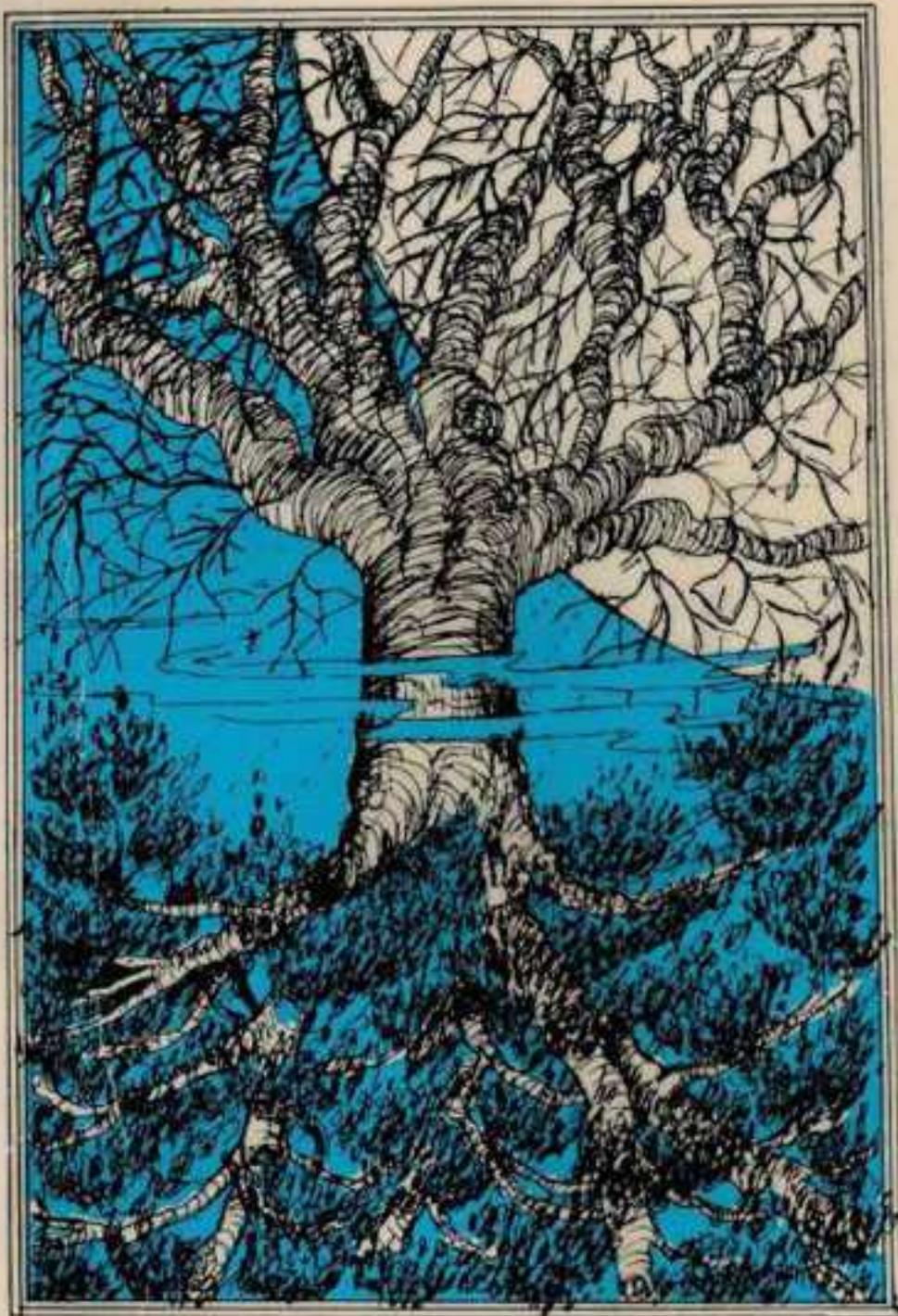


A Leaf From The Peepul Tree



Swami Venkatesananda

*Talks on the 12th Chapter
of The Bhagavad Gita*

The Bhagavad Gita
Chapter 12
A Leaf From the Peepul
Tree

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Chapter 12
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Contents

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One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Six
Seven

1. One

We might take a quick glimpse into the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. This was one of Gurudev Swami Sivananda's favourite chapters, because it deals with bhakti yoga. Gurudev said himself, very often, that bhakti yoga is the easiest, surest, and quickest way to God-realisation. However, when you go into it, it looks as though what is quick is not very easy, and what is easy is not very quick.

There seems to be a third element, which we often ignore. To give you an example, many of us were highly inspired by the title of a small article written by Gurudev, entitled "Samadhi in Six Months". Of course, to you, it means nothing, because there are people now who can give you samadhi in six minutes! But, in those days, this was a big thing. Even in the Bhagavad Gita we have Krishna's own statement: "After many lifetimes, a jnani surrenders himself to Me." But here is something - samadhi in six months! Admittedly, we read only the title, not the text. And so we went to him.

Once you go there, he says that it is very simple. He seems to suggest that even six months is too long. "Just close your eyes, and when you open them, see God in all, see God in every face." Yet, when I open my eyes, it is still Mr. So-and-So sitting there.

Why do I see him as Mr. So-and-So, and not as God? If you are able to see God in every face instantly, you are freed instantly, and instantly you are in perpetual samadhi. It doesn't take six months, does it? So, there is always some little trick, some small but vital factor which is overlooked. So, we shall go back to this 12th chapter, and see how easy or how difficult it is. Whether it is a short cut which goes the long way round. If love is natural, devotion is also natural to us, and surrender should not be very difficult either.

Why is it that we have not attained illumination yet? The first verse - the second according to some texts - gives a clue immediately.

mayy avesya mano ye mam nityayukta upasate sraddhaya parayo 'petas te me yuktatama matah (XII:2)

"They who have entered their minds into Me, into God, they who have entered their ego, their heart, their whole being into God, these are the best in yoga."

We suddenly realise that we have put the cart before the horse. We have turned the whole thing upside down. We try to push God into our hearts, we try to understand God. We try to squeeze the Infinite into a poor little polluted mind. We have tried to grasp the infinite, omnipresent Being, with a little thing called my heart. It is not even heart. It is my heart, so narrow, so little, so silly.

If you enter the Infinite into your heart, sincerely and honestly, and in earnest, then it is inevitable that that heart must burst. Great saints, especially among the bhaktas or devotees of the Lord, have gone crazy according to us, because they poured this God into their hearts, and it burst its bounds. We call them mad

because we are mad, or we are afraid to be God-mad. We are frightened of losing our little individuality, and yet we want to fill our little personality with this infinite, omnipresent God. We don't want the personality to burst, we hold on to it for dear life, and then we complain that we are still ignorant or limited, or that we haven't realised God. One has to let oneself go at some point.

One has to take this blind leap into the unknown at some point. If it is not possible, then it is not possible. We have no cause for grumbling though. Most of us want to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die. The snag is that, unless you die here, you won't go to heaven. We are clinging to this little personality, embellishing it, adorning it, trying to make it shine and look nicer in so many ways, and yet we want God-realisation. We want to fill ourselves with this infinite God. That is not possible.

So, instead, Krishna says: "mayy avesya" - don't try to squeeze Me into your heart; I'm too big, too large. Better offer yourself into Me; that is simpler. Not only is it simpler, but it is the way.

mayy avesya mano ye mam nityayukta upasate (XII:2)

Once your mind, your heart, the totality of it, is thus offered to Him, and you enter into Him - "nityayukta upasate" - then, from there on, you are forever wedded to God. When you enter this hall for instance, wherever you look, you are seeing the hall. You are surrounded by this hall, you are moving in this hall, whether you are going forwards, backwards, or sideways. If, similarly, you enter your whole being into God, then, wherever you move, it is God, which ever way you turn, it is God. That is the beauty. At that point, the bhakti is non-different from jnana or self-realisation.

Ramana Maharishi often used to quote a verse which he was very fond of: "Why do you see the world as world? Because the eyes belong to the world, and you see whatever it is, with the eyes. That which belongs to the world, only sees the world, and nothing else." There is a beautiful song in hindi, addressed to Krishna. The devotee says: "Come, live in my eyes Krishna, live in my eyes." Why? So that I may see Krishna in all. Only then is it possible to see God in all. Can God be enthroned in our eyes? Can our whole being be offered into God? Then it is possible to see God in all; because, whichever way you turn, you are seeing only God.

nityayukta upasate sraddhaya parayo 'petas (XII:2)
"This demands supreme faith".

What is faith? Even ordinary faith is not blind faith. Blind faith is blindness. If you are blind, how do you know that you will even have faith? If you are in darkness, you will see nothing. You don't 'see' darkness, you are 'in' darkness. If the faith is blind, there is blindness, there is no faith. If there is blindness, there is belief. Someone tells me that there is something called 'eskimo' and 'sledge'. I have not seen these things; but the person who told me happened to be nice-

looking; so, I believed him. But it is quite possible that he pulled a fast one on me. So, every belief contains a lie. In the very heart of the word is 'lie'.

A belief is something which is absurd, but which may be necessary in our spiritual childhood. I don't take a belief, I am given it. Someone comes and tells me that Mr. So-and-So is a very nice gentleman; so, I believe. But that belief is of no use to me whatsoever. Your beliefs are useless, unless they tempt you to find out by experience whether they are true. That is the only use that a belief has. When one enters into direct experience, one gets a glimpse of this truth. It is passing, it is like a flash. A certain inner experience makes you gasp: "That's it". But before you say "That's it", it has gone. Because truth is living, and the ego is still there. It is the ego that wants to experience this truth. That truth seems to be fleeting, not because it is impermanent, but because the ego is trying to grasp it. You now begin to feel that what he said is probably true. Still the word 'probably' is there. You are not strong enough in your conviction to say that it is true, but you had a glimpse of it. I experienced it, but it was only a glimpse. It went away. It is at that point that faith is born. Faith is an experience, a direct experience which was momentary, a brief encounter. You have got some contact.

