Let us take another case. A street-dog snatches an old, dry bone but finds it very hard to break. Out of its anxiety and hunger, the dog goes on biting the bone with all its strength. Suddenly, the bone breaks and a piece of it pierces the dog’s gum. As a result, blood begins to flow in the dog’s mouth. The foolish dog keeps biting the bone and thinks that it is enjoying the blood flowing from the bone, while actually it is getting the blood from its own gum and not from the bone.

We eat different sweets made of different kinds of flour. Sweetness, however, comes from the sugar and not from the flour. Yet, we say that the laddu or the Mysore pak is sweet. In the same manner, although the sweet beatitude of the Atma is within us, we erroneously attribute the sweetness to the fleeting objects found in the world. *Nara* (man) must pursue the path that takes him to *Narayana* (God). We must aim at becoming *Pashupati* (Lord Siva) but should not revert to the life of an animal (*pashu*). One who follows his intelligence can become *Pashupati*, while one who follows his mind becomes a *pashu*. It is natural for the mind to prompt and provoke, but we must not translate them into action hastily. We should discriminate with our intellect and implement its dictates.

The intellect is described as the embodiment of God. Krishna says in the *Vibhuthi Yoga* that He is the intellect inherent in all men. In daily life, when someone commits a mistake, we scold him as one devoid of intellect. When we come across a good man, we remark, “He is one having intellect.” *Buddhi* (intellect) develops the divine Nature, which is within us. Therefore, it is necessary for man to follow the intellect which offers permanent, supreme delight and which continues from birth to birth, displaying divine attributes. The mind is destructible, but the intellect cannot be destroyed. The intellect guides and leads man to the *Atma*. We should follow the intellect which seeks the eternal delight of the *Atma*, and not the

mind which hankers after the pleasures of the senses.

In general, people of this age follow the mind and only a very rare person follows the intellect. Therefore, Krishna, foreseeing the trends of the *Kali Yuga*, desired to teach *buddhi yoga* to all mankind through Arjuna. I hope that everyone will follow the sacred and inspiring words of Krishna to Arjuna.