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Work, Worship And Wisdom

If there were no clouds in man's life, it would be difficult to discern the true value of light. So too, there can be nothing extraordinary about happiness which does not arise out of genuine exertion.

Without sathya (truth), dharma (righteousness), santhi (peace), and prema (love), the education that one would have acquired would be meaningless. Charity would bring no merit and the results of all good deeds would verily become naught if man lacks these few virtues. Even so, no heavenly good would accrue to those who wield power in the world, yet lack these cardinal virtues. sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema are the four foundation walls on which the edifice of the grand mansion

of Sanathana Dharma (Eternal, Universal Religion) stands. What else can I make known unto you, O assembly of good and gentle persons!

Embodiments of Love!

Knowledge of *Brahman* is denied unto them who discard the intellect and are enamoured of ephemeral knowledge. To the man who stands on the shores of the sea and observes the stultifying external manifestations, the waves alone appear. Only the daring expert diver who can search the seabed finds the precious pearls lying there. The *Bhagavad Gita* declares that knowledge of *Brahman* is attained only by the person who seeks the Atma in the innermost recesses of his subtle being.

The human body is affected by the impurities connected with the three humours present in the body (*vata* or wind, *pitta* or bilious humour, and *sleshma* or phlegm). So also, the subtle body represented by the mind is tainted by *mala* or impure, evil thoughts and tendencies; *vikshepa* or projection of the unreal as the real, and *avarana* or concealment of the real. As a result of this threefold impurity of the mind, man is unable to attain divine knowledge. So long as his mind has these taints, he cannot gain the knowledge of the Atma.

Mala can be got rid of by means of sacred work,

while *vikshepa* can be removed by worship and *avarana* by wisdom. The *Gita* teaches us that by good and sacred work we can purify our hearts; that by worship we can attain one-pointedness of the mind and that by wisdom we can remove the veil of ignorance and attain union with God. Thus by work, worship and wisdom, man can become divine. However, according to the *Gita*, all these three, that is to say, purification of the mind, one-pointedness of the mind and unitive knowledge of the Godhead, can also be attained by the practice of *Yoga*.

Yoga also means *samathva* or equal-mindedness (*Samathvam yogamuchyathe*). Having regard to the environment in which the ordinary man is placed and to his duties, both secular and spiritual, *samathva* has been found applicable in five different ways. We, accordingly, cognise *samathva* in relation to *prakruthi* or nature, *samaja* or society, *jnana* or knowledge, *karma* or action, and *upasana* or worship. *Prakruthika samathva* is equanimity in relation to *prakruthi* or the various natural phenomena. In cold seasons, warmth gives us comfort, while in hot seasons coolness gives us joy. This way both heat and cold, at one time or the other, give us happiness. Neither subjects us to misery. At times, however, due to the varying intensities of heat and cold, we might be put to some inconvenience. But then these are only subjective and superficial experiences rather than universally applicable realities. Essentially, both heat and cold give us happiness.

In the same manner, pleasure and pain also bring

happiness to us. Without pain, one cannot appreciate the true value of pleasure. It is only in the light of sorrow that joy assumes greater prominence. Thus, pleasure and pain or happiness and misery should be looked upon with an unruffled mind and with the same sense of detachment.

It is very necessary for us to develop *prakruthika samathva*. This is specially so for students who tend to be impulsive and let success and failure influence them easily and profoundly. To be impulsive is a sign of human weakness. Everyone should recognise the truth that pleasure is but an interval between two pains and face the trials and tribulations of the world in a calm and collected manner. The alternating experiences of pleasure and pain actually prod us on along the path of righteousness.

Samajika samathva or the equanimity which man, as an integral part of society, should possess comes next. Society too subjects man to the dual experiences of joy and sorrow. For instance, both praise and blame come to man from the society in which he lives. Praise and blame are like the two faces of the same coin and they always haunt each other. We should be perturbed by neither. We should regard both adulation and censure as stepping stones to progress.

When a well is being dug, the earth that is removed from the pit forms a mound by the side. The mud in the mound is the same mud that was in the pit.

Praise and calumny are like the mound and the pit and are essentially of the same origin. Realising this, the mind should be trained to develop equanimity in terms of man's relationship with and existence in society.

Jnana samathva is the third type of equanimity which we should try to promote in us. This basically consists in recognising the identity of the Atma that permeates all beings, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. Religions may be different, but all of them lead man to the same goal—God. Garments may be different, but the fabric is the same. Ornaments may be various, but the gold is the same. Cows may be of different hues, but the milk is one. The electric bulbs may have varying wattage, sizes and colours, but the electricity that lights them all is the same. Similarly, the *jivas* and the animals are myriad and multiple, but the life-force in all of them is essentially the same. The realisation of this unitive aspect of creation is *jnana samathva*.