And now Krishna says here: "sraddhaya panayo" - "one who has supreme faith". Offering oneself, one's whole being to God, placing one's whole being in God - that is what 'sannyasa' means. 'Sannyasa' means to put something very correctly into something. The sannyasa or the swami is one who has offered his whole being into this Infinite; and it is there, securely placed. When that happens, this direct experience is repeated very often. It might not be continuous yet, not quite unbroken, but it is repeated often. So, this faith is also strengthened again and again. The ego is still there, but it is very thin and greatly weakened; for, whichever way it turns, it experiences the Divine Presence. Therefore this faith is supreme.

sraddhaya panayo 'petas te me yuktatama match (XII:2)
"They are very closely associated with Him, very closely united with Him. Such a devotee and I are in very close and fast embrace.

"Yuktatama" is a superlative degree. He is a super-wonderful devotee, but the word 'devotee' is not there. 'Yukta' is a yogi, one who has attained union with the Supreme, and such a person is supreme, "yuktatama matah".

ye tv aksaram anirdesyam avyaktam paryupasate sarvatragam acintyam ca kutastham acatam dhruvam (XII:3)
samniyamye ndriyagramam sarvatra samabuddhayah te prapnuvanti mam eva sarvabhutahite ratah (XII:4)

Whenever one thinks of these two verses, it is impossible not to think of Gurudev at the same time. His life, His personality, was a running commentary on these two verses.

ye tv aksaram anirdesyam avyaktam paryupasate (XII:3)

"Aksaram" - he who is devoted to the imperishable; "anirdesyam" - something

which cannot be described as 'this is it', something which is indescribable, immeasurable, inexpressible; "avyaktam" - which is not obvious. Here, in the third word, lies the supreme adventure. The other words are quite clear - God is indescribable, God is imperishable. These are all obvious. But, in the third word, there is an enigma. "Avyaktam", this omnipresent Being is not obvious, this infinite Being is not obvious. There is something which is obvious, which has a form, a name, a description; but something which is indicated by these is not obvious. Contemplation of this one word generates in us the spirit of enquiry. You see something, you realise that the form or the name or the description or the function is obvious, but then you don't accept the obvious as the truth. You are questioning, you are enquiring, you are not deceived by appearances.

Gurudev was an embodiment of this. If you went to Him with some complaint about somebody or something, immediately he would close one eye - this is obvious, this is not obvious. I am seeing what is obvious, and I am also trying to figure out what is not obvious. It's fantastic. There are two eye-witnesses to this. He would never say that you were wrong. You had gone to Him with a complaint against somebody, this is the obvious thing; and the closed eye sees something else, which is not obvious. When He closed one eye, and looked at you with the other one, it was really terrifying. It had a piercing quality. He never denied you the privilege of saying what you wanted to say. But there it ended. Sometimes, His reactions were the ones you did not expect, because whereas you were committed to the obvious, He was looking through it, enquiring into it, to see the unobvious truth. There He often revealed our own hidden motivations.

That was in the case of human relationship; and the same thing applies to our search for God. It is not obvious, because the mind has cloaked this truth with a veil of ignorance. The veil of ignorance is not something which you can peel off, unless you are God Almighty. One has to enquire into it, one has to be constantly vigilant, constantly enquiring, and constantly taking refuge in the Truth - I am looking for the Reality, the Truth, and not the appearance. This fire of enquiry must be burning in us constantly. Then it is possible for us to see through the obvious, at least most of the time.

sarvatragam acintyam ca (XII:3)

We should introduce an anti-God element here - God and some anti-God, a devil veiling this God. "Sarvatragam" - God is omnipresent, as we repeat in the universal prayer. Omnipresent means that even that veil is apparently God Himself, even this foolish mind that tries to pierce through that veil is He Himself.

"I am the Truth, I am also the False", is a shattering statement from the Bhagavad Gita. The same truth was also revealed in the Upanishads by the Rishis. "Because the Lord entered into all, into everything, every atom of existence, that which the mind thinks of as the false, is also pervaded by the same truth". To give a very imperfect example - you speak the truth, but, on a certain occasion, you tell

a lie. The content of both these is your intelligence, your mind. It is your intelligence that expressed the truth, and it is your intelligence that expressed the lie. Basically they are all the same. What you call the real, and what you call the unreal, are both based upon this universal consciousness. There is no difference. What you call the skin and what you call the body are both the same. The skin is part of the body, it is not outside the body. Though we use the expression that the skin 'covers' the body, it is not like the shirt covering the body. 'The skin covers the body' has a very different connotation. So, when you say that God is covered by a veil of ignorance, it is not as though the veil has been imposed upon this God by some anti-God, but it is His own nature. It is His own playful, divine, loving nature. Gurudev often used to say that God is playing hide and seek in this world. It is not that He wants to hide Himself, it is not that the mother wants to hide herself from the child, but there is no but, there is a play.

sarvatragam acintyam ca (XII:3)

The only thing that can be truly said about this God is that He is 'acintyam', unthinkable. So, try not to use the little brain too much. Questions like "If God is omnipresent, why don't I see this or that?", or "If God is omnipresent, can you say that this and that are both the same?" arise in the polluted mind. That polluted mind is also in God, in this cosmic Being, just as a little cloud is floating in the sky. That cloud is also in space, it is not outside of it.

kutastham acalam dhruvam (XII:3)

This God is unshakable. He is firmly established in the whole world, in the whole universe, so that you cannot run away from Him. You cannot run away from God, throw Him out, dismiss Him. You cannot declare that God is dead. He is firm. And, wherever you might go, however far you might run, you are still in Him. Don't try to escape. Therefore, since this is an inescapable truth, better offer yourself to Him.

kutastham acalam dhruvam (XII:3)
samniyame 'ndriyagramam (XII:4)

How do I realise this? What is the method, and when does this realisation become difficult? When one tries to apprehend the reality by means of the senses. The secret of control of the mind and senses is here. If God is omnipresent, all experiences are of God. But, am I trying to experience an object which is also God through my senses? There I am bound to fail. Any sense experience becomes an immediate limitation of the illimitable. Every sense experience limits and distorts the Infinite, and therefore leads to sorrow, trouble, conflict, and turning away from the supreme reality. It can only give an experience of the appearance; but, the mind flowing through the senses regards that experience as the reality, and there comes trouble. But, if, with the eyes, I am seeing a form, a figure, and if the inner intelligence is trying to see that this form is seen, but the indwelling substratum is the divine, there is no harm. If the intelligence immediately suggests that though this is a form it is the appearance, and the reality is the

divine, then there is no sense-apprehension. The senses are not trying to grasp Him; the senses are not trying to limit the illimitable; the senses are not deceived by the appearance.

samniyamye 'ndriyagramam (XII:4)

All these senses must be well-governed, so that they do not run away with this intelligence, so that they do not pervert or delude this intelligence. Put a bar of chocolate into your mouth. Is it possible at the same time to realise that this is a bar of chocolate, but the sweetness is not in it, not even in my tongue, that it is somewhere else? If that is possible, then the senses have been very well trained and controlled - 'samniyamye 'ndriyagramam'. It is not a question of throwing the chocolate away, running away from it, but bringing about a total inner revolution, a complete change in one's inner attitude. Then you have mastery over the senses.

It was a delight to watch Gurudev enjoy a meal, especially if somebody had prepared things which he thought that Gurudev liked. For instance, He used to enjoy eating mealies, and whenever I see some mealies, I remember Him. But, instead of the attention flowing out, the attention was indrawn, so that He was able to say, "I am flavour in coffee, essence in orange" - song of vibhuti. The flavour in coffee is also the divine. While apparently enjoying a good meal, can that fact be made to the intelligence that here, again, there is God? It was beautiful to watch. We were living close to Him, observing Him. That intelligence was ever alert, and, while enjoying a delicacy, He would say, "That's enough. You take it." There was not this greedy gulping that we are quite famous for; there was a very steady and regulated, disciplined enjoyment of even that food. If two spoonfuls were enough, the third spoonful was not taken, however delicious it might have been, however fond Gurudev might have been of that particular dish. Moderation was possible for Gurudev, because of this 'samniyamye 'nariyagramah'. The senses were under His control, neither suppressed nor allowed to be expressed haphazardly in an undisciplined manner. Expressed means to push out. So, in His case, there was neither this expression nor suppression, but a beautiful attitude called 'nyama' - discipline. All these were utilized to reveal this inner essence, this inner intelligence.

sarvatra samabuddhayah (XII:4)

I'll give you the literal translation: 'sarvatra' - everywhere; 'sama' - same; 'buddhayah' - intelligence, intellect or understanding. 'This person has the same understanding, the same outlook'. This relates to the buddhi or the awakened inner intelligence. That awakened inner intelligence has the attitude of sameness everywhere, in all conditions. And so, Gurudev was able to sing, "Chidanand, Chidanand, Chidananda hum" - "In all conditions, I am Knowledge, Bliss Absolute". He could express joy as no-one else could express it. When He wanted to appreciate, it was all superlatives, and you could see from His face that He was happy. Here, again, there was no suppression. On one or two occasions, I have also seen a bit of a shock on His face. Once, when the news that a mother had lost

her husband, and soon after that her child, was conveyed to Gurudev, there was sorrow, pain, on that face, but neither of them exaggerated.

sarvatra samabuddhayah (XII:4)

There are these experiences which are brought into the intelligence by the mind, by the sense experiences. But, as soon as they reach this intelligence, they reach this sameness, so that, immediately, that equanimity is restored.

te prapnuvanti mam eva sarvabhutahite ratah (XII:4)

"And they are devoted to the welfare of all beings". This is an almost impossible statement to understand with the mind and the ego and our limited, narrow heart. Our narrow heart has been trained not to love all. Even if you have struggled hard to love all, you are still going to say, "I will love all. I'll love all good people, everything divine. But the devil? No! I hate him." How can there be the least non-love in the heart that is love, in a heart that has been offered to God, who is Love? Only that person whose heart has been transmuted into Love, who has entered himself into this Love that is God, can know what is meant by 'sarvabhutahite ratah' - one who is devoted to the welfare of all beings, not just my friends, members of my cult, my temple, my organisation. This again was Gurudev's speciality. When you join an organisation, you merely join it. Which means that you can also be disjoined. You are here, walking into it; you can get out of it. Even when you 'join' an organisation, you very soon become fanatic. You are devoted to promoting it, you want it to outshine all the others. That was something conspicuous by its absence in Gurudev, totally. He was a stranger to it. Even though He created the Sivananda Ashram, even though He founded the Divine Life Society, He did not have this fanaticism. He could go to another ashram and tell them what improvements to make, how to make it even better than His own organisation. It was fantastic to watch. For that half an hour or one hour, He was a member of the other place, not the Divine Life Society or Sivananda Ashram. I don't know if I have ever seen someone who could say that, even if the organisation that I have founded flounders, let yours flourish. That is as important to me as this, perhaps more - sarvabhutahite tatah.

