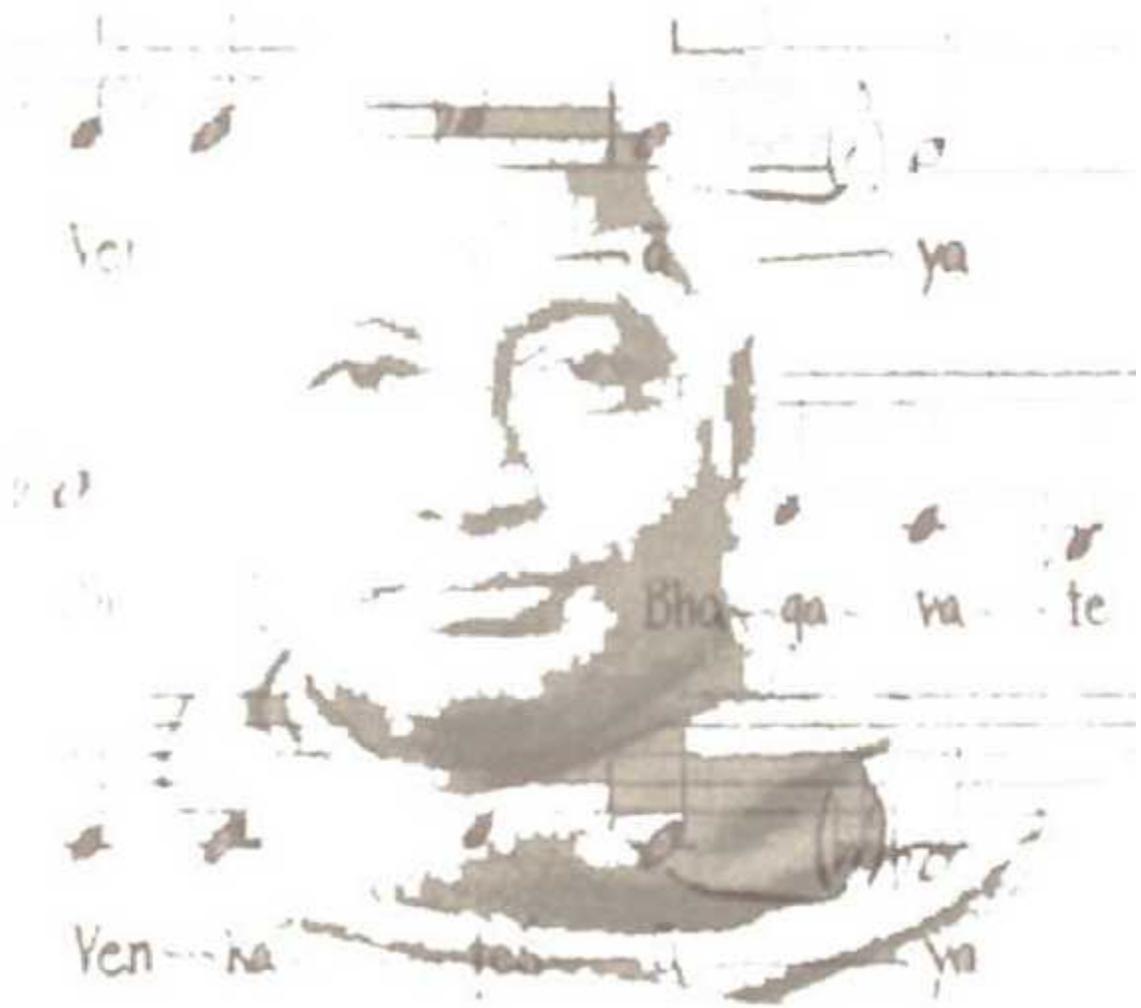




LIFE WITHOUT CONFUSION

Swami Venkatesananda



Om Namah Venkatesaya
Om Namah Shivaya

The Bhagavad Gita Chapter 7 Life Without Confusion

Swami Venkatesananda

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**The Bhagavad Gita
Chapter 7
Life Without Confusion**

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1. What is Omnipresent is God

The seventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita starts with a grand assurance that the teaching would be comprehensive.

jnanath to 'ham savijnanam idam vaksyemy asesatah yaj jnatva ne 'ha bhuyo 'nyaj
jnatavyam avasisyate (VII:2)

I shall declare to thee in full this knowledge combined with direct realisation, after knowing which nothing more here remains to be known.

That is a most important declaration. Krsna has given a few hints which suggest that all that happens, happens because of the divine omnipresence. But for this omnipresence nothing would exist, because the existence is the omnipresence. That which is omnipresent, is ever existent; that which exists, is omnipresent. That which exists, is also divine. Hence, here and there we have a word of caution:

balam balavatam ca 'ham kamaragavivarjitam dharmaviruddho bhutesu kamo 'smi
bharatarsabha (VII:11)

Krsna says here: "I am desire, which is not contrary to the laws of nature." Can all our desires then be considered divine? The question is not answered by a stop-gap answer; so, enquire deeper and deeper into it.

In order to answer the question, you must enquire into nature. Ask yourself "Is this in accordance with the laws of nature", not as defined by me, or you, or some scientist, philosopher, or psychologist? Can you investigate it directly, without anybody's help, and arrive at enlightenment? It is possible that if this enquiry is properly conducted, you might discover that all desires arise in the same mind stuff, they are made of the same mind stuff.

When this discovery is made by oneself, then no desire that is contrary to the laws of nature will arise. Only natural desires remain, and unnatural desires seem to go away. Supposing I have a desire to get up and kill somebody. If everything that happens in this world, happens only because of the divine omnipresence, this also is obviously because of the divine omnipresence. I sit down to investigate: "Is this true? Does this desire to murder somebody also arise in the mind? Why does it arise in the mind? What is the content of this particular desire - or craving, or impulse?"

Intelligence and energy are common to what you call good actions and not-so-good actions; but, in the case of the latter, there is some amount of foolishness mixed with it. So, this desire to kill arises on account of a paradoxical mixture of intelligence plus foolishness. Otherwise, the content of both the desire to love somebody and the desire to hate somebody is exactly the same. The desire to love somebody is closer to nature; which means, there is no foolishness in that consciousness. The desire to kill somebody or hate someone partakes of both the intelligent side as well as the foolish side.

It is up to you to choose which side you want to be on. That is why Krsna had already declared:

na mam duskrfino mudhah prapadyante naradhamah mayaya 'pahrtajana asuram bhavam asritah
(VII:15)
These stupid people, who do not resort to me, are of diabolical disposition.

The omnipresence is not withdrawn from even their hearts. Just as smoke is part of fire, what is called foolishness is also part of this intelligence. This is a paradox which cannot really be answered by human intellect.

What happens to these people? Are they God-forsaken? Nobody is God-forsaken, because the omnipresence cannot withdraw itself from anything. That which is omnipresent, is called God - if it is not omnipresent, it won't be called God. We are not saying God is omnipresent; but, what is omnipresent, is God; what is existent irrespective of time and space, is God; that which is everywhere, and that which exists forever, is God.

This omnipresent eternal being cannot forsake anyone, it cannot be withdrawn from any part of the universe, nor take a holiday. It cannot be absent at any one period of time, or in any part of this universe. That is the reason why, in the Bhagavatam, there is a beautiful declaration that God himself promotes from time to time that which appears to be evil. There cannot be two forces. "It is himself," says the Bhagavatam, "who appears to promote evil at a certain time." If you have ever had a headache or some serious illness, it is then you are powerfully reminded of the truth which you had until then ignore, and if you don't wake up, it comes back again. It is like the old-fashioned repeat alarm clocks. If you don't get up and turn them off, they ring again. That is what happens to our lives. We are granted, by God's Grace, some illness, some serious problem; and then we wake up, "Oh! I was asleep, I suddenly forgot the nature of the world. I suddenly forgot what I am here for." If you are sane, if you are intelligent, you wake up and say, "Thank you God, now I am awake." If you go to sleep, the alarm will ring again a little later. The same problem or a little worse problem will come and wake you up. God does not forsake us.

