

# ‘ऽमगागपुमेऽ पुठपुम



‘ऽमगाग, पेद्यारुमाऽमगागदेस



# The Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9 Sannyas Yoga

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The Bhagavad Gita  
Chapter 9  
Sannyas Yoga

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## 1. One

The only reason why the ninth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is chosen today is that the speaker is familiar with that particular text. The message in one text is non-different from any other text in the world - Gita, Bible, Koran, Dhamapada, Yoga Vasishtha, Torah - and one can take any text one is familiar with.

If one listens to what goes on without what has been beautifully called 'the internal dialogue' - agreeing or disagreeing, then it is possible for each one of us to discover that the same thing could be said on the basis of the Gita, the Bible, the Koran, the Dhamapada, the Torah, or the Yoga Vasishtha. That has to be very clearly understood. There is no comparison here; we are not even thinking of a difference. The message is essentially the same. It depends upon our receptivity, and the receptivity precludes internal dialogue, or agreeing, or disagreeing with what is being said.

One important consideration may be placed right here. I wonder if you realise something very simple. I am talking, you are listening. That is an understatement or oversimplification of the fact. When I am talking, as a background, something else is going on within me. I am watching to see if most of you are receptive, restive, or dull and sleepy. That is what I am supposed to do, in any case. When I say you are listening, you are not merely listening. If you observe yourself, as I am observing myself, you notice that at times you agree, "Ah that is right"; at times you do not agree, "That is not right"; at times perhaps you are violently reacting within yourself, "Ah, that is rubbish", or "Ah, wonderful". All these things go on within you while you are listening, and therefore you are not listening properly. Because of this internal dialogue, you are unable to listen properly; and because of all this that goes within me, it is possible that the expression is interfered with, it is not spontaneous. These two possibilities exist. How do I avoid both of these?

How do I avoid the consideration of whether your expression shows that you are appreciative or critical? And how do you, for your part, avoid this internal dialogue of agreeing or disagreeing, appreciating or depreciating? By a very simple perception of a simple truth, which is - that what I am saying is probably irrelevant to you, of no use to you at all. It is how you respond, or what happens within you, that is of value to you. You can see it within yourself - if something someone said has been of tremendous use to you, you will remember every word. If you do not remember it, it shows that it was totally irrelevant and useless. If you are a psychologist, you will have studied this. The mind has selective memory, it does not remember everything. And, on what basis is the selection made? On what I am interested in.

So, it is not what is presented to me that matters, it is what I am interested in, how I react, how I respond, that matters. In the same way - without appearing to be vain or boastful, your opinion either way is of no use to me, no value to me at all. What goes on within me is all that is of value to me. When this simple fact is recognised, then anxiety on the part of the speaker drops away, and the internal

dialogue on the part of the listener stops.

As each thought travels and enters my ear, I am merely trying to see if I am able to respond. In very simple words, does it click or not. If it clicks, let it be there. If it does not click, nothing more need be said or done about it. If we listen in this fashion, it is possible for us to engage in a fruitful encounter, where the text taken is of no great importance, and how the discussion develops is also of no great importance.

The text is chapter nine of the Bhagavad Gita. Most of the background of the Bhagavad Gita does not have relevance to us now; but one factor might be useful. The Bhagavad Gita is a teaching, and the context of the teaching is the context of our life, the battlefield. Whether we like it or not, our life is a battlefield. We may all be pacifists, devoted to non-violence - ahimsa, we may all be practising cosmic love, we may all be filled with love, radiating love, broadcasting love, and every morning we may sit together and pray, "May love prevail on earth, may peace prevail on earth". All that you need to do is to tune into the radio news in the morning, or pick up the newspaper a little later in the day, to see that in the meantime millions of others have been praying differently. "May there be war, may there be more trouble, may we succeed." They do not pray like us - they pray very vigorously, manufacturing guns and bombs. So, even if we are pacifists and non-violent people devoted to love, to God, to peace, we are living in a world which is full of conflict.

I do not know if we have the psychic or the spiritual power to stop all this conflict. When you study the Bhagavad Gita, it looks as though even that is beyond our powers, it looks as though even God has been unable to stop this conflict. Even the very first couple of chapters in the Bible contain violence - brother killing brother. So, this violence and conflict have been in the world from the dawn of creation; and, how long they will last, we do not know. We are living in a world which is full of conflict. That is where the Bhagavad Gita begins.

Is it possible to live an intelligent life, a wise life, a life free from conflict, in a world full of conflict? How do we do that? I am not going to say that, just because the world is full of conflict, I am going to become part of it, and I am not going to say that, since the world is full of conflict, I am going to resist it, fight it. That is conflict too! In a conflict situation, if I am engulfed by that conflict, what do I do?

This "What do I do?" is a risky question. That is the question that the student, known as Arjuna in this context, asked Krishna: "What must I do? Must I fight, or must I not fight?" Krishna says: "That is not the problem." The problem is not whether I should do this or that, because if that conflict is also in you, whatever you do, in a state of conflict, may be conflict. "If he comes to threaten me, and wants to fight with me, what must I do?" is an absurd question. If I also roll up my sleeves to stop him from quarrelling with me, it flares up! If I say, "Alright my brother, please beat me up as much as you like and I will lie down", he is going to do just that! I have not stopped it. If I resist, I aggravate it, and if I yield, I am still

aggravating it. So, in such a situation, the relevant question is not "What must I do?" but, "Who am I? What is he? What is this world we are in?"

If I gain a right vision of the world and life here, then the right action follows automatically without any difficulty whatsoever. It is extremely simple. You are in the position of the surgeon or physician - he does not decide what he must do with a patient till he has examined the patient. It is the examination of the patient, and the correct understanding of the problem itself, that decides the action. The action follows.