We repeat at the end of our satsang:

sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu niramayah
sarvesam svasti bhavatu
sarvesam santir bhavatu

It's a remarkable prayer.

May all be happy.

Not just good people, not just my people, not just your people.

May all beings be happy.

That is possible only if one's heart and soul are offered into the divine, surrendered to the divine. In that surrender, it becomes one. And that is when

God's Will becomes your will, God's own Mission becomes your mission in life.

2. Two

God is infinite, and therefore not subject to human intellectual comprehension. God is infinite, and therefore inconceivable, nameless, formless, unmanifest. This unmanifest godhead, because of its omnipresence, dwells in all beings as if manifest. This is an extremely tricky statement, which needs intense alertness, faith, and devotion, to realise. Because God is unmanifest, He cannot be considered to be dead, unrealisable, transcendental, and something which we don't know about. This truth is not only realisable, it is something which is unforgettable. If we forget it, it is at the expense of our own happiness and peace.

This unmanifest reality, because of its omnipresence, is as if manifest in infinite forms; not confined to them, but providing their substratum. He is neither in the forms, nor is He not in the forms. So, in and through these manifestations, we constantly seek the unmanifest. We are not deceived by the manifestations, nor are we tied to them, nor do we neglect them altogether, because the manifestation makes manifest the infinite potencies of the infinite.

I wonder if you have ever asked yourself, or even wondered why there is such a diversity in creation. If I asked you why there is such a diversity of faces and hair colour, you might say that it is to distinguish one from the other, in order that we may relate to the proper people. But, why is there such a diversity in shrubs, in the formation and shapes of leaves, among flowers? Couldn't all of them have been reduced to about ten major varieties? It is merely to reveal that the infinite is infinite in infinite ways. That divinity, that glory, that infiniteness, that omnipotence, is manifest in this manifestation. Not God Himself, not the infinite itself, but the infinite potencies of the infinite - which expresses itself in infinite ways - is manifest in all this. So, the wise devotee's heart seeks that unmanifest infinity in and through all these manifestations. Here is a wedding of the manifest and the unmanifest.

The next verse warns us:

kleso dhikataras tesam avyaktasaktacetasam avyakta hi gatir duhkham dehavadbhir avapyate (XII:5)

"Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the unmanifest; for the goal, the unmanifest, is very hard for the embodied to reach."

There are people in this world who discuss love ad infinitum over a cup of tea or coffee, but in their own lives, love is the one thing that is conspicuous by its absence.

There are people who discuss truth, peace, harmony, unity, divinity, who discuss all these wonderful things most intelligently in an abstract way, but never allow these things to touch their lives in their relationship with others. In their lives, you find unhappiness, only because there seems to be a tremendous cleavage between the flights of their fancy and the realities of their lives.

avyakta hi gatir duhkham dehavadbhir avapyate (XII:5)

"Such a pursuit of the unmanifest, the abstract, though it may appear to be a valid path to self-realisation, is a non-starter for embodied beings".

You are embodied. You are basically limited to this body. Whatever your thoughts might be, whatever your flights of fancy might be, when you refer to 'I', you are pointing to your own body, which means that you are more or less convinced that the body is you. However much you may repeat as a formula, "I am not this body, I am the immortal self", when it comes to real life itself, every cell of this body cries out, "I am the body". 'I am the body' is a realisation; 'I am not this body' is a formula, a distant goal which you are running towards. Is that right? When the tables are turned, so that 'I am not the body' becomes a realisation, and 'I am the body' becomes a sort of formula which is used for the purpose of getting on in this world, then you are different. This was what mattered in the lives of such great ones as Gurudev or Ramana Maharishi or some other great saints. In their case, 'I am not the body' was the realisation; 'I am the body' was a sort of reality with which they dealt with us, communicated with us, lived amongst us as human beings. So, as long as you are limited to this body - dehavadbhir - as long as you feel that either you are the body or you dwell in the body, or you have something to do with the body, be careful. Don't live in an abstract world. That may be one of the interpretations of this verse.

Another simple interpretation you might find in most of the commentaries is that God, who is unmanifest, nameless, formless, has to be approached through his own manifestations. In Gurudev's teachings, this meant even what is known as idol worship. He, Himself, was a staunch idol worshipper. Till the last day of His life, He had His own little shrine, and He offered worship there. You may not like that, you may use some other idol or some other symbol, suited to your own liking, but the unmanifest is necessarily approached through the manifest. The pure unmanifest, the path of abstraction, may be suited to some, but not to the majority of us - ye tu sarvani karmani mayi.

samnyasya matparah ananyenai 'va yogena mam dhyayanta upasate (XII:6)
tesam aham samuddharta mrtusamsarasagarat bhavdmi nacirat partha mayi avesitacetasam
(XII:7)

Having suggested that such a yogi reaches me, such a yogi lives in me, Krishna warns that this is not like joining a university and getting a diploma or degree. There, you attend the course for two years, three years, or five years, and then take an exam, and if you do well, you get a diploma or a degree. Krishna says it is not like that, but, "If you do all this, then I grant you salvation."

Here is a very beautiful expression: mayi sarvani karmani samnyasya matparah - "Regarding God alone as the supreme."

Even if you didn't understand the Sanskrit, I am sure you understood one word - samnyasya. Samnyasa means someone who has renounced the world. Not renounced the world in the sense that you kick it away or abandon it - the swami is also in this world, treading the same earth as you do. The sannyasi, or the man who has this understanding of the omnipresence of God, realises that all actions

take place in Him, in this omnipresence. That's beautiful, and applies to all, whatever they wear. Whatever be your external appearance, and whatever be your station in life, God-realisation is for all, not only for swamis or for so-called yogis. So, it must be possible for all who live in the omnipresent Being to realise the simple truth that all actions already take place in Him. If there is a 'me', even that 'me' is in Him. If there is an action taking place through my instrumentality now, even that happens in Him, for Him, towards Him, by Him.

By not separating himself from this omnipresent Being, the sannyasi realises that there is nothing else in this universe. That is what your famous word 'omnipresent' means - all actions take place in Him, in this infinite Being, because there is nothing else. I don't exist outside it, nor do you exist outside it. So, when I say "I serve you", "I love you", these are expressions which are essentially meaningless, the 'I' and the 'you' being non-different from the whole, from the totality, from the infinite. Any action that takes place, is one that takes place in the infinite, is a movement of energy in the infinite. That is called sannyasa.

There is no egotistic feeling in the sannyasi that "I am doing this." When that egotistic feeling arises, it is followed by a motivation. It's a funny thing - the motivation follows the ego, and then pushes it. This is true of all these wonderful followers of the gurus and the swamis. The follower starts following and then, very soon, he starts pushing the guru. Is that right? If the motivation keeps following the ego humbly, probably there is no harm. The ego arises somehow in God Himself, it seeks God, and the motivation also follows. That may be right, but it does not happen in reality. Once the egotistic notion has arisen, "I am doing this to you", immediately there is the following statement, "because I have got some motive, some desire to fulfil, some goal to reach." That ambition which seems to arise after this egotistic feeling, seems to push the ego itself in various by-lanes, and we are completely lost. Instead, the yogi realises that, if there is an action, it takes place in Him; if there is an ego, even that is in Him. Now you look at the same statement 'I serve you', and it has a different meaning - 'I' and 'you' being two cells, two limbs in the same body of the cosmic being - and whatever action takes place, takes place in Him. That is called sannyasa.

'ye tu sarvani karmani mayi samnyasa matparah ananyenai 'va yogena mam dhyayanta upesate (XII:6)

Here we have 'ananya' yoga. 'Ananya' means not another. There is not another, and there is intense yoga; that is, intense unity. There is not union between two different beings, but union between two cells of the same body, two aspects of the same infinite being.

mam dhyayanta upasate (XII:6)

A person living such a life of renunciation - renunciation here means renunciation of the egotistic feeling, renunciation of the motivation, who remains firmly established in the infinite, is constantly meditating upon the infinite.

Whatever expressions may be uttered by his lips, the consciousness is saying all the time, "I love you", "I serve you", which means the same thing. It is merely one hand rubbing the other, or the hands scratching the head. When you say "I love you", there is a 'because' creeping in, and that is going to pollute and destroy our relationship. Here, that is gone, and you say "I love you", where 'I' and 'you' don't exist, and love is merely some kind of a vibration in this cosmic consciousness. What is love? That's it. Then, whatever happens, becomes natural. "I serve you", yes, but what do I serve you? Since both of us are parts of the same cosmic consciousness, and the service is some vibration in the same cosmic being, there is no service, there is no love, but there is pure being. That pure being itself is love. Love is in the infinity, and when it manifests in the infinite, it is translated into 'I love you', but without any motivation whatsoever. When that vibration is translated into our actual daily lives, it is translated into 'I serve you', but without any motivation whatsoever, without even the egotistic feeling. That's it. That is called sannyasa, and that is called constant meditation.

ananyenai 'va yogena mam dyayanta upasate" (IIV:6)

'Upasate' may mean worship. But here 'upasate' means, he sits very close to truth, he sits very close to the infinite. You 'are' in the infinite, but psychologically you have separated yourself from the infinite, and now, when you do all this, you draw closer to the infinite.

tesam aham samuddharta mrtyusamsarasagarat bhavami nacirat partha mayy avesitacetam (XII:7)

Don't think that if you take all these steps, you will somehow attain God-realisation. 'I am going to realise God' is a marvellous, wonderful expression. Gurudev sang a very beautiful song:

"When shall I be free? When 'I' ceases to be".

So, whenever you are tempted to use the expression 'I want to attain self-realisation', please also remember that the self-realisation is had only when the 'I' is gone. So, probably the 'I' never attains this. Then, who attains self-realisation? The Hebrew texts remind us that you can't see the face of God because, when you see the face of God, you disappear, only God remains.