We have to be awakened spiritually; and whatever happens in our life, is God's awakening call. A blanket makes you sleep sounder, comfort and pleasure are hindrances; but a cold wind wakes you up. Pleasures may be granted to you - take them as God's gifts - but they are not what might help awaken you. Troubles have that peculiar quality.

Mayaya 'pahrtajana - their intelligence has been robbed by maya, which means that it has somehow become clouded. How is it possible for intelligence to be clouded? How is it possible for smoke, which rises from fire, to hide that fire itself? How is it possible for a cloud, which is produced by the sun, to hide the sun itself? Such is life. An intelligent mind sees all these as facts. When I make the slightest effort to regain that intelligence, my heart is turned towards God. The pain, the suffering, and the sorrow, may be still there, because these are inherent in life. A little bit of happiness and pleasure may also come along - these are all part of life - but from then on, this inner intelligence does not forget the truth.

This awakening can come in several ways:

caturvidha bhajante mam janah sukrino 'rjuna arto jijnasur arthartha jnani ca
bharatarsabha (VII:16)

The awakening call comes to all of us invariably. God does not forsake us, and nobody is God-forsaken. If it looks as though we have been forsaken by God, it only means that we have forsaken God. The omnipresent cannot forsake us, but we can ignore the omnipresence of the omnipresent, we can ignore the existence of what exists. We do that all the time. When there is a problem and it seems to be too troublesome, we seek a diversion. Why not face the jolly good problem? Why must the mind be diverted, either by alcohol or the theatre, a concert, or a holiday? Going to a concert is good, but not because you can't solve a problem!

When the mind is diverted, we are trying to ignore that which exists right in front of us. This problem has been given to you to awaken you. If you seek some sort of diversion, you are ignoring the existence; but the existence doesn't ignore you! That problem will come into your life again in a much more serious form, because God has not forsaken you. That which exists, cannot be forsaken by you; but you can, if you are foolish enough, ignore it. That which exists is God, who can send out awakening signals in several ways. That is what this verse really means.

tesam jnani nityayukta ekabhaktir visisyate priyo hi jnanino 'tyartham aham sa ca mama
priyah (VII:17)

They have done well. When they have received the signals, they have turned towards the light, instead of seeking a diversion. That is the most important fact to remember. When you are unhappy - physically, psychologically, emotionally, or socially - if you seek a diversion, you are lost - asuram bhavam asritah. You have missed the vital signal that the divine omnipresence sends out to you. The wise man, however, when pain or trouble comes, recognises that he has slept, and turns towards this omnipresence. When this omnipresence sends out these signals - which are the experiences in our lives, we respond in four different ways. Or, four different types of people respond to these signals.

One signal is pain and suffering. You are sick physically, mentally, morally, or you are sick of this world - all sickness is included here. Without seeking a diversion, without calling it karma or making others responsible for it, look directly into it, and see that a vital truth has been forgotten. I am not referring to what these nature cure people might say, that pain is an indicator of some error in your diet or your life-style. Pain, sorrow, or suffering, even on the purely physical level, is an indicator that this body is not permanent. Psychological sorrow is an indicator that you cannot possibly manufacture your own happiness. The more you try, the more of a mess your life will become.

In the Bhagavad Gita itself, Krsna described the world as dukkham - sorrow.

This is the place where dukkham is available in plenty. You forget that; so, you are reminded by this experience of sorrow that this world is dukkham. If you are intelligent, it is possible for you to awaken yourself by an experience of physical and psychological sorrow; or, if you are not intelligent, you seek a diversion from that, or try some kind of cosmetic trick. You think, "I did that, and so I invited this sorrow. If I do something else, I may escape from this sorrow." It is as foolish as trying to run in mud. Whatever you do, you will sink deeper.

Any cosmetic escape effort leads only to greater sorrow. If you can, at that very moment, stop there and say "Ah, I was facing the wrong direction, I had forgotten the truth that this is a world of pain and sorrow," that is when the artha becomes a bhakta. So, instead of being foolish enough to pray to God, "Please God take my sorrow away," one might regard that experience as an awakening call, a signal from the divine, and say, "Thank you God, I have accepted it and I am awake now." If you have some problem, some sorrow in your life, by all means take steps to remedy the situation, but let that not be a diversion or an escape.

The inner intelligence is awakened to this ever-existent truth that all that is born must die, that this world is one of pain and sorrow - not in a pessimistic depressive manner, but in an intelligent manner. Of course, you will go to a doctor and get some pills if necessary, but you are not going to expect from now on that you will have no headache hereafter. You are not going to run after pleasure or happiness here. Let what comes come, but be alert and wide awake. That awakened intelligence being God, be devoted to it, and sustain it, keep looking at it. For, as long as you are facing the sun, you will see no shadow.

It is possible that the awakening signal doesn't come to you as suffering, but as mysterious happenings. I will give you a crude example. Either you yourself or someone else behaves in an inexplicable way. The immature mind is tempted immediately to enter into judgement, or to philosophise. Instead of doing that, when you see something funny, inexplicable, once again return to the source: "What a mysterious thing this mind is! It is the mind that undergoes all these changes. What we call goodness, badness, virtue, or vice, are all modifications of the same mind. How does the mind undergo this change?" Now you begin to inquire into it - jijnasur.

Instead of entering into judgement over it, can the mind be trained to look within, deeper and deeper, to unravel the mystery within oneself? You may see some mysterious behaviour on the part of others; but that must immediately turn your eyes upon yourself, and enable you to realise "Such is my nature too. What is it?"

The signal may come as poverty; but, instead of running after earning one's daily bread, one learns to deal with poverty. "Why do I crave for wealth? What is it?" Can the intelligence be awakened by these experiences of pain, sorrow, or poverty, the experience of peculiar behaviour on one's own part, or the part of others, or peculiar happenings in the world? All this hypocrisy, violence,

aggression, and greed, are in the world; but they are also in each one of us. These things exist in the world perhaps merely to awaken us.

How do you know how to look? It is very simple. Get hold of a pin and, while looking at the ceiling, prick the leg with it. You suddenly become aware of that part of your anatomy of which you were not aware at all. That pain enables you literally to see that part. In the same way, when you feel hurt if you inquire into what it is that is hurt, you can literally see what is called the ego, what is called the mind. When you are beset with sorrow and suffering, they are merely intended to serve as focal points for your contemplation.

If this simple truth is realised, whatever be your position or your experience of life, you can instantly become a bhakta, a devotee of God. When this becomes habitual - which means, when you are able habitually to turn towards God - you become a jnani.

It is then that you realise that there is this divine omnipresence, whose effervescence is called the world and all its experiences, and all the experiences that we undergo in this world.

2. The Mature Mind

It is not easy for immature persons to recognise that all awakening influences come from the divine source. The immature mind immediately holds onto the channel through which this impulse may reach us. When you turn the tap, water comes out; so, the inference is that the water comes from the tap. You do not see the reservoir and the various pipelines. Similarly, from where the awakening impulse comes, the limited vision of the human being does not perceive. The wise man becomes aware of it intuitively.

At a superficial level, there is no difference at all between the fool and the sage; but, if a kick is given instead of a cake, the fool reacts in a different way. The sage intuitively realises that, though the gift comes from you - whether it is the cake or the kick, it ultimately has its source in the divine ground - or God. A sage is one who sees that everything that happens has its origin in this divine ground. The totally immature person, however, considers you as the giver of the cake or the kick, and therefore the reaction is towards you. Either he kicks you back or clings to you.