The performance of right and sacred actions in a detached manner, without being ruffled by their consequences, either good or bad, is the spirit of *karma samathva* or equanimity in action. And *bhakthi samathva* (equanimity in devotion) consists in the realisation of the truth that Easwara pervades the entire universe and that He is everything, the refuge for all. *Twameva sarvam mama deva deva* is the cry of the person endowed with equanimity in devotion.

It is only when his *bhakthi* (devotion) is constant,

enduring and unwavering that the devotee can attain *bhakthi samathva*. The flow of love for God should always remain the same and be steady. Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

*Ananyaschintayantomaam yejanah paryupasate
Tesham nityabhiyuktanaam yogakshemam
vahamyaham.*

“I shall look after the material welfare and the spiritual well-being of those who worship Me through one-pointed devotion and are ever attached to Me.”

This *ananya bhakthi* or one-pointed devotion comes as a result of the five kinds of *samathva* (equanimity). *Samathva* should be steadfastly maintained and promoted at all times, at all places and in all climes.

The word *manava* (man) has three letters: “*ma*”, which stands for ignorance; “*na*”, which stands for the negation of the ignorance, and “*va*”, which refers to the power to attain divine knowledge. If man is to deserve his name, he should be free from ignorance.

The *Bhagavad Gita* contains the sacred lore of the spirit. Krishna gave unto mankind, through Arjuna, the core of the *Gita* message on the battlefield at 10:30 a.m. on the *Karthika Bahula Amavasya* day. This was the day on which the great Mahabharatha war was commenced. Ten days later, when Bhishma fell in battle,

Sanjaya was informing Dhritharashtra of the proceedings on the battlefield. Dhritharashtra asked Sanjaya:

*Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre samavetayuyut-
savaha Mamakah Pandavaschaiva kimakurvata
Sanjaya.*

“Gathered on the holy plain of Kurukshetra, O Sanjaya, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do?”

This was on the *Margasira Suddha Ekadasi* day. Some consider this day as the *Gitajayanti* or the day on which Krishna vouchsafed the message of the *Gita* to Arjuna. But this was the day on which Sanjaya narrated the story of the battle to Dhritharashtra. The *Gita* was actually given by Krishna to Arjuna on the *Karthika Bahula Amavasya* day.

Why did Krishna choose the *Amavasya* day for the commencement of the battle and so for the teaching of the *Gita*? Normally, nothing auspicious is done on an *Amavasya* day. However, such examples of Krishna’s divinely enigmatic ways are there in the other episodes of His life, too. His birth on an *Ashtami* day itself is a case in point. Krishna was born on July 20, 3227 BC, during the early morning at 3 a.m. The battle of Mahabharatha took place in the year 3141 BC, when Krishna was 86 years old. In these 5119 years that have passed since the Mahabharatha war, the *Gita* message has spread to every nook and corner of the world.

Students of the present day conveniently forget

the injunction to engage in *ananya chinta* (constant remembrance) but crave for *yoga kshema*. The Lord assures you that He will look after your *yoga* and *kshema*. *Yoga* is the *prapti* (obtaining) of the unattainable and the Lord should confer it on you; while *kshema* is the experiencing of something that is rightfully your due. Here is an illustration for this. While reading a book, you keep a five-rupee note in it and as time passes, you forget about it. However, on a later date, you are in need of five rupees and so ask for it from a friend who has come to visit you. The friend accidentally picks up the book, comes across the five rupees in it and hands it over to you. The money is actually yours and the friend has only given you what is really your own. In the same way, joy is within you though you are unaware of it. The *sadguru* is the friend who helps you unearth this treasure of happiness that is lying hidden in your own heart.

“Duty without love is deplorable. Duty with love is desirable. Love without duty is Divine.” Duty implies force or compulsion while love is spontaneous and expresses itself without external promptings. All the *japa*, *dhyana*, and the deeds of merit you perform will be futile if you do not cultivate universal and selfless love.

Even if you offer only a leaf (*patram*), a flower (*pushpam*), a fruit (*phalam*), or a drop of water (*thoyam*) to God in the true spirit of devotion and surrender, the

results will be infinitely good.

You have been listening to the teachings of the *Gita* for about a month now. No purpose, however, will be served by mere listening. *Sravana* (listening) should be followed by *manana* (recapitulation) and *nididhyasana* (assimilation).