Krishna - which means God here - says, "I liberate, I elevate." You cannot elevate yourself. As Jesus says in the Bible, "Knock, and it shall be opened." When you do all this, don't force the door, you will get splinters in your hands. Knock, wait - that much you must do, because the knocking will not be done by God. Love God with all your heart, with all your strength. If the door doesn't open, knock a little more. If the knuckles ache, use your head. Go on breaking each one, one after the other, the knuckles, the head, something else, till the whole 'I' is broken down, completely dissolved. Then the door is open, your heart is opened, and you are on the other side.

bhavami nacirat partha mayy avesitacetam (XII-7)
And, because they have entered their heart into Me, I am revealed.

This must be very clearly understood. It is not the ego's striving that makes this possible to happen, it is the ego's submission, the ego's realisation of its own impotence that enables the revelation that God is omnipotent. It is God Himself who uplifts and liberates this seeker, this devotee from the cycle of birth and death.

mayy eva mana adhatsva mayi buddhim nivesaya nivasisyasi mayy eva ata. urdhvam na
samsayah (XII:8)

I suppose Krishna had a twinkle in His eyes when He said this. "When you have entered your mind, your heart, your whole being into Me, you will naturally dwell in Me". That is obvious, it does not need Krishna to say, "Provided you don't keep anything back for yourself." Gurudev was very fond of saying this. After you have surrendered yourself to God, don't keep some private desires for your own gratification. "God, I surrender myself to you, I am prepared to die, I am prepared to suffer, but please, look after my children." When you surrender, let the surrender be total. When you enter into Him, realise that you are entering into the infinite, and the infinite includes all. There is the realisation that all are in Him, not only me, but my wife and children, my brothers, disciples, gurus, properties, the whole lot, and He who is going to look after me, can look after everybody else. I am the most difficult person to look after. Yes? 'I' is the most difficult person to look after. If this God can satisfy me, this one person, he is probably capable of satisfying everyone in this world. Don't we feel this? We have so many desires for gratification, we make so many demands upon Him, that even God has disappeared.

There is one south indian saint who has put this very beautifully. He says that if God had condescended to turn all the oceans into wine, and granted one man the freedom to drink and made him the supreme monarch of the three worlds, heaven, hell, and earth, even then, one man's desires cannot be really satisfied. Because, once you are the monarch of all these three worlds, and you have them all under your command, you are going to look over to the other galaxy for something else. So, when you surrender yourself to God, everything is surrendered, the totality of your existence is realised to be in Him. Don't keep anything for your own private gratification.

I don't know if I am being rude or blasphemous, but there is one mistake that God committed. According to, I think the 6th chapter of Genesis, it is said that God was so angry looking at the wicked condition of the world, He said that He was going to wipe out the whole thing by sending a flood. That would have been very nice, a complete spring-cleaning. But unfortunately, He changed His mind at the last moment, and kept back two of each. Two of each is enough for mischief. He could easily have wiped out the whole thing and created something new, then that would have been marvellous. But He built the whole world all over again, as it was before the flood. I don't know if this story is literally true, but to me it means only this - when you surrender yourself to God, keep nothing behind. When you want to die to this life, keep nothing behind, everything is dead. Then

there is something completely new. Then you live in God, and there is absolutely no doubt in it.

atha cittam samadhatum na saknosi mayi sthiram abhyasayogena tato mam iccha 'ptum dhanamjaya (XII:9)

If you find that this is difficult for you, then says Krishna here, practise abhyasa yoga. By means of abhyasa yoga, strive repeatedly to reach this point, to reach this state, to reach Him. Why will this be difficult at all when we have the understanding that God is omnipresent, that God is all, that God is infinite, that you and I are but cells in the cosmic being? Why will it be difficult for the mind and the heart to be entered into the infinite, to be saturated with this knowledge, with this understanding? Because of what we call 'samskaras'.

'Samskara' is a Sanskrit word, I believe, which means psychological tendencies, mental impressions, habits. But I take it to mean what it sounds like in english - some scar. Through various actions and experiences, egotistically received as personal experiences, we have accumulated scars on our own psyche, so that all these scars have come together, and formed what we call our 'personality'. Right from our childhood, we have gathered these scars. We were born fairly clean beings with clean hearts, fairly good minds, gentle, sweet, non-egotistic. Then, as we start growing up, someone scratches our forehead and says, "Your name is So-and-So" - one scar is formed. A little later someone says, "You are a Brahmin" - another scar is formed. Later someone says, "You are born of a very respectable family" - a third scar is formed. Then, "You are a boy, not a girl" - another scar. All these scars, accumulated, form what you call your personality. 'Persona' means a mask. Can you come up with a personality trait that has not been scarred like this?

These scars are extremely difficult to get rid of. The habits are so hard to break that, however much you tell yourself, "I am not an Indian, I am not this, I am not a man", these things don't work. So, the scars keep reviving the old vicious tendencies, and make it impossible for you to realise the infinite, to realise your oneness with all, and to surrender completely to God. If you are able to surrender completely to God, at this moment you are instantly liberated, free. You have instant realisation of the Absolute. But, the scars are bothering you again. So He says, if that happens and you find that in spite of your surrender, in spite of offering yourself to God, you are still your old, petty little self, alright,

abhyasayogena tato mam iccha 'ptum dhanamjaya (XII:9)

then struggle. Come back to this again and again and again - "I must realise God". Make repeated attempts.

Theoretically, when you once surrender yourself to God, you don't have to surrender again. If you have to surrender again, that means the first time you did not really surrender. One does not drown twice in the same water. But, it is possible for us to realise that that surrender has not taken place; and so, keep on

repeating the same practice again and again and again, otherwise repetition has no meaning at all here. When you look at something holy, when you look at a friend, or when you look at something else, a church, or a mosque, or a temple, or a synagogue, remind yourself that God is infinite. Try to come back to this. Repeat God's Name. Do japa, and more than anything else, remind yourself constantly that God dwells in all.

Gurudev's greatest favourite was this vibhuti yoga. In the 10th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, a whole list of special manifestations of God is given - the sun, the moon, the stars, light, lamp; and Gurudev Himself has added a few more. It is merely to suggest that once you learn to feel the presence of God in these special manifestations, it is possible for you to feel the manifestations of God everywhere, by stages, gradually. The scars will come up; but, in this manner, you go on healing them. The word 'heal' means to make whole. It is as if the scars have temporarily damaged the wholeness, and created a personality, which has set itself up as an independent entity, independent of the infinite. Now, as these scars get healed one by one, the infinity of the infinite is restored.

abhyase 'py asamartho 'si matkarmaparamo bhava madartham api karmani kurvan siddhim avapsyasi (XII:10)

"Even if to repeatedly remind yourself of the infinite seems to be difficult, you are not exempt."

"Treat whatever you are doing as service of God," says Krishna. That is, there is a level of consciousness all the time that you are doing your business, but you are doing it for the sake of God. Even by doing so, you can attain perfection. You may be a jnani and so withdraw yourself from the world and offer yourself to God; or you may be sadhakas or spiritual seekers like us, who are repeatedly attempting to cultivate this surrender; or you may be extremely busy in this world. Even there, you are in Him, in the infinite, you are not outside the pale of God. Nothing can remain outside the infinite. So, realise that whatever you do, you do because this is the will of God.

sreyo hi jnanam abhyasaj - jnanad dhuyam visisyate dhyanat karmaphalatyagas tyagac chantir anantarani (XII:12)

A correct understanding of what we are doing is better than the doing itself. Superior to that is contemplation where there is a clear understanding of the truth. Even better than that is the renunciation of all selfish desires. 'Karmaphalatyaga' means that you are doing what you have to do, but without desire for a reward, for a result. 'Tyagac chantir anantaram' - immediately after you abandon selfish desires, you have peace of mind. When there is peace of mind, contemplation, meditation becomes effortless. When contemplation becomes effortless, then there is knowledge, which leads to self-knowledge. So, abandonment of selfish desires, while still being busy in this world, says Krishna, is superior to all other forms of spiritual practice.

3. Three

The last four verses just discussed could be interpreted to mean four steps to the ultimate surrender. That is, to begin with, I work without regard for the result, I work because I have to work. What happens afterwards, happens afterwards. I have no power to change it, because the action has preceded the result. When the result arrives, it is not possible to go back and change the action. This is simple common sense.

The Bhagavad Gita's message, Krishna's teaching, is based on absolutely simple common sense. When He says, "Don't let the motives, the results, be your concern", it only means the results are not your concern, you can't do anything about them. Then, while an action is being performed, the human mind being motivated by motives, begins to wonder, "Why am I doing this?" We are all committed to this unfortunate position that every action is motivated. Without motive, which is selfish motive, action is impossible, work is impossible. So, when the intelligence sees that, though I am made to be active by the life force, by circumstances, by the world, by the energy inherent in everything, the results that I desire do not always materialise, it still asks, "Why must I do all this?" Then one graduates to the next step - madartham api - do it for God's sake, so that God will be pleased. It is a beautiful statement which most of us use, and there is no harm in using it. Let us work for God's sake, let us work in order that God may be pleased. But then, at some stage or the other, one must begin to wonder whether God is such a weak-willed, weak-minded person, that 'I' have to go on pleasing Him by doing all this. Then that motivation drops, and all that there is in the seeker's heart is an awareness, a notion of a division between 'me' and God. Now, there is a constant striving to abolish this too, and that finds its own fulfilment in the total surrender. This could be degradation, or the steps to this total surrender.

On the other hand, these four verses might also be taken independently to represent four completely different paths suited to four completely different types of people, people of different temperaments. One type of person is one who is instantly able to surrender like a Buddha, or a Sivananda, or a Jesus Christ. He sees the truth immediately it is revealed, and right then and there, the surrender takes place. You may call him a jnani or a sage, or a great devotee totally in love with God, or you may call him what you like; that is the person - mayy avesyamano - whose mind and heart enter into God without any motivation whatsoever, without a thought interfering in that surrender.

Then comes the abhyasa yogi - one like us, who is constantly striving. This could be the raja yogi, who meditates every morning, who does all the yama, niyama, isana, pranayama, and all that every day, and is striving and striving and striving to reach the goal, to reach this state of surrender. That is another independent path, the path of raja yoga.