An immature person blames you, and that's the end of that. A semi-mature person feels that the suffering comes from you - or some virus or some germ, but that the relief comes from God. When you think that your problems arise from somewhere, and the help to deal with them comes from God, you are totally untouched. This goes on for some time, until something else is awakened, and you begin to realise that not only the relief but the trouble also had its origin in the divine, and the mind begins to turn towards the divine ground. In response to these impulses, you get a kick, and you remember God; but you are not out of the woods yet, because of samskaras - sinful tendencies. You wake up in response to one impulse - maybe a bout of ill health, or some unfortunate experience, and you recognise that both it and the remedy came from the divine ground. When that episode has passed, you come back to the original state of immaturity - until another trouble arises.

When the mind looks a little deeper, suddenly it recognises that there is only one source for all events, just as no matter what it is called, all water has its source in the ocean. When you recognise this, you become a jnani. At that time, the inner limiting samskara has come to an end. Towards the end of this chapter, Krsna reminds us:

yesam tv antagatam papam jananam punyakarmanam to dvandvamohanirmukta bhajante mam drdhavratah (VII:28)

We don't know whether, when your samskaras come to an end, you become a jnani, or when you become a jnani, your samskaras come to an end. They are simultaneous. "When all the samskaras have been got rid of", says Krsna, "there is this inner total awakening, in which one recognises that all impulses come from the divine ground, and the remedy also comes from the same divine ground" - whether it is the digestive capacity, or the capacity to bear the kick or to

return it.

tesam jnani nityayukta ekabhaktir visisyate priyo hi jnanino 'tyartham aham sa ca mama priyah (VII:17)

Nityayukta means, 'constantly united with the divine ground - God'. That is possible only if the inner intelligence is awake, and able intuitively to recognise that all impulses and all solutions or responses arise from there. Only then is one totally devoted, totally united, totally dedicated, totally in love with this totality. If the previous explanation is not understood, then all sorts of other meanings are possible. Nityayukta also means, 'one who repeats God's names constantly, who remembers God constantly, who is devoted to God and not to friends or family members'. But, you do not become a jnani by merely thinking of God constantly, or by thinking that you love God more than you love all. This idea of 'all' still remains at the back of your mind, and will somewhere and somehow trip you. You think you see God in all, and suddenly some attachment develops, and the mind begins to entertain opinions. Then you run into difficulties. The difficulties are an awakening impulse. You recognise that they also come from God. You were only 'thinking' that you were devoted to God, and that God dwells in all! If there is an intuitive recognition that the impulse as well as the response arises in exactly the same divine ground - called God, then you are freed from all problems. Problems do not arise.

Priyo hi jhanino 'tyartham aham sa ca mama priyah - "I love him and he loves me, without asking why." There is no problem and solution; there is no challenge and no response. At that point, when the jnani becomes a jnani, there is no longer a feeling, "I am suffering", or "I am poverty stricken". This is all as it should be. This is when the formula "Everything is God. Whatever happens is God's will", becomes sensible.

udarah sarva evai 'te jnani tv atmai 'va me matam asthitah sa hi yuktatma mam eva' nuttamam gatim (VII:18)

Krsna says that if the half-mature person who, though blaming others for his distress, turns to God for a solution, even that is good, because he doesn't react, but prays to God. There is a lovely verse: "He who says 'This I am, and this is somebody else', is a man of small mind." But - udarah sarva evai 'te - all these have some expansion in consciousness. They are not as narrow as the immature person who feels that his troubles are due to x y z, and reacts without turning within and looking at the source. A person who turns within to look at the source of all these impulses is better, even if he regards the impulses as coming from outside. Jnani tv atmai 'va me - "But the jnani is myself." That is, there is no difference between him and God. Because the jnani's ego has been set aside, whatever happens, happens by the divine will - which means, there is absolutely no private will or private desire anymore.

In our own life, however, even though we have the high ideal that everything happens by God's will, something in us says, "But I hope it happens this way." It

needs an extraordinary vigilance to remember at that moment, "Not my will, but thy will be done." When you become an embodiment of that, the ego does not will or wish for anything anymore. At that moment, you have reached the supreme.

bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mam prapadyate vasudevah sarvam iti sa mahatma
sudurlabhah (VII:19)

When you don't exist, there is nothing more that can be done by you. It is all very simple, it is an obvious truth - when you don't exist, there is nothing more that needs to be done. Which means that the imposter who considered himself the doer - the ego - has been totally dissolved, and there is nothing more to be done. This is not an ordinary state of consciousness, which you can wish yourself into, acquire, and apply to yourself, reach by your own self effort, imagine you are in already, or think that you cannot reach! None of these speculations has any validity here. It is a state of total self surrender, of total egolessness.

Don't ask the question: "Can the human being, while the mind is still functioning as an individual, be free of wishing for something?" See where a wish arises in you. Hang on to it, don't let it go out of your focus of attention. Then, as life flows on, a situation arises where you entertain a wish - for instance, I wish to go to South Africa. I keep this wish in focus constantly, without losing sight of it; then I ask somebody to come and pick me up and take me to the airport in their car. Was it because I wished that this thing happened? Could it have happened otherwise, even though I wished? The plane could have engine trouble, the car a flat tyre. It happened because it happened - not because I wished, but on account of a million other factors. You only see this when your wish is not granted - when you go to the airport and the plane does not take off, for instance.

We must follow this pretty carefully if we don't want to miss it. When you really and truly realise that it is not the ego that makes things happen, that things happen totally independent of the ego's wish, there arises the shocking truth: "I am totally unnecessary in this world." At about the same time, the realisation arises that the wish was also part of that game - it was not 'my' wish at all, it was a wish that arose. The moment you realise this, an almost total inner revolution has taken place. The event is still the same, but there is a world of difference. If there is a headache, it is not 'my' headache. Can you deal with it as calmly and patiently as you would advise someone else how to deal with his or her headache? Because it is no longer 'my' headache, but a headache which has to be dealt with.

A wish arises in consciousness - it is not my wish. While living in this world, apparently wishing for something, and not wishing for something else and all the rest of it, you are free. While having the headache, you are free from the headache. Then what happens, happens.

Bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mam prapadyate - after many lifetimes of enquiry and investigation, he who is wise and totally mature, surrenders every day. Only he knows what surrender means, you and I do not, because it is the ego that thinks "I have surrendered myself". After I think I have surrendered myself,

either I look for a bed of roses, or I think that from now on no thoughts or feelings should arise in me, because I have surrendered everything to God. Life goes on and I am disappointed. It is not a bed of roses - and roses have thorns around them. But, what is even more disconcerting is that, after having surrendered, there is still hunger, thirst, headaches, feelings, thoughts, emotions. What are these? If you think that when you surrender yourself all these must disappear, there is no surrender. When you set your own conditions for what is to happen after surrender, you have not surrendered! When the surrender is total and complete - which is known only to God, then you become a jnani.

Vasudevah sarvam - "All is Vasudeva". Everything is God. Not only they who gave me pain, suffering, and sorrow, but even those experiences that I thought were unhappiness, misery, suffering, sorrow, and greed, are from the divine ground, or of the divine ground. There is no difference. Vasudevah sarvam - the experience, the experiencer, the channel through which the experience flows, and the channel through which the experience is experienced, are all Vasudeva.

Sudurlabah means very rare. It is a blessing to see such a person; but it is rare, because one may have to undergo all sorts of experiences in order to integrate the whole lot into the vasudevah sarvam consciousness - to understand that all this is consciousness, is God, the divine ground. However intelligent and wise we may be, the mind still divides - this is right, this is wrong; this is good, this is not good; this I like, this I don't like. You may even rationalise it, saying, "I like this because it is holy. I don't like this because it is unholy, not because I am prejudiced." Then, in the next birth, you will take birth in that unholy atmosphere, and then it won't appear to be terribly unholy anymore! For instance, if you are a human being, and you happen to step into mud, you go and wash. But if you are born as a pig, that is the best of all beds that you can ever have!