So, we have been asking the wrong question all the time: "What must I do?" The relevant question is, "What is the situation? What am I? What is this world?" When this right understanding arises, the right understanding itself is the action. For instance, when you are running across the road, and your shoe slips from your foot, you hesitate for a moment - you want to pick up that shoe - then you see a car hurtling along. You do not look at that car and think, "Now, ah it is coming 85 degrees towards me. What must I do now?" The very sight of the car becomes the action. You leave the shoe alone and run! Another shoe can be bought, but not another life. So, instead of wasting time and life - which mean the same thing, figuring out what I must do in this situation, it is wiser to apprehend the situation itself, to understand life itself, to understand me as part of this life.

When the teacher, Krishna, was asked, "What must I do?", he said, "We shall think about that later. First understand what you are, who you are, what the world is in truth, and let that understanding act".

That is the background story. The teaching that emanated from Krishna on that occasion is what is known as the Bhagavad Gita. The ninth chapter is very interesting. Krishna says:

idam tu te guhyatamam pravaksyamy anasuyave jnanam vijnanasahitam yaj jnatva moksyase  
'subhat (IX:1)

"I declare this to you. It is a great secret." Anasuyave - "in your heart there is no jealousy or envy", which means that you are not comparing yourself to others, considering yourself superior or inferior. You have a pure heart, a steady heart. And this knowledge which I am going to impart to you is guhyatamam - the supreme secret. Jnanam vijnanasahitam - it is knowledge, proven wisdom - 'vijnana' also means 'scientific'. If you understand this wisdom, if this wisdom becomes integrated into you, if it becomes the living truth in you, then you will be freed from asubhut - all that is inauspicious, unholy - call it evil, evil action, or evil destiny.

I was reading the teachings of the Buddha, where on one occasion he is said to have exalted one of his disciples. He used a very beautiful expression, "He is my beloved son". That reminds you of the Bible, does it not? What is even more interesting, the Buddha said, "He was born of my mouth". What does it mean? It means that his spirit has assimilated what issued from the Buddha's mouth. He

has assimilated the teaching. "He is my son, born of my mouth" - is not that a beautiful expression?

A similar expression is found in the Bhagavatam, a Hindu scripture. Here it is said that four great sages were born of the mind of Brahma, the creator. What do you mean by 'mind of Brahma'? Did they just shoot out of his head? It means, they had thoroughly assimilated the wisdom of the creator. In the same way one has to understand the biblical saying, "This is the Son of God" - which means he has thoroughly assimilated the spirit of God, and has become the living truth. The truth that is expressed by the teacher enters into the student - the disciple, and is assimilated to such an extent that that truth becomes the living He. It is no longer a set of words. So, Krishna says, "I am imparting this teaching to you. If you assimilate it, you will be instantly freed from all evil."

rajavidya rajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam pratyakfavagamam dharmnyam susukham kartum avyayam (IX:2)

This is like american propoganda. Right from the beginning, there is a flourish. Rajavidya - this a supreme kingly science; rajaguhyam - extremely secret, it is a secret known only to the best among men, the kings, the rajahs. Pavitram - holy; uttamam - supreme, the greatest. "What I am going to tell you is the greatest." Advertisement! Pratyaksavagamam - I am not going to tell you something which is a sort of future possibility, but something which you can see right in front of you, immediately. Dharmnyam - it is something which promotes social solidarity, human weal, and your own peace of mind, your own happiness, your own prosperity. Susukam kartum avyayam - it is easy, and once you get into this, its fruits are endless, infinite, inexhaustible.

Ah, now I am interested! First of all, if somebody says, "It is secret", you become immediately interested, whatever it is - whether it is relevant to our life or not. There is some magic in that word 'secret'. I think it applies to all of us. This is a reason why the yogis keep a mantra secret. That way, there is a tendency to cherish it, to value it. Each one thinks his is special, secretly imparted by the Guru. In some initiation ceremonies with an elaborate build up, the Guru is supposed to impart the mantra in great secret in your right ear. The Guru is supposed to whisper the mantra as softly as He can, so you strain to listen - and, at that moment, there is intense, tremendous, concentration. The simple trick of keeping it secret has all this value: it rouses your interest, promotes concentration, and makes you very keen to listen and to learn.

If you remember that this teaching took place on the battlefield, with everyone ready to let fly their missiles - probably there was a lot of noise, in order to win the attention of the disciple, Krishna says, "This is secret. Listen carefully. It is a kingly science."

One of the branches of yoga is called raja yoga. There are many explanations why. The meaning usually given is that it is supreme amongst yogas. It is a direct path, a royal road. It is a path which is straight, direct, clear, and broad. There are

no difficulties involved in it. Another explanation which I read in the Yoga Vasistha is that it is called raja yoga because rajahs practised it, not ordinary folk. It is only meant for a chosen few. This is another trick. Like 'secret', the word 'special' or 'chosen' also has a secret value. So, Krishna applies all that. Rajavidya - this only for the chosen few. Rajaguhya - it is a great secret. There are - or there were and perhaps there will always be - some devices, practices, and techniques, which are disgusting to normal sensibilities. I do not want to go into great details here. Krishna, perhaps aware that such practices prevailed even in those days, says, Pavitram - it is not a disgusting practice. There are no anti-social practices, there is no self-torture involved. Pavitram idam uttamam.