Then there is the one who is unable to do any of these, but who is active, and

that active person could become a karma yogi by dedicating all his actions to God. We only label him karma yogi, raja yogi, jnani or bhakta - all these are yogis.

It is possible that one cannot associate one's actions with God. "God has nothing to do with all this. I have to work for my wife and children. Why does God come into this?" But very soon you realise that you work because you have to work. You realise, if you are a hard worker, even in business, in industry, or working for any institution you like - mental, spiritual, physical, commercial - that all these are similar institutions. Very soon you realise, "I set a goal up for myself, and I am not able to realize it, I am frustrated. I want to get that, but I am unable to. There are too many factors-and cross-currents involved." Some day, a feeling arises in us, "I enjoy the work, but I am not able to achieve what I want to achieve." Watch carefully here - I enjoy the work, but the consequence seems to be frustration, the result seems to be frustration. I think it's simple common intelligence to hang on to this work, and drop that result. Is that right? I enjoy the work, I don't want to drop it, but it is the consequence, the result that is frustrating; so, I drop it there, and I go on doing what I have to do. I enjoy myself. This itself is the highest yoga. That's what Krishna says, not us:

tyagac chantir anantaram (XII:12)

If you are able to drop this selfish motive or desire intelligently in this manner, that very instant, your heart is at peace. That means enlightened, illumined, God-realised, and all the rest of it. When selfish desire has gone, when selfish motivation has gone, the little self has gone. You don't have to sell fish any more. You have become the ocean of satchidananda. So, that very moment, you are able to abandon this foolish and stupid chasing after a result to the action. That very moment, you are liberated, freed, emancipated. So, that itself seems to be a complete path indicated by Krishna.

These are different classes of devotees. Different classes, only because we are studying all four; but one who is in one of these categories is complete, totally complete. He doesn't have to look at others, and compare himself at all. The characteristics of these devotees are given in the last eight verses of this twelfth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. These are characteristics which are found in those seekers who have reached the summit, who have quaffed Divine Grace. A temptation that naturally arises in our hearts when we study these qualifications, and when we see them illustrated in great saints like Gurudev, is that if only I can also behave like that, will my behaviour not make me a saint? May not. Your behaviour might make you heavier. It is not just a behaviour; you will be heavier, and you will go down and down and down. You might become like some of these imitation diamonds; they sparkle, but they are worth nothing. So, imitation is dangerous. It is not the outward action that distinguishes a saint from a sinner.

Krishna himself has pointed out very beautifully that the yogi or the saint must behave externally in a way similar to the worldly man, but inwardly there is a tremendous difference. The outlook is different, the inner vision is different - a

reason why you find in some of the mighty scriptures of India, stories of butchers, hunters, warriors, soldiers, and people whose morals, according to you and me, were not all that impeccable, being enlightened sages. "It is not the external appearance that matters," says Krishna, "it is the inner spirit that matters." The converse is not true. I am not suggesting that the external appearance or behaviour has no value at all; but, what must be understood, and where our attention should be, is the spirit. If that spirit is understood, if that vision is cultivated, then the action takes care of itself.

This is an expression which occurs again and again in the Yoga Vasistha. Vasistha tells Rama, "Acquire this vision, live in this vision, and then from there the action will spring." I'll give you a very simple, ludicrous example. I am walking along and happen to cross the street, when someone comes very fast in his car. I look at the car and run. 'I' don't run. 'I' don't stand there and say, "Oh my God, he's coming at sixty miles an hour and I'll be crushed. I must run." All this takes too long. The looking itself runs. That's it. Another example. When I am in the presence of some children, I look at them and want to run. Even that is inadequate. 'I' don't run, the very sight of that child runs. It is not 'I' who am running away from the car, because I am afraid that I'll be knocked down. It is not 'I' who am running towards this child, because I love the child; but it is the inner vision that acts instantly, spontaneously, without question, without motivation. So, when these descriptions are heard, one must be aware that these descriptions or the qualities or the attributes spring from a vision. "Acquire that vision, these qualities will be found in you." That's all Krishna says.

These qualities are found in those who have acquired this God-vision. If you also acquire this God-vision, you will also possess these qualities. But don't use them as make-up, cosmetics. No-one is interested in your virtues, except for some social virtues. You don't go about hitting or molesting people; that's alright, and we understand all that. But, in how virtuous you are, and how you don't smell meat, or even drink a glass of wine, or things like that, no-one is interested. So, there is no use applying these as cosmetics.

This cosmetic discipline often fattens one's egoism, and leads to all sorts of complications and troubles. With this cosmetic discipline, you apply it nicely, and you look very decent, very charming, till there is a rainfall or perspiration, and then the whole thing is gone. "I eat only once a day", "I am a perfect brahmachari", "I am this, I am that", all these are out of the ordinary, and if you cannot do this which the swami does, he must be something extraordinary. He might be something else. This is how some of these people are worshipped.

If I have one weakness, you may have another weakness. If you drink a glass of beer, I may be drinking ten cups of tea. The net result is the same, there is a weakness. I'll tell you a story which Swamiji was very fond of. A sannyasi, a swami, in Rishikesh had put up a noticeboard outside his hut: "I have conquered anger". Four young men entered into a conspiracy to try him. First one young man went in: "Ah, Swamiji maharaj, I believe you have conquered anger." "Yes,

it's very easy, you know. Whenever there is irritability, you sit there, 'Om shaaaaaaaaaanti' - it must be long otherwise your irritability doesn't go, 'Om shaaaaaaaaaanti, shaaaaaaaaaanti'. By the time you have finished the third, you have forgotten why you were irritable. "Marvellous. You know, all of us are very short-tempered." "You must practise yoga, and when you reach a certain stage, when your consciousness comes up to the throat level, all these things happen." "Thank you Swamiji. Here is a banana for you, and a lemon, and this flower I picked in your own garden."

The first boy goes off, the second one comes in: "Maharaj, I heard from my friend that you never get angry?" "Of course I don't get angry at all." "You do not get angry, Maharaj? But supposing I insult you." "Oh no, soham, soham, soham, soham; you and I are one atma; you are my own self; how do I get angry?" "How did you achieve it?" "By meditating upon the one immortal self which pervades all beings. It is said in the Gita." "Thank you Maharaj. One more banana, and a flower, I picked it in your garden, I hope you don't mind."

And so the third fellow comes, and the conversation is kept up. Then the fourth comes in: "Swamiji, I believe you told all these three people that you don't get angry at all. But what happens when somebody knocks your head down?" "I don't get angry." "But how come? You are also a man like me, how come you are not angry?" "I don't get angry, I have told you fifty times!" "But how can you not get angry? If I go on arguing with you?" "Get out of here!"

So, if you practise these cosmetic disciplines, they ring false, and in the heat of your own activity to maintain them, the cosmetic disintegrates. If you wear heavy make-up, you can't afford to be active.

The cosmetic discipline disintegrates at the least sign of a challenge, but if the inner vision is clear, then the discipline is found. Not by yourself, you are not even aware of it. This is one thing which we all discovered in Gurudev. He was not aware that He was loving; He was not aware that He was active; He was not aware that He was unselfish. So, one very important thing to remember is that I cannot acquire this discipline, these qualities. These are found when the inner vision arises. I cannot cultivate them because the 'I', the ego that cultivates, is fed by all these qualities, and you become more and more and more egotistic. When you become proud of your own virtue, there is a fall immanent. If you have conquered all the other vices, this virtue has become large. That itself is the biggest vice. It's a compensatory vice; so, it is merely transferred to the ego. It has become pride, and the pride goes before a fall.

It is not possible for us to acquire these qualities, and pretend that we have become devotees or yogis. When we strive to become yogis, or when we strive to acquire this inner vision by becoming conscious of the nature of the world, the nature of action, the nature of life here, then none of us is really happy, however much we may pretend to be happy. None of us is really at peace as long as the mind is restless, and we have not found the key to peace of mind. None of us has

the moral courage to face the simplest fact concerning life; that life is subject to birth, death, old-age, illness, and misfortune, and all the rest of it. If I face this truth concerning life, then the truth that is beyond this life, the truth of the infinite, reveals itself. But, first I must squarely face what is the obvious truth. Through that, what is unobvious, becomes obvious. When I see the form, the spirit reveals itself. So, when I see the truth concerning life, the substratum of this life, that which is beyond the 'me', reveals itself. In that revelation, there is a vision. That vision determines what life should be, what my behaviour should be. You may not even be aware that you are charming, or that you are loving.

Such is the beauty of the next eight verses. They are called 'amrtastakam', because they are very sweet and very beautiful. Moreover, it is in these eight verses that Krishna uses an extraordinarily beautiful expression which occurs again and again:

yo madbhaktah sa me priyah (XII:14)

This person who loves me, I love him. So, there is a beautiful reciprocity, a beautiful unity. There is an expression of beauty or love - God loves me and I love Him - and therefore these eight verses are highly extolled.

advesta sarvabhutanam maitrah karuan eva ca nirmano nirakamkarah samaduhkhasukhah ksami (XII:13)
samtustah satatam yogi yatatma drdhaniscayah mayy arpitamanobuddhir yo madbhaktah sa me priyah (XII:14)

Advesta sarvabhutanam - he doesn't dislike anyone in the world. He has no dislike in his heart, so that, whatever the object may be in front of him, he is incapable of disliking it. Do you see the beauty here? It is not as though I recognise you as my enemy, and I say, "Never mind, my dear enemy, I still like you." That's a hypocritical approach, what I call 'cosmetic approach'. I have watched Gurudev on one or two occasions when He was confronted by people. Once He went to one swami's room and asked, "How are you?", as usual. This disciple brought a complaint that he was not satisfied with the food that was served, by the accommodation, by the comforts that were given to him - a forty-two minute monologue. And this wonderful man just sat there and listened, lovingly, with not a trace of disappointment or frustration. When the whole thing was over, the solution that came out was: "Yes, I'll provide whatever you want." It's an extraordinary reaction. How many of you would react in this way if one of your own subordinates came up with a whole catalogue of grouses? You'd probably throw him out. I might also pay a tribute to that swami. He accepted this privilege for hardly ten days, and then he said, "No, I didn't complain for my sake, I only said what I wanted to say." It was his nature, there was nothing wrong with him, and he is now a very great saint. It was not possible for Gurudev to dislike any person. Why? Because dislike was not in His heart. Another important point: can these qualities be made to manifest in one's being without a motivation? If I am loving, and I behave like a saint, I am going to be admired by many people - can these qualities appear in us with no such motivation whatsoever? These qualities should not be acquired or applied cosmetically. Can

these qualities and virtues appear in us as light appears in the sun, without the sun's intending to do so? Advesta sarvabhutanam - the only way in which this can happen is if there is no dislike at all in my heart.

maitrah karuna eva ca

Friendliness and compassion towards all.