So, all these prejudices have to be knocked down one by one, until you become like space - totally unconcerned with all that happens in it, with all that grows in it, which has room for all. The one glorious thing about space is that there is room for all, and it promotes growth.

To reach that stage, one has to pass through several births - bahunam janmanam ante. It may or may not mean physical birth. In our own lives, in the course of one year, it is possible for us to be born again and again in a million ways. Every new inner awakening is a rebirth within oneself.

3. Surrender - The Drop becomes the Ocean

bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mat prapadyate vasudevah sarvam iti sa mahatma
sudurlabhah (VII:19)

After many lifetimes of striving, one becomes a jnani. A jnani is not just one who knows a lot of words, but one who knows the truth, the reality.

What is the sign of one who knows the reality?

nasto mohah smrtir labdha tvatprasadan maya 'cyuta sthito 'smi gatasamdehah karisye
vacanam tava (XVIII:73)

The jnani is one who is undeluded; there is no confusion in him. Right understanding or intelligence, which had been veiled by confusion, has once again become clear - smrtir labdha.

There are no more doubts - not in the sense of an ignorant fool who thinks others are fools and he is wise, but in the sense that his doubts have been laid to rest, so that there is no possibility of anyone creating a doubt in his mind. Your doctrine or dogma seems to be absolutely valid, but the moment you get exposed to another point of view, doubt stirs. In the case of a jnani, that whole thing has come around one full circle, and the doubts have been laid to rest - sthito 'smi gatasamdehah. Then the resultant core of his life, the principle that governs his life is karisye vacanam tava - in total egolessness, he is able, actively, joyously, and without any reserve whatsoever, to participate in the divine will. These are the characteristics given of the wise man.

Bahunam janmanam ante jnanavan mam prapadyate. Here Krsna gives an indication of what the jnani would do. He surrenders himself - mam prapadyate. Surrender does not mean "I hand myself over to God and now God is going to look after me" - the 'me' is not there! If the 'me' sneaks through the back door, that is not surrender. Surrender is something which is impossible to put into words, as Gurudev often used to say, "In surrender there is no loss, the drop becomes the ocean." When the drop drops into the ocean, it is not lost, but becomes the ocean.

When you hear that, there is a tremendous tantalising incentive, "I will surrender myself so that I will become the ocean". Sorry! It is not 'I' that becomes the ocean, it is the ocean that becomes the ocean. You are absorbed into it. If you ask, "Oh my God, will I disappear now?", that shows the anxiety of the ego which doesn't want to die so easily. This is the problem of surrender.

If you ask the wise man, "Does surrender mean I will become the almighty, or I will be annihilated?", he says that both these questions are irrelevant. There is something else. It is only the wise man who is enlightened spiritually who is able to see that a shadow on the wall has a mysterious non-existence. It is seen, but it is not there, only the wall is there. When you shine a flashlight on a shadow, you

are tempted to say that it disappears. I am tempted to say that the shadow is enlightened. If you understand the difference between these, you have probably understood what surrender means. The shadow does not disappear, the shadow does not go away, but it is enlightened.

At that point, the ego is enlightened and, in that light, it sees itself to be non-existent - God alone exists. Can it see? How does it see? It sees because it is non-different from the total seer. It is aware, because it is part of this awareness, it is one with this awareness. It is conscious, because it is consciousness - but not as ego consciousness.

What happens to those who are not jnanis?

kamais tais-tair hrtajnanah prapadyante 'nyadevatah tam-tam niyamam asthaya prakrtya niyatah svaya (VII:20)

"Those whose wisdom has been rent away by this or that desire, go to other gods, following this or that rite, led by their own nature."

Jnana is there in all. All of us can become jnanis. As Ramana Maharshi pointed out, "You are the Self. Where is the difficulty in realising the Self? Where is the difficulty in reaching Self-knowledge?" But, it seems to be difficult. What is the difficulty? Kamais tais-tair hrtajnanah - there is always a craving for experience, whether it is called sensual craving, material craving, religious craving, or spiritual craving.

What makes me wake up in the morning? Sleep is a blissful, peaceful, harmless state. All the qualities of saintliness are present in sleep. Why do we come out of such a blissful state at all? My theory is that suddenly there is the realisation that in that state there is no experience of this bliss. Experience, to the normal mind, suggests dualism. The following is found even in the teaching of some of the great masters: "I don't want to be honey, I want to taste honey. So, Lord, I want to be separate from you, I want to enjoy your company." This funny craving "I have been sleeping blissfully and peacefully. I would like to enjoy that peace and bliss," arises, and wakes you up. When you strive to experience a state of totality or homogeneity, a division is created, and you keep running after that. Throughout the day, we run after these two goals, happiness and peace - or love. We don't find them in anything that we experience during the day.

If you are able to observe what happens to you at the moment you are actually going into sleep, you will see that that is a state of surrender. You lie down, let yourself go, and you are back to that state. Once again, this craving for the experience stirs in you, and you wake up. This is the stupid cycle which we experience every day. Jnana is there, in the state of deep sleep, veiled by sleep. That is the original state, the pure state, though technically one may say that, since you are ignorant during sleep, it is defective.

If that is clear, then perhaps we might take a very different view of this verse. What does prapadyante 'nyadevatah mean here? Does it mean that Krsna wants

you to worship him, and not other devatas like Rama, Jesus Christ, Allah, Durga, or Visnu? You may impute such a suggestion for this verse if you are a fanatic and if you have not read the previous verses. In the previous verses, Krsna makes it very clear that the mam - me - does not refer to Mr. Krsna, but to the Godhead or the Self of all - vasudevah sarvam iti. Vasudeva is that which pervades all, interpenetrates all, infills all, covers all - even every cell of your being. Krsna had repeated again and again throughout the whole Bhagavad Gita: "I am the all, I am the all in all" - not merely the personality called Krsna, but that which is all, that which is one, that which is infinite. That is the truth, that is the reality, that is God. Seek that!

When do you not seek that? When you want to experience those very characteristics that are obtained in the infinite. It is extremely simple, but intriguing. If you enjoy the company of someone, that joy comes from the Self, from the same source. If you enjoy a cup of ice cream or a bar of chocolate, that enjoyment also comes from the same source, and yet the mind that is full of craving, passion, lust, greed, and anger, does not recognise it, and therefore attributes each of these qualities to some different source. My security comes from money, or a house, or friendship; my pleasure comes from a friend, or games; my peace of mind comes from entertainment or prayer - so, for each one of these experiences, the ignorant mind invents a certain source.

According to vedanta, devas are gods. Each one of your organs is presided over by some kind of a god - or deva. The eyes are presided over by the sun, the mind by the moon etc. Each organ has got a presiding deity, and your mind also has got its own presiding deity. So, prapadyante 'nyadevatah might mean that they who are full of cravings resort to these sense objects themselves as gods. When there is a craving, the object of craving becomes your god, your goal, for the time being. It need not necessarily mean that ignorant people abandon Krsna and go and worship some other gods and goddesses. It may mean that, when you crave for some delicacies, the kitchen becomes your devata; when you crave for entertainment, the theatre becomes your devata; when you crave for some other kind of pleasure, your boyfriend or girlfriend, husband or wife becomes your devata; when you crave for degrees or diplomas, then the university becomes your devata - for the time being. It is not God, but the university that becomes your devata. That is the point! It is quite simple.