Pratyaksavagamam - the result is immediately seen. Once again, there have been schools of thought where one is lead to believe that you must suffer, suffer, suffer here, in order that when you leave this world and go somewhere else, you may enjoy heavenly bliss. There is a little bit of a trick in this. You tell me, "Swami, suffer, suffer, suffer in this world, and when you leave this world, you will be happy". But, I may not find you there! At your instigation, I have renounced even the normal pleasures of the world here - undergone endless suffering, imposed self-torture upon myself - if your promise was valid, and after leaving this world, I entered paradise, and enjoyed life forever and ever there, it is a good bargain! Twenty years of suffering, and then 20 billion years of bliss, is first class business. But, in case you are wrong, and after having subjected myself to all sorts of suffering and penance here for these 20 to 30 years, I go there and find it is worse there, I look around: "Where is the girl who signed the contract that gave me this promise?" You are not there!

Krishna says there is no such risk involved. I am not signing a contract for future fulfillment. Here and now - pratyaksavagamam. You practise this yoga, acquire this vision, know this secret, and immediately you see the result. Dharmyam - it is something which will promote social welfare, as also your own personal welfare. Susukham - it is extremely easy. Why is it so? Because it is not something which is done. There is difficulty only when you have to do something. Here, it is seeing more clearly. What is involved here is not doing at all - doing is secondary. Here, it is discarding, dropping, giving up wrong understanding, and gaining right understanding. Action follows understanding. It is so easy. It is easier than looking at an object sitting in front of you. That is another expression which is borrowed from the Yoga Vasistha, in which it says, "Attaining liberation, moksha, nirvana, is extremely easy. It is easier than crushing a flower that is placed on the palm of your hand, because here at least you need some effort. No effort is needed, no accessory is needed to see the truth, because it is self-luminous." Susukham kartum avyayam.

Once you have developed this right understanding, right view, right vision, then action flows from it endlessly, life flows from it endlessly.

The fruits from such understanding are endless, infinite, for ever and ever.

## 2. Two

Action is inherent in life. Life means constant action. That is why Krishna tells us.

na hi kascit ksanam api jatu tisthaty akarmakrt (III:5)

"Not even for a single moment can anyone remain inactive." This is not advice nor a commandment, but a simple statement of fact - that there is nothing in the universe that is absolutely dead and static. A car may move faster than a bullock cart, a plane may move faster than a car, a rocket may move faster than a plane; you and I may walk faster than a child, a child may walk faster than a snail - but everything is in motion. There is action everywhere, and so "Shall I do this or shall I not do anything?" is an absurd question.

What is the truth? What am I? Am I the world, or am I distinct and different from the world? If I am not the world, if you are not me, and you and I are not one, then I enter into a relationship - you are another, someone else - so, now I must find out what my relationship with you is. This is the problem. I must understand who or what 'I' is, and I must understand what 'you' or the world is. When this understanding arises, that itself is the right action.

We may say that right action follows right understanding, but even that is not really correct. Understanding itself is the action, because, action being natural, it is the right understanding that makes it right action. Wrong understanding is unable to alter or cancel the action, but imports a lot of confusion into it - so that you and I do what is inevitable; but, in the process, we suffer confusion, grief, sorrow, misery.

Krishna suggests that there is a tremendous, simple secret, which is immediately seen, which is instantly life transforming, and which bestows its fruits instantly - not in the other world or somewhere else. What is in the other world is here; what is here is in the other world, just as what is in me is in you. There is no factual difference between this life and the life to come. When you were six years old, you were struggling with some arithmetic problem - you could not easily add 156 and 244 - you were scratching your head because you might fail in your school test. That problem doesn't exist anymore. Now you have got property worth \$85,000, and you want to acquire some other property which is \$250,000, but the basic problem is still the same: adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing. So, the problem that seemed to be terribly important when you were six years old, now seems silly; but this problem is serious because, on the resolution of this, your whole life depends. That is exactly what you thought when you were six, when you couldn't add up those two figures! You were as much worried then about that little problem as you are now with this little problem; and when you leave this world and go somewhere else - I don't know where you'll go - you will have other problems, which will be as weighty or as 'lightly' as your present problems are. That is all.

All these considerations are irrelevant. Right understanding must be capable of solving our problems right now, not in another world. If I am making a fool of myself and a mess of my life, right understanding must get rid of that foolishness right now. Your foolishness, ignorance, or confusion, does not stand up to your intelligence, your wisdom. An example is given in some scriptures, particularly the Yoga Vasistha. A cave, which no one has entered until now, might have remained dark for hundreds of thousands of years. If you go into it and shine your flashlight, the darkness vanishes instantly. It doesn't stand and say "Oh no, I have been here for a hundred million years. Hang on to this flashlight for the next ten years and then I'll go ". That is the reason why the great mystics and philosophers say that your foolishness, confusion, bother, worry, and ignorance, are not real. It is light that is real, it is intelligence that is real, it is wisdom that is real, it is knowledge that is real - because light puts out darkness instantly. Darkness is not able to put out light, because light is the reality.

When the light of self knowledge (of right understanding) is brought in, the wrong understanding vanishes instantly, and therefore there is instant result - though it may not be quite accurate to call it a result. That which was, which has always been, and which was apparently submerged in wrong understanding, that reality is instantly revealed. And what is that reality?

maya tatam idam sarvam jagad avyaktamurtina matsthani sarvabhutani na ca'ham tesv  
avasthitah (IX:4)  
na ca matsthani bhutani pasya me yogam aisvaram bhutabhrn na ca bhutastho mama 'tma  
bhutabhavanah (IX:5)

These two verses sum up the tremendous secret that was promised to us. They also contain the quintessence of the message of the Yoga Vasistha, which is a voluminous scripture of 36,000 verses. In these two verses are contained a direct realisation of the truth, of the reality. As we go on with this discussion, you will see how the mind plays tricks, and creates concepts and images out of this. In order that we may be helped firstly in the destruction of those images, and then secondly in the non-construction of further images, there are a few self-contradictory statements even in these two verses. The self-contradictory statements were not left there by mistake, but deliberately put there in order that our minds may not construct images or concepts from these words, and thus veil the truth. Any concept veils the truth. The moment you look at this person sitting here and say, "Ah! that's the Swami", you have lost the truth. You are not looking at the truth any more, you have built an image within yourself of what you are seeing and, from then on, you are looking at the image, not at the reality.