Compassion is not feeling that I am a superior person, or I am a wealthy, prosperous person, and I pity you, poor, starving thing. That sort of thing is total viciousness masquerading as virtue. Can compassion arise without asking the cause? If it is not there, let us be conscious within ourselves that this quality is not there. That means, I have still not gained the vision that would make this quality possible. Is that right? Be compassionate by being divine. 'Be' compassionate, do not appear to be compassionate. They are two very different things. 'Be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate'. Appearing to be compassionate is a dangerous thing. 'Be' compassionate. It is the being that must gain this vision, the vision of the cosmic being, and then compassion flows naturally.

Krishna adds here:

nirmamo nirahamkarah (XII:13)

When are these things possible? When there is absolutely no egoism - nirahamkarah - when there is absolutely no sense of possession - nirmamo. When there is no sense of possession at all, then things flow. You don't even feel that you are sharing anything with others, you have no choice. If I don't think this is mine, when you take it away, I am not disappointed at all. But, if I consider this mine, I cling to it, and then, when I hear a nice discourse on dispassion, I feel I must share it. There is hypocrisy. Only when that sense of mineness has completely gone, then sharing becomes sweet, natural.

nirmamo nirahamkarah samaduhkhasukhah ksami (XII:13)

"And he is even minded in pain and pleasure, in happiness and unhappiness".

Why is he the same in happiness and unhappiness? Happiness and unhappiness, as mere events in our life, are events in life, and happen to everybody. But, happiness and unhappiness as results or consequences of action, are treated as happiness and unhappiness only as long as you link the action with the result. When I don't get what I want to get, I become unhappy. And when I get what I don't want to get, I am unhappy also. So, this happiness and unhappiness - or unhappiness at least, are directly related to the motivation, and when the motivation is dropped, there is nothing called happiness, there is nothing called unhappiness. The yogi begins to see that there is very little difference between happiness and unhappiness - only two extra letters. Unhappiness is also happiness with a little extra added, and therefore this doesn't touch the man of God.

So, the man of God is completely free from this thing called unhappiness. You

will recognise one when you see Gurudev. In what you call 'thick and thin', in what you call 'the ups and downs', He was delightful, joyous, cheerful, happy, all the time. Happy in a very different way. I'll give you two examples - one up, and one down. Way back in 1947, or early '48, there was not much money in the ashram, and everybody was living a hand to mouth existence. Gurudev was very fond of His publications. He had written quite a few books, and the manuscripts were accumulating, because there was no money to publish them and get them printed. One morning, an american family visiting the ashram, drew a cheque for forty thousand rupees. In those days, the maximum donation that we had ever received was probably a thousand rupees, and here was a cheque for forty thousand! When it was presented to Gurudev, I saw Him rushing out of His kutir, waving the cheque and shouting as He was walking along the road, "You have saved all my manuscripts, it's very good" - happy that somebody had donated such a lot of money to print and publish the books. He was about sixty-one at that time, but one could see that He was like a child, jumping, dancing with joy.

Much later, in the mid-fifties, somebody had robbed the ashram of everything. The bank accounts showed zero net balance, the cash box was empty, there was nothing in the post office, nothing anywhere. Then also He was happy. "Alright, that's not a problem. We are all swamis, sannyasis; so, let us go to some of the alms houses, take bhiksha, come back, and do a little bit of work and go back for our food, till the ashram position improves." Also happy. He didn't go into some sort of hibernation. If it had happened to some of you, you would have had a nervous breakdown. You are already bankrupt, and now you have got to pay some more doctor's bills! There no doubt He was happy, and here also He was happy. So, there is a result of evenness.

Samtustah satatam yogi yatatma drdhaniscayah (XII:14)
"Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction".

There is a peculiar and a very potent form of self-control here - 'yatatma'. It is not a self-control that is born of the mind, which says, "I must not eat this, and I must not do that" - thou shalt and thou shalt not. But it is a discipline which is of a superior type, which is true self-control. There is no struggle, there is no effort, but there is an intense inner observation. That vision again. There may not even be a characterisation of a certain action as evil, as bad, as wicked, as vicious. You may use these expressions, but in that inner light, either these wicked, vicious thoughts, words, and impulses, do not arise, or if they do arise, they collapse immediately. So, here again, what is needed is that inner vision, and that inner observation. This discipline is related not to the mind, not to the little self, but to the inner consciousness itself, "drdhaniscayah", and then the resolve to be vigilant is firmly rooted.

I have often given this example from Gurudev's life. This happened just once. In Delhi, during the 'All India Tour', Gurudev's health was in very poor shape, and the organisers had decided that when Gurudev was not delivering a lecture or having a satsang, He would go away somewhere else alone, to the house of a very good devotee for a period of rest. Incidentally, if Gurudev had accepted an

appointment, unless something serious happened, and He couldn't move or He was unconscious, He wouldn't postpone it. He had accepted a few appointments for the last day in Delhi, and that night we were catching the train back to Rishikesh. The appointments started at about three-fifteen. At two forty-five, He was still fast asleep; so, some of us pulled the curtains, closed the door - let Him sleep if He wants to sleep, and we will cancel the appointment. At 3 o'clock, He was awake. He got up, picked up His towel, and walked towards the car which was waiting. The lady of the house appeared there, and from the car He said nothing about her. We went out, and in five minutes we were back again. Then, He himself opened the door, went inside, and the sight would have moved even rocks to tears. He folded His palms, bent low, and said in Tamil, "Please forgive me." He didn't say sorry in so many words, but from head to foot, every cell was saying sorry. "Please forgive me, I shouldn't have taken leave of you from the car, I should have come here and said so properly." She was in tears, and couldn't say a word. Then Swamiji turned round and got into the car. For one minute or so, He was utterly silent and grave; then, He turned to me and said, "From somewhere the idea that I am a big man was about to enter. I must be very careful." One must be extremely vigilant and careful. That firmness of resolve we saw in Him. In His own heart, and in His own behaviour, He was something extraordinary. His humility, His natural goodness, His sweetness, was never allowed to be interfered with, never. That was the beauty - drdhanuscayah - firm in one's resolve.

This resolve does not arise in the mind or the intellect, but it happens simultaneously with the vision. When there is this vision, direct realisation that I am one with all, that there is absolutely no distinction between me and you, why should I feel superior to you? It is not the other way round - I feel superior to you and I should not; so, I'm sorry, I am very humble, very simple - that is hypocrisy. It is a show of inferiority complex which is backed by an enormous superiority complex. Is that right? It's a compensatory inferiority complex. But here, there is no such thing. Gurudev felt inferior to none, nor did He feel superior to anyone. That also arose from this .supreme vision.

samtustah satatam yogi yatatma drdhaniscayah mayy arpitamanobuddhir yo madbhaktah sa me priyah (XIII:14)

How does it happen? "He has completely and totally offered his heart, soul, and his whole mind, to me, and he is my devotee.", said Krishna, God. He is God's devotee, and he is the beloved of God. He is not only that devotee, but he is the beloved of God.

4. Four

yasman no 'dviijate loko lokan no 'dviijate ca yah harsamarsabhayodvegair mukto yah sa ca me priyah (XII:15)

We are continuing with the characteristics of a devotee, the characteristics of one who has entered his entire being, his mind, his heart, into the divine; the characteristics of such a person who is dear to the Lord, because he is in Him. It is an extraordinarily beautiful relationship. Not a relationship of two beings who are external to each other, who love each other, but who are within each other. You love the Lord, because you realise that you are in Him, and He loves you because you are in Him; you are part of Him. Love loves itself.

What are the natural characteristics, what are the distinguishing marks of such a person, a person who loves God with all his being and who is loved by God?

yasman no 'dviijate loko lokan no 'dviijate ca yah (XII:15)

It is not easy to translate this. One may say: "One who does not run away from others, and from whom people do not run away. One who does not dislike anyone, and one who is not disliked by anyone. One who does not hate, and one who is not hated. One who does not hurt, and one who is not hurt. One who is not afraid of others, and of whom no-one is afraid."

One of the affirmations that the person who renounces the world in form, like Swamiji, while entering the holy order of sannyasa is: "Let no-one be afraid of Me, because from the Self all have proceeded." What is that vision which enables one to live, in such a way that he is unafraid of anyone, and no-one is afraid of him; that he is not hurt, and he does not hurt? He does not hurt is probably fairly easy, even though there may be all sorts of complications to it. It may be fairly easy for you not to hurt others, but how can you ensure that you are never hurt? It may be easy for you not to fear anyone, but to ensure that no-one else is afraid of you, how is that possible? It is perhaps easy not to dislike anyone, but to live in such a way that no-one has cause to dislike you, how is that possible? Again, not by cosmetic treatment. Not by telling yourself that you'll play the politician, and have your own bag of tricks, or bag of lies, so that, when someone comes you take one out, and when somebody else comes you take the appropriate one out. Sooner or later, you will be found out, and all the time you are frustrated, you are in tremendous tension. Cosmetic treatment is of no avail here.

mayy avesya mano ye mam nytayyukta upasate (XII:2)

Only if I can surrender my whole being, if I can enter my whole being into the divine, then naturally I become part of the totality, and I realise that I am part of the totality, that I am absolutely one with the entire universe. In that oneness, there is no fear. Only when there is a consciousness, a feeling of duality - you and I - am I afraid of you, or you are afraid of me; and only when that duality is eradicated in one's consciousness, does that fear disappear totally in both of us.

Then you are not afraid of me, and I am not afraid of you. So, what we call love, what we call absence of fear, absence of dislike and non-hurtability - which is ahimsa, all these things are possible only in that love which is God, and only when, in total love, my whole being can be entered into that God, and there is the realisation of oneness. Otherwise there is no ahimsa.