In order to be able to enjoy those pleasures of the senses which you regard as a sort of deity, you still have to undergo some trouble, some struggle. Nothing comes for nothing. If your taste buds are not healthy, you can't enjoy food; so, if you want to enjoy nice food, you must also discipline yourself in a certain way. Your digestion must be good, and you must not be bilious. If you want to marry and enjoy sexual life, for that also you must pay its own price. You must be bound; you must enjoy the snoring of your partner. It also involves a certain discipline - you can't get something for nothing. And if you want to go to the movies and enjoy that sort of entertainment, you must be prepared to go away from home, and spend three or four hours sitting screwed to that chair, and smile

when somebody else smiles there, and weep when somebody else weeps there. All those rules and regulations are involved in attending to entertainment. Every enjoyment demands its own price. So, if you worship these gods, you must be prepared to pay the price that those gods demand.

There is absolutely no harm in worshipping any of these, if only you realise that all are essentially God, that knowledge does not come to you from the university, but from the divine source - that you do not worship a statue, but it is the spirit in you that worships the spirit there. The omnipresence expresses and experiences itself. This is jnana.

Will sugar taste bitter to a jnani? No. Sugar will taste like sugar only; but a jnani knows, while enjoying it, that the source of that experience is God, and the awareness that becomes aware of this experience is God. Since he is in that state, there is no craving in him for any experience other than what life brings unsought. The experience which the jnani has now, whether it is called by others 'pleasure' or 'pain', is experience enough; and this experience arises in exactly the same spot - if one may call it so - in which the experience of your pleasure arises. It is exactly the same consciousness, the same awareness, the same infinite Being. Therefore, there is no craving for a different experience.

The divine can be worshipped, adored, approached in any form, in any manner whatsoever, the essence being the spirit of adoration or devotion.

yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhaktah sraddhaya 'rcitum icchati tasya-tasya 'calam sraddham tam eva vidadhamy aham (VII.21)

Sraddhaya is an impossible word to translate. It is not merely faith in the sense of 'I have faith in you', it is not knowledge, understanding, or belief, but something which saturates your whole being. "I have faith in you", means I know you are dependable, trustworthy. So, a certain knowledge is involved in it, but not complete or perfect knowledge. Faith is an extraordinary thing. When one has faith, one has experienced the truth concerning this faith in a veiled manner. It is like kissing the bride through the veil. You sense that in which you have faith. You have experienced the glory of that Being, though not totally. It is not impossible for this faith to be shaken, but it is not as easily shaken as a belief.

Feeling the presence of the omnipresent Being, a devotee can worship anything. Tasya-tasya 'calam sraddham tam eva vidadhamy aham. And, Krsna says here, God never disturbs anybody's faith or belief. Whatever form is chosen by this devotee, if he has full faith in it, in and through that form, the infinite God can be realised. God, being infinite, is in that form.

That which you adore becomes the door for you to enter the kingdom of God.

4. Faith and Devotion

Impelled by various desires, the human being - or the human mind - resorts to various divinities or deities. What are these deities, and who creates them? Some are historical e.g. Krsna, Rama, Jesus, Buddha, right up to our own Guru. But, who installs them as god, as a deity? The devotee.

The devotee has some desire, craving, ambition, a result to be achieved, a goal to be reached. He is not interested in the supreme Being, because in the supreme Being all desires find their fulfillment - which means dissolution. When the supreme is reached, all your cravings, desires, and ambitions, take leave of you - or show you that you don't exist. It is like sleep - in deep sleep, no one has any desire or craving whatsoever.

Here, the unfulfilled desire or craving for some experience invents the deity. For the sake of fulfilling your own craving and wishes, the mind creates a deity, which the mind and the ego thereupon worship and adore with faith and devotion. Faith - *sraddhaya* - is the most important word here. The basis of this faith is not merely a belief; it is more than that. You worshipped this god or this saint, and because of that worship your headache went away; therefore, you feel there must be something in it. Luckily for us, we don't count the number of failures, but keep counting the number of successes, which is a good thing, because eventually it may lead you somewhere else. Faith and devotion are important.

Here it is possible to relate to the psychological counterparts or archetypes of human faculties. You want brilliant intelligence; so, you must worship the sun, because all brilliance comes from the sun; or you want very good eyesight, so you must worship the sun. You want tremendous strength, strength to lift a mountain, so you worship Hanuman. Hanuman is merely an externalised archetype of your own physical strength and stamina. This worship is very good; but, it is not without motivation. White magic, black magic, grey magic, and green magic - are all based upon this motivation. You want to achieve something, and so you create a mandala, a deity, a yantra; and it is your own soulforce, as it were, which is directed towards a particular, one in order to achieve a certain end. This is how the mind divides itself into the ego - or the personality that throws up all these cravings - and the archetype from whom it expects the fulfillment of these cravings. It is quite possible that sometime or the other you may get what you desire. According to me, it is accidental coincidence; according to you - if you have great faith, it may be that this effort leads to that achievement.

yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhaktam sraddhaya 'rcitum icchati tasya-tasya 'calam sraddham tam eva vidadhamy aham (VII:21)

Pray to any form you like, but adore that form with intense faith and devotion.

What I am going to say is not said here, but it is probably implied: you are full of desires and ambitions, and you worship one devata for success in your examinations, another for getting a nice wife or husband, another for giving you a

son or a daughter. Go on, you have got a whole galaxy of devatas! But, you do not even know whether they are all friends of each other or not. I am not joking! It is said that sometimes a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law cannot live in harmony together. Based upon this factor, there is a superstitious tradition that Lakshmi and Saraswati would not stay together - Saraswati being the daughter-in-law of Lakshmi. Supposing you pray to both Lakshmi and Saraswati - "Lakshmi please give me wealth", "Saraswati please give me wisdom". They say, "No, both of us cannot stay together with you. Choose now. Would you like wisdom or wealth? You can have either of these, but not both." So, there are such complications.

Granting that all of them are in harmony with each other, and all of them are prepared to give whatever you want, will they give you whatever you want? What happens if you are praying for some thing, and I am also praying for the same thing? What will the Lord do if both sides in a war pray for victory? Give victory to both of them? One has to win and the other has to be defeated. If both of us are praying for the same thing, who is the Lord going to listen to? Therefore, all our desires will not be fulfilled by any god that we pray to. This is axiomatic. If all of our desires were constantly fulfilled, we would never die. The world would be a horrible mess! So, thank God all of our desires will not always be fulfilled.

You will perhaps wake up one day to the simple truth that the fulfillment of craving is not its indulgence, but a state in which the craving doesn't arise again. If I ask God to scratch my back today, it feels marvellous, and I sleep very well tonight. But, tomorrow evening, again there is the same problem. So, if I ask God to take my back away once and for all, then there is no scratching necessary. That is fulfillment. If this ego can be surrendered totally, the craving does not arise at all.

"Whatever be the god you worship, with whatever motive, says Krsna, "do it with tremendous faith and devotion." Faith and devotion are the keys; because, if you have the faith that through this god - or incarnation etc. - you are going to receive divine blessings, your inner self is turned in the right direction, and it is quite possible that the divine blessings come to you, but not in the manner you expect them to come - the granting of your boon. They may come to you along the same wavelength, but of a different type - as frustrations. So Krsna says: "Whatever be the form that the devotee chooses to worship with great faith and devotion, I strengthen that devotion."

Devotion is strengthened because we have, now and then, a few little successes, a few little boons. Then we think, "Ah! God is listening to my prayers. I must ask him for something more." And then the whole thing is lost! There was a swami in Rishikesh who struggled hard for years to get one little siddhi, which would enable him to tell gamblers on which horse to bet. For a fee, no doubt! One man in particular was his regular customer. The first day, he was told number seven. He bet about a thousand rupees on number seven, got ten thousand rupees, and gave five thousand to the swami. This went on and on and snowballed. Four times he won, and the fifth time, when the swami said number eleven, he staked

his entire fortune. Whatever he had, he put on number eleven - and the horse came in number eleven. He lost everything, and the swami lost his life - the next day, his body was found in three or four pieces.