We have not trained ourselves in the understanding of the reality, the enquiry into the reality, the search for reality, in finding or discovering the reality. We are fond of images, of memories. Somehow we think it is more convenient to live with those memories or concepts. I am reminded of a quip by Bernard Shaw. It seems someone asked him, "Mr Shaw, who do you think is the wisest man in the world?" He replied, "My tailor, because he takes my measurement every time I go

to him. Others adhere to their past estimation of me. So far as they are concerned, I am a well-known quantity." They don't measure anew. That is what happens to us. You may have been rude to me once upon a time when you had a headache. That is imprinted on my mind, it is my measure of you. I think you are a rude man. You might have in the meantime become a Buddha, but when you come back to see me again, I will say, "Ha! He insulted me 25 years ago". I don't use the tape again, those old measurements persist. Why do we do this? Because we think that there is an advantage in it. It makes life easier. If I have to look at you afresh as if I have never seen you before, and if I have to come into a fresh relationship with you now, it's all a bother. Instead, as soon as I see you, I bring the past measurement up in my consciousness, and see that - which means, I am not seeing you at all!

We are scared of working in a field of non-concepts. We love these concepts, we love these psychological images which we have formed of one another, ourselves and the world - and that is the cause of our unhappiness. In regard to oneself, as the body grows older, structural changes take place in the body. I am not suggesting that it may not be as efficient now as it was before - it is as efficient now as it has to be. When I begin to think "I am 57, the body is not as efficient and as energetic as it was 30 years ago", already I am running into trouble, sorrow, disappointment, despair. I have the measurement of a young man of 27, of what he was doing, how he was able to climb mountains, to jump and dance and do all sorts of things. And, with that measurement, I measure this body 30 years later, and feel unhappy about it, or push it and ask for trouble. And yet somehow we do not see this, and we cling to those images, in the false idea or notion that, to build those images in the first place, and to live with them, is more convenient, makes life easier.

In order that we may not carry on committing this mistake again and again and again, Krishna introduces what on the surface appear to be contradictory statements; so, one has to be very cautious in understanding these two verses.

*maya tatam idam sarvam jagad avyaktamurtina (IX:4)*

I will give you the literal translation. "Everything here is pervaded by me, who is unperceived." Who is the 'me' here? Krishna said - and theology has it - that Krishna was an incarnation of God. There are millions of people who are convinced that the 'me' there, refers to Krishna - God, who is Krishna. If that is alright with you, it is alright with me, because I find no problem in it. Devotees of Krishna might say that it is Krishna who pervades the entire universe; there may be some devout Catholics here who might believe that it is Christ who pervades the entire universe; someone might say that it is Chit-Shakti; Vasistha might say that it is the infinite consciousness - and there is absolutely nothing wrong with any of these. I am merely suggesting one more possibility: "The entire universe is pervaded by 'me', who am unmanifest." Why not 'me'? What is wrong with the 'me', being exactly the 'me'? Not the 'me' that is manifest and gross - that is: not the body, not the life principle in the body, nor the thoughts and feelings, because

I am aware of this body, of this life pulsating in me, of my thoughts and feelings - even they are gross. Jagad avyaktamurtina - "I am the extremely subtle, imperceptible being" - that me. That me is what pervades all beings in the entire universe. "All beings in the universe are me". It is possible; but it is conventional to interpret the 'me' here to mean God.

What is God? It is a big problem. God is abc, xyz, dna, or some biological term. It only means "I don't know". Abc means I don't know, xyz means I don't know, God means I don't know. I don't know what it is, because it is so subtle that it cannot be known as a concept, or as an object of comprehension. When it is turned into an object of comprehension or understanding, it becomes gross, it becomes an image. If you have a concept in your mind, that is already an image. He who is devoted to that concept, is as good or as bad as the cranky idolator. There is no difference.

What is it that pervades the entire universe, remaining so subtle that it is unperceived even by the keenest intellect? How do you answer this question? You might say 'God', but there is a simpler answer to that question: "That which pervades the entire universe, is what pervades the entire universe". I once heard a talk by a brilliant Indian nuclear scientist. He was a beautiful soul and a great devotee. He said, "People often ask for proof of the existence of God, and want to know what God is. I am puzzled. If I am asked "What is electricity?", I would in all honesty answer, "Electricity is electricity". Paraphrasing it with a few other words leads you nowhere. It is too subtle. When such is the problem even with a thing like electricity, how are we going to explain what this extremely subtle omnipresent, all pervading reality is?"

You know what 'explain' means, don't you? Plain means clear. It is plain, it is very clear to me. Explain - I push it out. Even if I say 'It is clear to me', I am already making it a concept and an object. And when I explain it - push it out of me - it definitely becomes a gross concept. So, anything that is explained is - to use a simple word - rubbish.