You may not want to hurt; but, if you are hurt, you are hurting. I insult you, I say something which offends you. You may stretch yourself up and look at the space between the eye-brows and say "Om, shanti, shanti, shanti. Even though you are insulting me, I am not offended. Even though you are hurting me, I am not hurt." That awareness itself, that thought itself is hurt. It shows you you're hurt. You are trying to mask it by wearing a mask of an angel, but behind the mask is somebody else. The truth is something else. When will you not be hurt at all, and when will you not hurt at all? Only when this dualism goes. So, Krishna suggests: first approach the whole problem from that end. Realise the truth that God alone is, realise the truth that we are all part of Him. Then all these qualities flow. That is what Jesus Christ said, though in a slightly different context: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" - first find God, then all these shall be added unto you. Such a person is not highly elated, nor depressed. There is no fear as we discussed just now, and there is no tremendous excitement. He is free from all this.

anapeksah sucis daksa udasino gatavyathah sarvarambhaparityagi yo madbhaktah sa me priyah (XII:16)

'Anapeksah' is desireless. It's quite simple, isn't it? If one truly understands and realises that "I am in him, he must know how to look after himself," only then can a person truly become desireless. Otherwise, once again we go on with our cosmetic treatment. I am still something apart from the totality, I am still an independent entity, praying to God, trying to find God who is elsewhere. In that there is fear, in that there is insecurity, in that you pray, "God, please, maybe you have forgotten that I am here, can you also look after me?" Then someone else says that it is good to pray, to offer unselfish prayer. Selfish prayer is not so good - all these rules and regulations, like the talmudic philosophers. Once you miss the truth, then you are caught up in a maze of conflicting opinions. Must I do this; must I not do this? In some circumstances, this is right; in other circumstances, this is not right, and so on. But, when the heart and the mind are entered into him, he looks after himself.

"Sucir" - pure. Such a heart is pure, such a person is pure, because God is pure. 'I' can never be pure. The letter 'i' is the most vital part of the word 'evil'. If you take that 'i' out, you cannot pronounce the word, it becomes a dead word. As long as the 'I' lasts, it will create some evil, it must create it; and as long as the 'I' lasts, there is bound to be some impurity.

You can juggle with the 'I' - make it a little taller, make it a little shorter, make it a little thinner, make it a little fatter - you can do all that, but it will really go, and the heart will become really and truly pure only when it is totally offered to Him.

Not till then. Only when there is an immediate and intense realisation of oneness. Immediate in the sense that there is absolutely no mediator, nothing between me and him, not even a notion, not even a thought, not even a thing called devotion. The dualistic devotion or the dualistic love is the dangerous thing. When even that space is lost, then there is immediate realisation of God.

Intense means the opposite of tense. What is tense? Not this tension, but past tense, present tense, future tense. Intense means that state in which there is no past tense, there is no present tense, and there is no future tense. Neither in space nor in time is there a division between the devotee and God. The devotee has totally offered himself to the divine, entered himself into the divine, and has become completely, totally absorbed in the divine. That is the most essential and vital requisite.

anapeksah sucir daksa (XII:16)

'Daksa' is extremely efficient. That person is very efficient, because he doesn't concern himself with the past and future, and there is no tension. When you are living in what is called the present, and half of you is stretched into the future, and the other half of you is stretched into the past, there is tension, naturally. So, drop these tenses altogether, and then you are free from tension. Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita: "What is yoga? To be super-efficient in whatever you do". That efficiency can happen only when there is absolutely no tension in the mind, when the whole being has been offered to the divine.

anapeksah sucir daksa udasino gatavyakthah (XII:16)

He is indifferent - 'udasino'. What does indifferent mean? Indifferent does not mean: "Well, I don't care." There, the 'I' is present. That 'I don't care' is an evil, an impurity of heart, which has already been dealt with when we said that the devotee's heart is pure. This 'udasinata', this indifference, is something quite different; it is the antithesis of anxiety - anxiety concerning what one calls oneself or concerning others. There is no anxiety, knowing that the adorable Lord of Mercy and Love is omniscient. You say this every day in your universal prayer - "You are omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent." A certain form of indifference arises from that, where there is no anxiety concerning oneself or the others. It does not mean that such a person would be lazy, idle. Oh, no! 'Daksa' - efficient, totally dedicated to the welfare of all beings. Why? All beings belong to the same being, one being. It is not that I am devoted to the welfare of you, but that one being looks after itself. If that happens, we scratch each other's back, we serve one another, because such is the love that is God. In that there is no anxiety, there is no restlessness, but there is a calmness, there is a peace - 'udasino gatavyakthah'.

Such a devotee is totally free of sorrow. Sorrow has taken leave of him. He is not a long-faced miserable man who is bearing the burdens of all the sorrows of others. If you are miserable, you cannot radiate joy to others. You had to see Swami Sivananda. Even when the body was in pain, the face radiated such joy,

such delight. One could easily say that He never experienced sorrow, except on one or two rare occasions, when He felt shaken by some other people's sorrow. I am tempted to give you just one or two glimpses.

Once Gurudev had typhoid, and I don't know if you realise that for a person who is past sixty, past sixty-five perhaps, to have typhoid is not such a joke. He had a very heavy physical frame, and was bedridden. If doctors went to see Him, He enquired about the doctors' welfare, and if the doctor said "How are you Swami?" - "Oh, wonderful." Joking, laughing. The doctor had to pinch himself to remind himself that He was a patient! One day, He wanted to come out of his bedroom. He said, "How long am I going to be here? I want to have a look at the Himalayas, I want to have a look at the Ganges." So, hanging on to two of us, He came out. We lowered Him into a very low easy chair which He liked very much and which He used to use a lot. For about half an hour, He sat there, talking to people, and once he was there, bliss was radiating from Him. There was no thought that He was a typhoid patient. Then came the time when He said, "Alright, let's get up and go." He propped Himself up, and suddenly collapsed into the chair. He started laughing, "The legs, they have lost their strength. Come on, pull me up please." Even then there was laughter, there was joy, there was delight. You and I might even panic.

On another occasion, He had lumbago. When He went to His office, He had to climb a flight of very steep steps, which normally He could do very easily. But only during that period, He used to use a long stick to climb. One day, He propped Himself up with the stick, and then He gave it to somebody else, and started crawling on all fours, like a small child. Once at the top, He looked around and said: "Huh, today it was difficult. Well, come up like this." Even that was a joke, even that was something to laugh about.

So, 'gatavyathah' - from him all sorrow has departed. God is bliss, and one who has entered his entire being into that God, has no choice but to be blissful. Pain may come to the body and go away - we will discuss that in a few minutes.

yo na hrsyate na dvesti na socati na kanksati sukhastubhapanityagi bhaktiman yah sa me priyah (XII:17)

Yo na hrsyate na dvesti - one who is not unduly elated. Harsa - could also mean laughing, joking, indulging in pleasantries; but, again, there is a slight distinction. There is joy which comes from sense contact. I see a friend of mine, I touch a friend of mine, I hear a friend of mine, and I am happy. This happiness is something which is derived from the awareness of another. Krishna has already told us that this is a dangerous thing. If you feel that your happiness depends upon others, you are asking for unhappiness. The moment they go, what is going to happen? You will be unhappy, miserable.

There is another happiness which comes from within. Within you, because you are in God. You are a little cloth bag, filled with fresh water, and that little bag is lowered into the ocean. Now there is ocean water inside, ocean water outside.

That is it. That bliss, which arises within you, and which surrounds you, is something different. It is not dependent upon anything. It is natural to you. It does not arise, and it does not cease. The other happiness that arises from contact with others must have an end, but that which does not arise has no end either. Because you are in God, He is in you. There is an inseparable relationship here.

yo na hrsyati (XII:17)

Here is a devotee who is totally immersed in God, he is not elated by sense contacts; 'na dvesti' - he doesn't hate anyone, he doesn't dislike anyone; 'na socati na kanksati' - he doesn't experience grief. When do you experience grief? When an object of pleasure is got, and then it leaves you. When your father or mother or your wife or your husband or your child is lost. "I've lost my child, I have lost my husband" - they say it as though they have lost their purse. It is a sort of possession. It is that sense of possession that creates the sense of loss, and the sense of grief. Right? It's a procession: first there is a sense of possession, and then there is a sense of loss, and then there is grief. If you don't have the sense of possession in the first place, you have no grief.

This is another affirmation, which the sannyasi takes on the day that he enters the Holy Order: "I don't belong to anyone and no-one belongs to me." This means something quite different from what it sounds superficially. I don't belong to anyone, no-one belongs to me, because all of us together belong to Him, are in Him, one in Him. Since we are one in Him, we all belong to Him, so that there is no dependence one upon the other on this plane of diversity. This dependence is illusory.

So, 'na socatii na kanksati' - 'he doesn't grieve and he doesn't desire anything', knowing that all desires and needs are already fulfilled. What I need today has already been provided. It's a very obvious truth, but unfortunately we miss it. Whatever you had for your dinner this evening was produced years ago, especially in these days of storing - wholesalers and retailers and supermarkets. The grain that went into your stomach today was really produced by nature, a couple of years ago, just for you. If it had not been just for you, you could not have been able to eat it. Knowing your need, nature or God had already made it available. Such is the divine glory.

subhasubhaparityagi bhahtiman yah sa me priyah (XII:17)
'To him there is neither good nor not good';

neither auspicious nor inauspicious. It's an extremely tricky state, which one cannot intellectualise. The intellect divides; the intellect creates an individuality, an independent entity called the 'I', and then gets caught. It then divides the whole world into 'this is good, this is not good', 'this is pleasant, this is unpleasant', 'this is happiness, this is misery', and all that. When the intellect comes to an end, or when the intellect has been entered into the divine, into God, then there is no such thing.

In the divided state, you may have to discriminate. You may have to abandon what is evil, and resort to what is good. There is another qualification that is mentioned in a future verse - contentment. The good person is contented. From evil you graduate to good, and when you are truly good, truly contented, you don't even desire the extra 'o' in 'good'; it drops away and you become God. Once you are in Him, there is no such thing called good and evil, there is no such thing called auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, because when you turn round, you see God and God alone everywhere - "O adorable Lord of Mercy and Love, Thou art omnipresent".