That is what happens to our ego. Forget this gruesome story, treat it as a sort of metaphor. You go to God and ask him, "God, what must I do now, I am in trouble?" God says, "The trouble is gone." Then you feel: "Ah! Now I am a devotee." It is an interesting fact that the throwing of a little piece of meat to the dog makes it wag its tail and run after you. So, God throws a little piece of meat, and you wag your tail and say, "Ah! I've got great faith now." The second time, it is more marvellous, the third and fourth time, it is even more, and the fifth time, everything you had is gone. The whole edifice crumbles, and you suddenly realise "As long as I have this craving, even God cannot satisfy me. Let the craving come to an end."

sa taya sraddhaya yuktas tasya 'radhanam ihate labhate ca tatah kaman mayai 'va vihitan
hi tan (VII:22)

Where did you get all those blessings from? Were they in fact the product of the devil? No, the same God. You don't understand his ways, but that's not his problem. "Whatever my devotee wants, and for whatever my devotee prays to me, with faith and devotion - these are the most vital words - I myself grant those desires." He doesn't say 'always', but 'occasionally'.

This was the marvellous magic of Swami Sivananda also. Sometimes He made you feel that you were His favourite disciple. Then you thought "Ah. I am His best disciple", and you knocked the other disciples on the head saying, "You must listen to me hereafter. I am the chosen one. Swamiji's confidence in me is unshakeable." The moment that this thought arose in you, for Him you didn't exist. He fussed over somebody else. He didn't even look at you, didn't recognise your existence. What happened? That was also a blessing. Perhaps that was an even greater blessing!

All our prayers will never be granted, never be heard. It is only when that is very clearly and directly understood without any confusion whatsoever, that you may still continue to pray. But learn the simple truth, "Thy will be done". As long as the human mind functions in a human body, there are bound to be prayers such as, "God, let it happen this way". But having prayed, say, "Ok, That is your job, not mine." Labhate ca tatah kaman mayai 'va vihitan hi tan. Where does intelligence come from? Not from the sun.

Where does strength come from? Not from Hanuman, a picture, or an image. Where does happiness come from? Where does domestic harmony come from? All this ultimately can be dissolved into the one consciousness, into the one cosmic intelligence that has created and sustains all beings in harmony, in disharmony, in love, in hate, in prosperity, in adversity.

It is that one Being that exists. Swami Nishreyasananda gave us a very beautiful

illustration of this. Though Swamiji used it in one context, I am borrowing it for a different context. Imagine a man about seven miles tall. If he goes to Singapore and the Pacific Ocean, and goes into the deepest part of the ocean, he is still able to walk, because he is seven miles tall. Suddenly, he might realise that, though this is called ocean, that land and that mountain, it is all contours of the same earth. So, whether the blessings that I received from God were considered to be success or failure, honour or dishonour, one sort of boon or the other sort of boon, they are all boons, all gifts of God.

After I have offered my prayer - which, as a human being, with a limited personality or awareness, I am impelled to offer - whatever is granted in this form comes from the same divinity, the same God, the same source, the same cosmic being - mayai 'va vihitan hi tan.

antavat to phalam tesam tad bhavaty alpamedhasam devan devayajo yanti madbhakta yanti mam api (VII:23)

When the intelligence observes this procession of boons, of experiences - which are variously interpreted by the limited mind as pleasure, pain, honour, dishonour, success, failure, birth, and death - a simple truth is instantly seen: that which has a beginning, has an end. I ask for strength, God gave me strength; but this strength didn't last forever; it was with me for some time, and then it had to go. I asked for a wife or a husband - God gave me that, but that didn't last forever. I asked for a son, a son was born - I doted on him, he grew up and was attracted to somebody and he left me and went away. I wanted pleasure, God gave me this pleasure - and the pleasure wore out my energy and is at an end. This is inevitable, everything that has a beginning has an end. You can't have it for all time to come - sa taya sraddhaya yuktas tasya 'radhanam ihate.

The devotee - if he has faith and devotion - comes to the point where he realises that all these back-scratching boons have a beginning and an end. If he does not have faith and devotion, he is lost - he prayed to God for a wife, got a very beautiful wife, and now thinks "God can take care of himself now, I don't need him anymore. My wife will take care of me." Unless you have faith and devotion, the hotline to God is not kept open, you forget to communicate with God. Once you get some satisfaction, God is forgotten.

If you have faith and devotion, you keep repeating your prayer to God for the fulfilment of your cravings and your desires, and sooner or later the inner intelligence is awakened. Then you discover the simple truth that God gives you all of this sometimes, and even when he gives you what you are praying for, it comes to an end. So, there seems to be no sense in praying for something.

Is there something else for which I can pray which could put an end to this whole series: the repetitive erring, the repetitive mess? Instead of indulging in this kind of game, the intelligence then begins to wonder, "Is there a possibility of dropping this whole thing altogether?"

When the intelligence is small, limited, you continue to pray for these little boons, for fulfilment of little desires. When that is dropped - madbhakta yanti mam api. "They come to me."

God is the centre of my life, God is the centre of the whole universe; and, by surrendering what was regarded as self, or ego, all desires reach their true fulfilment.

5. Plunge into the Sea of Truth

Mind is nothing but limitation, or unclarity. Restlessness, agitation, and limitation are synonyms of the word 'mind'. Without these, mind is not an existential entity, which you can prove or disprove. The existence of the mind is known only when there is restlessness, agitation, and non-comprehension of the totality.

The whole of the seventh chapter is devoted to the total understanding of the totality. The mind - through its own thought process or brain work - tries to comprehend the totality, but is unable to; and, unable even to realise that it is not possible for it to comprehend the totality, it comprehends something and calls it a totality. But, it is not outside the totality. For instance, if you take a small bucket to the seaside, and fill it up with water, you are entitled to say that that is seawater. It is not the whole seawater, obviously, but it is non-different from the seawater.

I am sure you know the story of the five blind men and the elephant. None of them really knew the total elephant - and I suggest that nobody can really see a total elephant, whatever you do. If you are sitting on top, you are seeing only the top; if you are lying underneath, you see only the belly. The rest of it is supplied by you. Another important factor is often overlooked. When you touch the trunk of the elephant, you are touching the elephant. If you poke that trunk, the whole elephant reacts. This means that, though you are touching one part of the elephant, you are in communion with the total elephant. That is the rationale for worshipping God in any form you like.

yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhaktah sraddhaya 'rcitum icchati tasya-tasya 'calam sraddham tam eva vidadhamy aham (VII:21)

Yo-yo yam-yam tanum bhaktah - as long as, inwardly, what you are aspiring for, is the totality, and not a limitation, you are even allowed to approach it through what is called pleasure, because in and through that pleasure there is the same ground. Whether it is a pleasurable experience or painful experience, you ask yourself "What is the ground of this experience?" If you eat a bar of chocolate, and go deeper into the experience of pleasure, you might come to the same ego, and beyond that ego to the same consciousness which becomes aware of the taste of the chocolate. It is the taste bud that responds to the sweetness of the chocolate, and something calls it sweetness. When the description is dropped, the experience is left. If you go one step further and eliminate even the subject-object experience, suddenly you are left with pure experiencing. This is possible, but the danger here is that halfway through you have lost your wisdom and your sense of direction. Krsna pointed out the danger in that approach.

kamais tais-tair hrtajnanah prapadyante 'nyadevatah tam-tam niyamam asthaya prakrtya niyatah svaya (VII:20)

When you get caught up in these diverse phenomena, you are satisfied with the

limitation, the limited experience, and you don't go further. Jnana or wisdom is gone. Otherwise, all experiences and activities can and must lead us to this ground, for the very simple reason that this omnipresent reality is never absent from anywhere at any time. When you pick up this pleasant path to God realisation - as the tantrics and so on, attempt to, half way through your wisdom is lost. You are no longer interested in the quest for truth, you are quite satisfied with the little pleasure that you seem to experience superficially. That is the danger.