There was a great saint in India called Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He used to say that God is real, but all philosophies concerning God are polluted. I think I must explain this word 'polluted' to you. In India, if I bite an apple, I don't give it to you. That apple is considered polluted - in relation to you, not me. If I take a spoonful of soup from my bowl and it is tasty, I don't say, "Come on, have a sip". That is considered not right, because that bowl of soup, into which I have dipped the spoon which has come into contact with my mouth, is already polluted by me. So, it is good only for me, not for you. Anything which comes out of my mouth is unfit for someone else's consumption. Ramakrishna said, "All philosophies have come out of some person's mouth; so, they are no good for anyone else's consumption". It is so subtle.

maya tatam idam sarvam jagad avyaktamurtina matsthani sarvabhutani na ca 'ham tesv  
avasthitah (IX:4)

This principle called God - again polluted by being called God - pervades all beings. "All beings exist in me, but I am not in them." There are several statements in the Bhagavad Gita where Krishna himself says, "I am seated in the hearts of all beings" - aham atmu gudakesa sarvabhutasaya sthitah. Here, there is a direct contradiction - matsthani sarvabhutani na ca 'ham tesv avasthitah - "All beings exist in me." Being the infinite, I contain everything - na ca 'ham tesv avasthitah - "but I don't dwell in them." Everything exists in the infinite, but it doesn't exist in anything.

There is a humorous statement in the vedic mantra - sa bhumim visvata vrtva atyatisthaddasangulam - "What supreme being pervades the entire universe and extends beyond it for ten inches." How do you measure? "I know that God pervades the entire universe, and extends on all sides by ten inches. If you don't believe it, prove me wrong." Again, it is not as if there is one particular entity or being called God that pervades the entire universe, in whom all beings exist; but that which pervades the entire universe, that which is infinite, in whom all beings exist, that is God.

There is a beautiful book called "The Lives of a Cell", where the author, a scientist, echoes some of these thoughts. He says that, in every cell in your own physical body, there are living organisms that are seemingly totally independent of one another, and of the totality of the organism. It is strange, but when you die, the whole lot dies. And he says, "When one observes this phenomenon biologically, one wonders if it is not possible, similarly, that the earth is nothing more than a cell in another greater body, greater being." Worlds within worlds, within worlds, within worlds. All these cells exist in that single body and, in a similar way, all beings exist in me, in God - na ca 'ham tesv avasthitah - "All beings dwell in me, but I do not dwell in them". 'I' - here refers to God - can be very simply translated and interpreted: all the cells and all the organs of that body dwell in the lady sitting over there, but she is not in them. Which means I am infinite, and I cannot be contained in any of these finite entities.

na ca matsthani bhutani pasya me yogam aisvaram bhutabhrn na ca bhutastho mama 'tma bhutabhavanah (IX:5)

In the second line of the fourth verse, Krishna says, "All beings exist in me", and, in the first line of the fifth verse, he says - na ca matsthani bhutani pasya me yoga aisvaram - "They don't exist in me either. Look at this grand mystery." What does it mean - I am the infinite. All beings exist in me, I don't exist in them. They don't exist in me either. How beautiful it is! They don't exist in me as diverse beings, as if they are independent - just as we cannot say that all these various organs of the body are in me. If you are caught in that absurdity, there is a Buddhist who had an answer for you: What is this? Nose. Take it away. What are these? Ears. Take them away. Mouth? Put that away. Arms? Throw them away. Etc. Then he says, at the end of it, "Where is the body?!" The organs are not contained in the body.

No, these beings are not in me; and I am not in them. bhutabhrn na ca

bhustastho mama 'tma bhutabhavanah - "Because I am, all these exist. I uphold all these beings." Because God exists, the entire universe exists - all these billions of infinite creatures exist because of him, just as all these billions of cells in the body exist because the body exists. The relationship is one of non-duality. It is not as though all these cells exist, and therefore the body exists; it is not as though the body exists, and therefore all these cells exist - there is only a verbal distinction between the two.

There is one Upanishad where the self is described in an elaborate way. There is the physical body, and within the physical body is the life force, and within that is the mind. Is it like an onion, one layer within the other? The body is there; within that, is there a thing called life force, and within that, is there another thing called mind? No. Every cell of the body has life force, and in every cell of the body there is awareness. The body is there, the life force fills the body, and the awareness fills the entire body and the life force. It is very much like the anatomy of our bodies. There are no parts in which there are no nerves or blood supply at all, otherwise you would wither away! Every cell in the body is supplied with blood. In the same way, when we say, "God fills the entire universe", it is not as if he is sitting as some kind of a being in everybody. He is the one that pervades all, and yet as the infinite. We all do not exist in him as diverse beings. When you look at me, you see me as one body, one person, you are not seeing a hundred thousand billion cells dancing around. So, the reality being the infinite, the diversity is something created by your mind. It is not there.

Again you can go back to the analogy of the ocean. When you are watching the ocean, you are watching the whole ocean. It is the mind which has been trained in that fashion that sees waves as something different from the ocean. Here I am emphasising the expression 'the mind which has been trained in that fashion', because, if you have not been taught when you were young that these are waves that rise on the ocean, you would never recognise them as waves. I know of people who had reached adulthood without seeing the ocean. One swami who had never been outside North India, was with us when Swami Sivananda went to the south on an All-India tour. I couldn't believe that a person could get so excited looking at the sea. He was almost running amok. He was not a teenager, but a mature man of about 30. He said, "Look at how the water comes up like that!" He was not aware of waves as waves. He merely saw the ocean, and the ocean was alive to him. There is neither the ocean, nor the waves, nor the ripples, nor the currents - just water.

Here Krishna tells us similarly, "God alone exists". When you become aware of this diversity you are told, "Yes, this diversity exists in God." Then, to prevent the danger of your adoring God in each other in a crazy way, saying "Yes, I am adoring God in you. You are my God," you are told that God does not exist in any of them. The mind can create all sorts of mental images which act as blocks to the truth. In order to prevent such misconceptions arising, Krishna says, "No, I don't dwell in any of them". So, we think: "Alright, if that is so, if all these beings exist in you, then in and through them I will worship you." No, no, no. They don't exist

in God as 'they' - as these diverse beings, human beings, subhuman beings, trees, plants, stones. These divisions are created by the conditioned mind. Just as waves are seen only by a mind trained in that way, these diverse beings are seen as diverse beings only by a mind which has been conditioned in that manner, and which then rationalises itself by saying, "Yes these are diverse beings and these diverse beings exist in God, or God exists in them". Instead of rationalisation, we should negate all this, and endeavour to see the truth, to realise the truth as it is.