I thought, in my state of immaturity, that there is evil. I am sorry that such a thought arises in me, because suddenly there is pollution in me. This thought doesn't enter into the heart of the devotee who is completely merged in God, saturated by His presence, who has surrendered his whole being to God.

Symbolically, this is done in Indian temples, and especially when a deity is taken in procession. You go round the temple every day, and prostrate from in front of the temple, and prostrate from behind the temple. When the deity is taken in procession, you bow down from the front, you go round and bow down from behind. God doesn't have only one side, the side which I call good, or beautiful, or auspicious. Everything is God, everything is pervaded by God. If there is evil, if something appears to be evil, that is His business, not mine.

Sanvarambhaparityagi - one who has abandoned all beginnings. 'Arambha' is a beginning, that is: one who does not initiate an action, one who does not begin an undertaking. The devotee does not start anything. What does that mean? Don't we do so many things every day which seem to be beginnings? So, here again, one has to be watchful within oneself. Does the action spring from me, or is it a response of the divine to a need that arises in the divine?

Where does action take place? What is the source of action? The source of action is not the ego, not the mind, not the emotion, but the source of action is always beyond all these. Even when you think you are selfish, you are unselfish, because you cannot do anything which is contrary to the divine will. Is that right? You have got your quotation in the Bible: 'But for His will even a sparrow will not fall.' Even a sparrow will not fall without His will.

So, action springs from God all the time. But, as the action flows from the divine source, the ego springs up and owns it. "I am doing this". If you are such an author of an action, can you right at this moment generate an action with your own mind? You are peaceful, quite calm, happy now. Can you suddenly feel angry, now? You cannot do it. This merely goes to show that, even when actions flow from you, they flow from somewhere else. Action always springs from life, and life belongs to God. As simple as that. So, one who has entered his whole being into the divine, does not initiate action. The action is initiated by God Himself, either from within, or through the instrumentality of others. I believe Ramana Maharishi used to explain it, saying that the sage does not initiate an

action of his own, but acts in response to others.

samah satrau ca mitre ca tatha manapamanayoh sitosnasukhaduhkhesu samah sangavivarjitah
(XII-18)
tulyanindastutir mauni samtusto yena kenacit aniketah sthiramatir bhaktiman me priyo
narah (XII-19)

Language is so inadequate, such a bad instrument of communication, that we have to understand the spirit behind these words. 'Samah satrau ca mitre ca' - 'this devotee is the same to friend and foe'. You have a parallel in the Bible: 'love your enemy'. How can I love my enemy? If I treat you as my enemy, I already do not love you. If I can see an enemy in you, that love has been lost, tainted, polluted. And, telling myself, or telling you that, though you are my enemy, still I love you, there is an extra pollution, called vanity. Yet, here a similar expression occurs: 'samah satrau ca mitre ca' - even if that person is a 'satrau', an enemy, this bhakta, this devotee, is even minded. Even if others regard themselves as his friend or as his enemy, to him they are all the same. The very notion of enmity does not arise in him. If it arises, there is pollution already, there is hatred, there is dislike, whether it is expressed or unexpressed, and such a heart is not full of love, which is God. In that heart, there is an imperfection. The heart which has been entered into God, offered to God, does not know enmity.

Such a one was Gurudev. Take one simple example: there were people who didn't like his use of the English language. Living in the Himalayas, North India, why does this swami speak English, write in English, publish books in English? Once in 1953, another swami had come to attend the Parliament of Religions convened by Gurudev. He had come prepared to blow the whole thing up, and he was also on the platform, fidgeting. He had asked the organiser for some time to speak, and the organiser probably sensed that there was some trouble; so, he told him the programme was full up. They were arguing in one corner of the platform. Gurudev noticed it, and asked them, "What is this?" "He wants to speak, Swamiji, but the programme is full." "It doesn't matter, come, talk. I'll reduce my share." So, this great swami got up, and for the next ten minutes or so there was fire, venom. He spoke in very high-flown Hindi, but still Gurudev understood it. He didn't speak of parliament, he didn't speak of any religion. He said, "There is too much of English here, this is India, Hindi is our national language. We are all sannyasis, sannyasis should not speak English." And Gurudev was looking at him, smiling, "If you want to say so, say so." After ten minutes, he made him sit down. There was absolutely no change in Gurudev's face, in that radiance, in that smile, in that happiness.

tatha manapamanayoh (XII:19)

'Even so, honour and dishonour' - they are both the same. People express their opinions concerning the devotee. What has he got to do with it? Someone says he is a good man and someone else says he is a bad man. This is one sort of opinion, and that is another sort of opinion. What has he got to do with it? Why shouldn't God himself express that opinion through one person, and why shouldn't the same God express another opinion through somebody else? He might even

regard the critic as not only entitled to his opinion, in the ordinary sense of the expression, but as the Lord Himself making this possible. If the question 'why does God allow this?' arises, there is the answer: it is for my evolution, for my correction; if the question doesn't arise at all, even that is welcomed as divine grace.

sitosnasukhaduhkhesu samah sangavivarjitah (XII:18)
'In heat and cold also, he is the same'.

Does it mean that the yogi or the jnani or the devotee walks about naked in ice or through fire, not caring? I don't know if this is possible, but maybe such an interpretation exists. Having lived with Gurudev, there seems to be a different meaning to this. The meaning seems to be that the body, when it feels cold, clothes itself, and the body, when it feels hot, throws off the woollen jerseys, and probably picks up a fan and fans itself; but the inner attitude is the same. I am sure this is not very easy to appreciate, because to us, the body and the consciousness within are so completely and thoroughly confused, that we don't really understand this. One has to see that. When the weather got cold, you looked at Swami Sivananda's face, it was still the same. We talk only of the freezing cold, he never bothered about all that. That freezing became God for the time being. If the weather changed from heat to cold, he just picked up the overcoat, put it on, and carried on with the same job as if nothing happened. When suddenly the weather turned warm, he took off the coat and carried on the same work as if nothing happened. This is the beauty. The inner feeling, the bhavana at heart, was the same, unaffected, but outwardly the body goes on adjusting to all this, let it. Can you do all this without fretting and fuming and making that an issue, a reality?

Again - maybe because I am Swami Sivananda's disciple, please don't think I am criticising anybody else, the person who says, "Oh no, I am not affected by heat and cold. Look, I can bear below freezing temperature without clothes and I can stand in fire without fanning myself." may be a great yogi, but he may also be an egotist. Here, the devotee having completely lost the ego in the cosmic being, lives a completely and totally natural life.

tulyanindastutir mauni (XII :19)
'Whether he is praised or whether he is insulted, he remains the same, indifferent to it'.

'Mauni' - he is silent, except when he is asked to speak.

samtusto yena kenacit (XII :19)
'There is great contentment'.

Whatever happens, whatever is given, whatever is provided, it's all from God; and he who knows this, he is completely and totally contented.

aniketah sthiramatir (XII:19)

There is a little bit of word play here. 'Aniketah' is one who has no home, a

wanderer - you call him nomad. Nomad is just no mad - the wanderer is not mad. Only one who is stuck somewhere can be mad. One who goes on wandering from place to place, he is nomad. We don't call him mad. Though he is wandering, his mind, 'mati', his heart is firm. He is well placed, well rooted, well established. You see the fun here? He seems to be wandering, but his heart is well established; whereas people who are very established physically, their heart is wandering. 'Aniketah' can also mean one who has no home, the homeless. This reminds me of the buddhistic tradition of going into the homeless state. The same thing is mentioned even in one of the Upanishads, where Yajnavalkya says, "I am going into the homeless state."

What is that homelessness? We are all in a home somewhere or the other. Whether you call it an ashram or a devotee's house, or a friend's house, or a stranger's house, or an hotel, you are in a home. What is this homelessness - 'aniketah'? One who does not regard the world as his home. One who does not regard even the body as his home. One who is not confined by anything in this world, in this universe, and, by a little extension, one whose consciousness is not conditioned, 'sthiramati'. It is firmly rooted in this unconditioned state; but it refuses to be conditioned by any surrounding, whether it is of the body, or the environment, or a house, or some kind of ideological conditioning.

aniketah sthiramatir bhaktiman me priyo narah (XII:19)
 'Such a devotee is extremely dear to me', says Krishna.
 ye tu dharmyamrtam idam yathoktam paryuasate sraddadhana matparama bhaktas te 'tiva me priyah (XII:20)

The concluding verse. He who contemplates this 'dharmyamrtam' - nectarine dharma, 'sraddadhana' - with faith, 'matparama' - totally devoted to me, 'bhaktas te tiva me priyah' - such devotees are extremely dear to me. What does it mean? The 'upasate' means to be devoted, to worship, to adore, to sit near, to contemplate. He who contemplates the teaching that has been given here, he is extremely dear to me. Not contemplates intellectually, but 'upasate' - sit close to it. Sit close to it, so that you are all the time looking at it, you are all the time observing it, you are all the time absorbing the teaching.

'Upasate' also occurred earlier on in the same chapter:

mayy avesya mano ye mam nityayukta apasate (XII:2)

So, there it starts, and here it ends. He who has entered his whole being into Me, sitting close to me as it were. Which means that the person sitting next to you is God. Treat your neighbour not as yourself, but treat your neighbour as God. You look at him, God, and he looks at me, and sees it's God. Can we live in this consciousness that I am constantly sitting near God? That in front, behind, to the right, to the left, above, below, I am completely surrounded by God, his being totally pervades the entire universe? One who is able to enter into the spirit of this teaching, one who is able to live this teaching, who has supreme faith in God, and who is totally devoted to God, 'he indeed is extremely dear to me'.

These qualities and qualifications manifest in that person who is able really and

truly to enter his whole being into God, who surrenders himself into God, and lives the divine life. Such a one was Gurudev Swami Sivananda. I am sure that, though you have heard all this, it is perhaps easy to understand it as a possibility only when one sees a person such as Gurudev, and lives at the Feet of a great devotee of God, who is divine, who is an avatar of God, an incarnation of God. Only when one lives there, and beholds the divine in action, does all this knowledge that is given to us in the Bhagavad Gita make real sense.