This danger is present even in what called idol worship. You create an image of God, because you realise that that is all your mind can comprehend. For instance, the ocean is large, but your bucket is small. If you are quite convinced that the ocean is just as big as your bucket, your wisdom is lost. This is what happens. You start quarrelling: "This is my God. My God is truth, and your God is not truth. My God is the saviour, your God is the destroyer." That is where wisdom is gone and the limited reality - which alone the mind could comprehend - has suddenly been given the status of the total reality. If this danger is avoided, you can justifiably reach the totality through the limitation, knowing that the reality is not limited, but the limitation is your fault.

avyaktam vyaktim apannam manyante mam abuddhayah param bhavam ajananto mama 'vyayam anuttamam (VII:24)

This is a fairly enigmatic statement, which should be very deeply meditated upon. I will give you the literal meaning of the words: avyaktam - unmanifest; vyaktim apannam - having assumed manifestation; manyante - regard; mam - me; abuddhayah - the unintelligent. "Unmanifest, having assumed manifestation, fools regard me." What does it mean? The simple meaning that is given to us by tradition is 'I am unmanifest, and fools regard me as having become manifest, and worship me in various ways.' If we go one step further, we see something very different. 'Fools regard me as both unmanifest and having come into manifestation.' What is wrong with that? If you merely take the words as they are, a grand truth emerges: abuddhayah - they whose intelligence has not been awakened; manyante mam - consider me; avyaktam - either as unmanifest or vyaktim apannah - having a form; ajananto - they do not know; param bhavam - param is a state of being which is beyond your comprehension, so drop all your attempts at comprehension, realising that the comprehending faculty is totally limited and incapable of comprehending. The final truth is that the total reality is inexhaustible, and therefore incomprehensible. Beyond that, there is nothing. That cannot be reached by you. Only when this interpretation is taken - or this understanding is reached, do we stop worrying our poor little minds, whether God is unmanifest or manifest.

If you regard God as manifest here in this world, a whole basketful of questions arises. Does God dwell in a mosquito also? If God dwells in all, why does one God bite another God? Perhaps we had better say "God is unmanifested, and he is beyond our intelligence". Then, if God is beyond our intelligence, what is all this? Maya. What is maya? Is it God's maya, or some other maya? So, you will always

find some unresolved unanswerable questions, unless you interpret it this way: "Unintelligent beings regard me as either manifest or unmanifest, whereas I am beyond all of that."

In the earlier verses of this chapter. it says, "Here is a strong man, that strength is me; there is a beautiful creature, that beauty is me." That starts the whole process of vicara - enquiry: "Is the beauty there in me? If I don't say she is beautiful, would she still be beautiful or not? Does her beauty depend entirely upon me? If I decided she is ugly, or it is not a she but a he, will suddenly some kind of a transformation take place? Is there an external reality, or is it all subjective?"

Now you are entering into serious investigation. Eventually you may arrive at the same truth: that that which is unmanifest is what is manifest, and the very essence of what is manifest is the unmanifest. That is, I can see that is a woman, but that which is called 'beauty' is unmanifest. I can see a man, but I cannot see strength; strength is indefinable, intangible, unmanifest - but reality all the same! So, by plunging into this sea of truth, one discovers that that which is unmanifest is the manifest, the essence in the manifest is the unmanifest. They are non-different.

na 'ham prakasah sarvasya yogamayasamavrtah mudho 'yam na 'bhijanati loko mam ajam avyayam (VII:25)

This truth or the understanding - or knowledge - of the totality is not evident. That is evident! That this truth is not evident is quite evident, because we are trapped somewhere. Why is it that my intellect is unable to perceive clearly that what is manifest is the unmanifest Being; that what is unmanifest is manifest here? In other words, that all this is God. Why is it that this simple truth becomes so elusive, so difficult?

Na 'ham prakasah sarvasya yogamayasamavrtah. Maya is that which robs you of your understanding - mayaya 'pahrtajana. It has also been described as divine - daivi by esa gunamayi mama maya - so, don't try to belittle it or pretend that you can overcome it. You are unable to see a thing without getting lost in the description of the qualities. You cannot see a thing for what it is. For instance, what is a young girl? A skeleton clothed in about twenty or thirty pounds of flesh, with a bit of hair. 'Girl' is already a definition of a quality - then we add to it a 'young' girl - another quality - a young 'beautiful' girl - a third quality - a 'naughty' young beautiful girl.

This is yoga maya - maya means 'qualities', and yoga means 'coming together' or 'union'. The perceiving intelligence seems to be inextricably bound up with qualitative descriptions, and therefore the truth is never seen, though it stands right in front of you. It is the mind - or the ego - that brings about this union of the intelligence and the qualitative description.

Can I look at something without necessarily designating qualities, or a quality?

If I do so, the mind becomes absolutely still. Or, to put it conversely, unless the mind is absolutely steady, you cannot do that. If the mind flutters even one little bit, it immediately creates a thought. When the mind loses its restlessness, it is no longer mind, it is God. So, na ham prakasah sarvasya yogamayasamavrtah, on account of this yogamaya, this omnipresent divinity - God - is not perceived. Mudho 'yam na 'bhijanati loko mam ajam avyayam. The deluded world does not know me. Mudho means idiot, stupid or deluded - stupid because we are stupified by the appearance, we are satisfied with that appearance.

Is the appearance unreal? No. In the second chapter, there is a very beautiful statement: na 'sato - that which is unreal can never be. Why are we talking about the unreal? There is nothing called unreal! What is unreal can never exist. Is the appearance unreal? No, it is there, but only as an appearance. It is a qualitative description, a description of the qualities, and it arises in your own thought-process. You have decided to call such and such a thing a young girl. When does a young girl become a non-young girl? When does a man become an old man? There are absolutely no hard and fast rules. These are all conventions which we have adopted, carried over, and perpetuated, but they are not facts. They have no relation at all with the truth.

When the intelligence is awakened to this simple fact, it is capable of transcending the limitations, by recognising the limitation as limitation. This is the magic. The yogi does not say that you can transcend the limitations. When you recognise the limitation as limitation, the intelligence has transcended it. That has to be experienced.

In that transcendental state, there is direct realisation of the totality, which is not 'either-or' - either unmanifest or manifest, but both and beyond.

6. God Alone Exists

In the seventh discourse, we were promised a complete revelation of the truth, beyond which there is nothing to be known. That truth was stated again and again in different formulations - vasudevah sarvam - there is nothing but God. 'That which is real is God, that which is reality is God, and that which is not real can never exist', is extremely simple logic, and an extremely simple statement - but, as a statement, it is of no more use than a piece of paper with the word 'sugar' written on it would be to sweeten your coffee. So, the truth, as long as it is external, is not a realisation. It is of no use. The reality that God alone exists must become real to each one of us.

There is nothing called 'unreality' or 'illusion'. 'Illusion' is a word used to denote that which does not exist, but of which there is a notion as if it were reality. It is a complicated business. Vasistha tells us again and again in the Yoga Vasistha: "Don't spend your time investigating what is not real. Investigate what is truth, what exists."

veda 'ham samatitani vartamanani ca 'rjuna bhavisyani ca bhutani mam to veda na kascana (VII:26)

If you take this verse as coming from Mr. Krsna, there is a problem. It means "I know the past, future, and present of all beings. I know the destiny of all beings, but no-one knows me. How does one person - whoever it is, Krsna or Buddha, sitting in his room as an incarnate divinity, located in a certain place, know what is going on everywhere in the world? Bhutani means, not only human beings, but all beings. How does he, sitting in Mathura or Gaya, know which mosquito has come to bite me? It leads to all sorts of crazy impossibilities. On the other hand, if you divest this verse of the personalised, individualised, incarnate Krsna, and regard the essence as the author of this verse, then it becomes immediately clear. "That which is omnipresent, knows exactly what is happening at each point in this entire universe.