### 3. Three

When we discuss the origin and the nature of the world, and possibly a creator - a God - in relation to this world, an important consideration must be borne in mind. We should avoid the temptation of thinking that the world is out there, outside of me, so that all the problems are flowing into us from the world. We are miserable because of the outside world; and therefore, we need somebody from outside to make us happy. We fell from grace because of a temptation that came from outside; and, in order to regain that foothold on grace, we need someone from outside to help us out of this. When we think of the world, we realize we are an integral part of it. What is even more interesting and important, is the realization that there is perhaps not one set, crystallised, solid thing, called the world; but there are perhaps worlds within worlds, universes within universes.

In the Yoga Vasistha, we are given a beautiful vision - not a picture, nor a description - only a vision. If you have a huge block of uncut marble and you are a sculptor, you look at the marble and say, "Ah! It would be lovely to carve out a nice three foot high statue of the Buddha". When you are about to commence work, the head of a buddhist monastery says, "I need not just one Buddha, but six of them". While you were contemplating that single Buddha in the marble, as a sculptor, you really saw that figure taking shape. But suddenly someone says, "I want six of them". All that you do is blink, and look at it again, and you can visualise one here one there, one here one there, one here one there. Where were these six Buddhas? All within that one Buddha. Then you start carving; and, because of one wrong stroke or defect in the marble, one Buddha gets his head chopped off. It doesn't matter, because, out of that one Buddha's head, you could carve another Buddha. You see the fun here? As and when the marble cracks and bits fall off, Buddhas emerge! How is this possible? What is the magic here? The magic is that marble is marble. All Buddhas are made of that same marble - smallness and bigness is merely a matter of opinion. Worlds within worlds - simply because all these are made of the same substance, there are no two substances in this universe. We may use words like chit-shakti - chit means consciousness, intelligence; shakti is power, energy - there is intelligence and there is energy, apparently two. We might speak of God and His nature as if they were separate - like water and liquidity; fire and burning; sun and shining. When have you seen the sun without light? You can't separate them; and yet you seem to think that the sun is an orb, and that shining is a quality that comes out of that sun. It is the mind, the intellect that seems to split these - seems to - it cannot.

So, when we are speaking of the world or the universe, we are not speaking of something outside of 'me'. The 'me' is part of that, an integral part of that. I don't like the word 'part' - but there is no other word you can use, because, to me, 'part' sounds like 'to part', to take it away. We are together now, in a few moments we shall part from one another. But the relationship of the individual with the universe is not like that; you cannot be parted. I cannot tear myself from this world, from this universe. What shall I do? Where shall I land? I can get out of this earth's orbit; but, wherever I land, it is still the same material universe. I am

an integral unit, part of it; part of it, without the possibility of my parting from it. Which means, I am it. Is that clear? Since I cannot be parted from it, I am it, it is me. It is in that sense that we endeavour to understand the origin and nature of the world; and, if it had a creator, of the creator.

In order that we may better understand the problems that, according to you, arise in our lives and, according to me, we create in our lives - the view point is different but the effect is the same, Krishna gives us a beautiful vision: that God or the Self - these two are synonyms - pervades the entire universe. God or the Self are both made of the same substance, there are no two substances. If there is a God, and if the visible existential universe could be considered His nature or creation - whatever word you want to use, and if there is a self, a conscious entity which somehow seems to be linked with this body - it may or may not be within it, that self is also an inseparably integral part of that nature, and if there is a nature in the universe - which one can see, feel and touch, the body is also made of exactly the same substance. The next time you are tempted to smell a rose, try to figure out who is smelling whom - maybe the rose is smelling you! If you touch my hand, who is touching who? I think I am touching you, and you think you are touching me, because we are both made of the same substance. When next you handle some manure, think of this. The hand that holds the manure, came from the manure; only it has been processed into the vegetable, and processed again into the flesh of the body. It is exactly the same. The difference is apparent, artificial, arbitrary.

There are not two fundamental substances in this universe. There is consciousness or intelligence, and that consciousness is energy - not blind energy, but conscious energy, energy which is filled with intelligence; and, this intelligence is not inert, but full, active, vibrant. That is Chit-Shakti. It is that Chit-Shakti that fills everything. But it doesn't fill everything, it holds everything; because, once you use the expression 'it fills everything', it looks as though there are many types of vessels into which this Chit-Shakti is poured, and that these vessels contain this Chit-Shakti - which is absurd! So, Krishna contradicts himself immediately, saying, "No, I am not contained in anything. I contain all this. No, even that's not right. Then I become a glass jar with numerous little pebbles dropped into it. No, because there is nothing other than me."

bhutabhrn na ca bhutastho mama 'tma bhutabhavanah (IX:5)

This is a riddle which one has to contemplate again and again and again. Bhavanah has any number of meanings: contemplation, meditation, an attitude, a deep feeling, an imagination, a concept, a notion. Mama 'tma bhutabhavanah "The divine", says Krishna, "contemplates beings, contemplates the elements, contemplates the infinite diversity of beings." 'Imagines' is a wrong word, but I am going to use 'imagines' in a different sense. The omnipresent infinite divine imagines the entire universe. Imagine in this context means the literal appearance of the word, not the literal meaning. If you look at that word 'imagine', you see two words in it already - 'image' and 'in'. To make sure that the

image is inside, they put the 'in' inside the 'image' - imagine. So, what is the relationship of this world, this universe, to this creator? It is an image which arises in him. I believe that is the literal translation of the first word in the Hebrew Bible, which is translated into 'in the beginning' in your English version. But I believe, according to Kabbalistic interpretation, that word could mean 'in the head'. Where is this universe that you are so deeply concerned about? "In the head of God, in God's own head, he created ..." - mama 'tma bhutabhavanah. I imagine this universe - 'I' here means God, and therefore, the universe arises in me. And, since I am made of only one substance, Chit-Shakti, consciousness - intelligence and power - energy, whatever is imagined, also becomes of the same substance. In the divine, in the infinite, in the universe, there are no two substances, only one substance. If there is a bowl of soup, whether you take it out of your left hand or right hand, or lick it with your tongue, or sniff it through your nose, only one substance will get into you. So, whether the infinite - or the Absolute Being or God - creates this universe, imagines this universe or thinks of this universe, that must also be of the same substance. Whatever arises in that universal intelligence, called God, must also be intelligent. Whatever arises in that universal cosmic power, called God, must also be endowed with energy, power. And so, everything in this universe is endowed with the same energy, with the same consciousness.

yatha 'kasathito nityam vayuh sarvatrago mahan tatha sarvani bhutani matsthani 'ty upadharaya (IX:6)

"If that is a bit difficult of comprehension", says Krishna, "I'll give you one example. It is like space, and the air that seems to fill this space." Air does not only mean this air that you are breathing here, but all gaseous substances throughout the universe. Some sort of gas is there throughout the universe; there is nothing which could be called absolutely empty space; you can't imagine it. And if there is absolutely empty space, that is God. This air is in space; there is a movement in space, and that movement is called air. What is called space? The distance from here to there. That distance is made up of some substance, and the movement of that substance within space is called air. Such is creation, too.

Yet again, this space seems to come into being and disappear. They put up a building, and the space seems to be enclosed. If this space was created when you put up this hall, it must also disappear when you break the hall down. Can space be enclosed? Can space come into being and disappear? All these are absurd expressions without any meaning whatsoever. In exactly the same way is creation. In this enormous, infinite space, called Chit-Shakti, here and there something seems to happen, whereas in reality nothing happens. When you put up the wall, nothing happened to that space. The space remained as space; even the space where the wall stands, remains as space, it has not been interfered with.

When this infinite consciousness - which is also Chit-Shakti - contemplated infinite beings within itself, these infinite beings arose. Arose is a bad word. When that infinite being starts 'thinking' otherwise, changes take place. Therefore, this whole creation has been compared, in a way, to our dreams. When

you lie down and dream in sleep, you dream of diverse beings. Where were they all? You cannot even say that they were in your head, because you were also there, you were also part of your own dream. You probably were dreaming of surfing in New Zealand. New Zealand was created, surfing was created. Maybe there were so many other friends also surfing, a big ocean was created. Where were all these? One hesitates to say "In your own mind, in your own head". One doesn't know. But this much is certain - that those objects, those things, were made of the same substance as you are made of, as your mind is made of. For the time being, they were even solid realities. Then, in this manner, this divine being also creates the entire universe out of his own substance. None of these is outside.

What are we trying to suggest here? When you are tempted to point the finger at something outside of you as the source of your problems, an error has arisen. The problem is not there. The problem 'is', that's all. It is not my problem, it is a problem, a problem that has arisen in the universe, that's all. You see the wonder here? The moment this awareness arises - it is a problem, not my problem - then the sting is gone. Action arises in response to the problem. There is no headache, no worry, no anxiety, no fear, but action. When you consider something my problem - which means that the world is there and I am not part of this world, the world is my enemy, my headache - you are creating a problem where none exists. There are problems in the world. They demand solutions, and there are solutions. When there is a problem, there is action - when there is my problem, there is trouble. What is even more interesting:

sarvabhutani kaunteya prakrtim yanti mamikam kalpaksaye punas tani kalpadau visrjamy  
aham (IX:7)

Krishna says here, "At the end of a kalpa, all these enter into My nature; in the beginning of a new kalpa, I let them go again." I guess you are familiar with the theory of repetitive creation in world cycles. Once every 1.569.500 million years, the whole universe is dissolved. And, once again in the beginning of a new epoch or world cycle, the whole thing is brought into manifestation. I would have thought that this was an extraordinarily comforting message. First of all, that the creation would last for such an unimaginably long time, that we are not in imminent danger of being swallowed up in hell-fire; and secondly - which is more important from my point of view, someone has brought all this into being, and he will probably withdraw all this in his own good time, so I don't have to be terribly bothered about it. Therefore, there is no meaning at all in the expression that you hear again and again 'the struggle for existence'. There is absolutely no struggle for existence! If you study your own history and read between the lines, whenever you discover that there has been some struggle, it has never been struggle for existence, but a struggle for domination. Existence is inevitable, what do you want to struggle for? Your existence or non-existence is determined by somebody who created you. That is not your concern at all. This is a heartening message: this existence goes on, and when its own allotted duration has come to an end, it is withdrawn, and it is projected again.

The word 'kalpa' here is very interesting. Sanskrit is a very old language. As you

grow older, there is a tendency to get a little more confused, hopefully. What seemed to be very clear, cut and dried, seems now to be a bit less clear. The boundaries are getting blurred. There doesn't seem to be 'this is black and this is white', but an enormous grey thing. Probably it is all grey. That is the stance to which, as you grow older, you move. That is true of the sanskrit language. Probably, many of these words had a single meaning, thousands of years ago. As time went on, the connotations, the interpretations, the secondary meanings and applications were all brought into the actual meaning of the word, so that now, if you open a dictionary and look up the word 'kalpa', you find strange meanings which do not tie up. Kalpa means an extended duration, and kalpana means imagination. Why is it so? That is also an extension of something inside. Kalpa essentially means an extended period of time, whether it is real or imaginary.

kalpaksaye punas tani kalpadau visrjamy aham (IX:7)

This creation goes on like breathing - someone seems to inhale, and the universe seems to expand, and so many beings arise; then he seems to exhale, the whole thing collapses, all these infinite diverse beings are withdrawn. Can you visualise an infinite cosmic person - like you - lying in an infinite ocean. He dreams of all of us, sitting here, talking; he wakes, and that dream is gone, and we all disappear! Then there starts another dream. It's funny, but it may be true. If you meditate upon this, you'll derive tremendous solace, inspiration, inner spiritual strength, and courage.