One step further: he in you knows where he is sitting, he in you knows what happened yesterday and what is going to happen tomorrow - so the omnipresent is omniscient. The divine knows the past, present, and the future; because, in the divine - in God, there is no such division. The division is a limitation, a fragmentation, which is brought about by the ego sense. Where there is no ego sense, there is no such division in time. When you are asleep, you don't know the passing of time, you are not aware of a yesterday or tomorrow or even today. That division, being the creation of the ego sense, ceases to exist in the divine. Therefore, the omnipresent is simultaneously omniscient. That makes sense.

No limited being can ever know the unlimited in its totality.

icchadvesasamutthena dvandvamohena bharata sarvabhutani sammoham sarge yanti paramtapa (VII:27)

Why is it that you and I are unable to comprehend the totality? What is this thing called 'me', that stands as a block, veiling this totality? It is an absurd thing, but it happens. There is a crude illustration to indicate the possibility: the sun is enormous, and yet, if you hold the palm of your hand in front of your eyes, the sun is blotted out. So, it is possible for a fragment to veil the totality. It is strange, but paradoxical - paradoxical in the sense that no amount of teaching and argumentation is going to enable you to understand. But, you see that it is there. There is the totality, there is consciousness, and that consciousness is somehow so thoroughly mixed up with what it creates, that it itself is veiled. In the same way, thoughts and feelings etc. arise in this consciousness; and when it gets mixed up in all those self-created notions and ideas, it forgets itself.

Dvandvamohena - moha is a delusion, and it comes to us in the form of dvandva. Usually this is translated into 'pairs of opposites'. This seems to suggest some sort of 'one in opposition to the other'. For example, pain and pleasure. I don't know if pain and pleasure are opposites. They seem to be complementary, they come one after the other. Dvandva means duality - this and that, I and you; and from there, infinite divisions of what is into 'this' and 'that'.

In a deluded state - don't ask how that delusion arises, this consciousness - which is whole - becoming aware of itself, generates the first duality. 'I am aware of 'this'. If you train yourself as you wake up in the morning to become more aware, first there is the feeling "I am aware of the skin", then "I am aware of the blanket", "I am sleeping in this room" etc. So, "I am aware of myself" is already a duality, and this awareness of myself creates a thing called 'myself' - and then 'you' are created. I see you. And then comes "You are my friend, you are not my friend; your company gives me pleasure, your company gives me pain", and all the rest of it. So, one little fragmentation of an objective awareness multiplies itself into innumerable dualities.

The inevitable result of this division of all experiences, expressions, and all that one perceives in this universe into dualities, is that you like something and dislike something else. You cannot have two objects without liking one and disliking the other. If you are able to resolve this problem, and prevent the likes and dislikes from arising in the mind, then there is no world for you. You are free. Gurudev Swami Sivananda used to say that the entire world can be reduced to these two forces - likes and dislikes. Remove these from your heart, and you are free, you are liberated then and there.

There is one mysterious implication in this verse: there seems to be a suggestion that even babies are born with some sort of likes and dislikes. It is possible in the case of a baby that likes and dislikes are fundamental, rudimentary, animal, in the sense that they are inherent in life. Or, you may say that likes and dislikes come from the dawn of creation: "God willed it so."

You can bring in any argument you like, or interpret it in any manner you like, but a Buddha would say, "Why bother about who created it? See if you can put an

end to it", because, as long as this is there, you are going to be trapped, you are going to suffer endless agony, you are going to remain in delusion. So, any rationalisation of this is a sanction to perpetuate it.

Wisdom consists in finding ways and means of getting rid of this:

yesam tv antagatam papam jananam punyakarmanam te dvandvamohanirmukta bhajante mam
drdhavratah (VII:28)

There is an end to it, because it had a beginning - whether at your birth, or the birth of this creation. That which had a beginning in a certain circumstance need not necessarily come to an end only with the conclusion of that circumstance. For example, this happens quite often in the Himalayas. There is heavy rain and landslide, and one huge rock is washed away, and a cave is revealed. There was a hollow on the mountainside even when the rock was sitting and hiding it. Now that the rock has fallen away, the cave is brought into being. When you go into that cave, you see that it is dark. For how long has it been dark? For as long as the mountain has been standing there. How long will that darkness take to go away from there? One moment. If you have a powerful flashlight, you press the switch and the darkness is gone.

That which had a beginning must have an end, and the end can come at any time! In other words, if you have been deluded or foolish for the past fifty million years, it is not necessary for you to stand on your head for the next fifty million years in order for that foolishness to go away. The moment you wake up spiritually, that delusion is gone.

There are beautiful indications of such an event. When do I know that I am spiritually awake and that this delusion is gone? Antagatam papam - sins and sinful tendencies come to an end. Until then, as long as the sinful nature continues, there is no end to the delusion, because they depend upon one another, and feed upon one another.

kamakrodhaviyuktanam yatinam yatacetasam (V:26)

When kama and krodha - love, in the ordinary sense of the word, and hate - come to an end, papam - sin - has come to an end. As long as sinful tendencies do not come to an end, these two cannot be got rid of. If in your heart you find that there is no attachment at all, and no hate, then sinful nature has come to an end, because from then on there is no sin. Wicked actions have lost their motivation.

From then on, your life becomes divine life. Your life is blessed, you are a blessing on earth; and whatever you do is meritorious, holy, virtuous, auspicious. You are firmly rooted in God, devoted to God; you love God. To love God means that you love everything, which means there is no hate or attachment in your heart. The ego has ceased, and there is an inner vision of the totality. It is not a vision that arises in me, but an inner vision, beyond the me, which is revealed, not because I have realised it, but because it is real.

The last penultimate verse brings it down to our level.

jaramaranamoksaya mam asritya yatanti ye te brahma tad viduh krtsnam adhyatmam karma ca 'khilam (VII:29)

You may not want to attain eternal bliss, but if you want to be free from old age and death, get busy; for, the only way in which you can avoid death is by not being born. One more dying is inevitable; so, take it, and don't be born again. You will not be born again if moha - or delusion - is not there. If you die a deluded person, you will inevitably be born again with this delusion right from babyhood. Hatred, anger, and greed, are dormant in the child. Given a little time, these qualities will slowly emerge, because they are hidden there. We carry them over from one incarnation to another. It is our duty to recognise them as potential obstacles to the realisation of the truth. We must bring about an end to all this.

Jaramaranamoksaya mam asritya yatanti ye. Krsna again reminds us that this omnipresent truth may be difficult to comprehend without divine help, even if you are of pure heart. Somehow or the other, the ego will come in the back door - the egoism of holiness, of saintliness, of purity. So take refuge in God - to brahma tad viduh krtsnam - you will soon enter into the knowledge of the totality - adhyatmam karma ca 'khilam. Only then will you know what is to be done and what is not to be done. You worry yourselves: "Shall I do this or something else?" Don't break your head. First attain Self-knowledge, and all actions will be revealed unto you.

sadhibhutadhidaivam mam sadhiyajnam ca ye viduh prayanakale 'pi ca mam to vidur yuktacetasah (VII:30)

How do you put an end to this whole cycle of existence, the birth and death cycle? When you realise this totality, and sustain this realisation unto the end of this present life cycle.

Attain this realisation now, bring about this inner awakening now, and sustain it as long as the body lasts.