The more you think of 'time', the more puzzling the whole thing becomes. Your time scale is computed by the rotation of the earth, the sun and the moon. Once you go out of this orbit, you don't know what time means - kalpaksaye. "In this imaginary thing called time, at a certain point, I gather up all these into me, and at a certain other point in the same time, I release all this."

I'll just hint at one more point before we conclude: we have imagined all this universe we live in. Whether all the world around us is what it appears to us to be or not, we do not know, because we only know what the world appears to us to be. That problem can be satisfactorily solved only when we cease to think, totally; and realize what the world really is, minus our thought projection. So, really and truly, the world outside us is our kalpana, is our imagination.

As we discussed earlier on, even your presence in front of me is apprehended by me only on the basis of the image that is formed; firstly within my eyes, and secondly within the brain centre. If there is some defect in the optic nerve, the retina or the brain centre, you are all distorted so far as I am concerned. Nobody in the world could convince me otherwise. So that even now the world is inside me. Even without all this philosophy of projection and thought projection and so on, it is an obvious fact that I am only seeing the world as it is reflected inside me, I do not know any other world. I'm aware of this world in this kalpana - in this imagination, this day-dreaming. I dream it is day, and I dream I am seeing all of you here. After some time, all this is withdrawn into my nature, and I sleep, and

my nature remains my nature. Then I create another piece of universe, within myself. Here, while awake, I see the world within myself - there, while dreaming, it is also within myself. What is the difference? Here I dream that the dream is outside - there I dream and the dream is 'outside' too. Only to an onlooker is there the feeling that now I am awake and I am seeing all of you. If I am asleep and dreaming and talking in my dreams to the onlooker, there is the feeling that I am dreaming an audience within myself, and am talking to it. Only an onlooker is able to say that - not me. All this is withdrawn and a new dream is projected, and then - this is very important and very beautiful, as sleep comes to an end and this consciousness-energy begins to stir again - to agitate memory, concepts and inner imagination, then there is once again projection of this world.

So it happens, not only on the cosmic scale in the mind of God, but to us every day - probably several times a day if one becomes aware of it. I'm not talking merely of sleeping several times a day. In a strange way this goes on. You sit and contemplate, the whole thing seems to come back to you; suddenly, that contemplation is disturbed, and the whole thing seems to flow out, creating the world around you.

If one becomes aware of this, then one becomes aware that there is a problem which is not my problem. And when there is a problem, there is action; when there is my problem, there is confusion.

## 4. Four

What makes events that happen in the world a problem, is 'me'. 'I' don't like it, or 'I' like the other thing. We are unable to see an event as an event - it is always something which happens to me, and as the extension of the 'me', to mine. Then the mind creates a causal chain, in an effort to avoid a repetition - but, while creating this causal chain, something fundamental is missed out.

A cyclist is knocked down by a car. That is a simple event. The mind is unwilling to see it as an event, especially if it is someone related to me. If you are the cyclist who is knocked down by the car, the other person is always at fault. If the cyclist who was knocked down is a friend of yours - an extension of the 'me' - then you try to figure out what caused it, how and why it happened. If you are a rationalist, you figure out who was right, who was wrong, where the cyclist was standing, and how the car knocked. If you do not want to indulge in this kind of rationalisation, you look at the whole thing, and throw it on karma - as if you know. Neither the man who weaves a rationalistic theory about it, nor the man who spins some kind of karma theory, knows why it happened. It is an event, to be looked at as an event.

When Jesus was questioned by someone, "This child is suffering; is it the child's fault or the parents' fault?", Jesus said, "Neither." Don't look at it that way at all. Don't link it with some kind of cause which your mind has invented. One must be very careful here. No-one is suggesting that an effect has arisen out of a non-cause, but that, if there is a cause, you do not know it. The real cause is not that which you mind or my mind invents.

People die in accidents, people die in a war; but, what is the fundamental cause? Not because these two people are fighting, but because the body is subject to death. The human body gets hurt because the human body is vulnerable, because, that which is born, must die. When this is understood, then the inner intelligence sees the event as an event, first of all unrelated to the 'me', and secondly caused by I-don't-know-what.

Events in the world take place. There is virtually no 'why' in regard to these events; but, if your mind asks why, Krishna gives a fairly enigmatic answer:

prakrtim svam avastabhya visrjami punah-punah bhutagramam imam krtsnam avasam prakrter vasat (IX:8)

"At the beginning of each epoch, at each new kalpa, this whole thing springs up in the cosmic mind." The first question your mind asks is, "Why does this happen again and again?" Krishna says, "It is because of My nature. I let these beings flow out of Me, again and again" - avasam prakrter vasat. 'Avasam' is not so easy to translate. In the english idiom, it is 'in spite of myself', but that is not quite correct. 'Non-volitionally' is the correct expression. "On account of My nature - and therefore naturally, but not volitionally, because I do not desire anything." So, "The release of this flood of creation within me takes place periodically,

naturally and non-volitionally." That's the correct translation, though it's probably not literal. In a subsequent verse, Krishna - God - says:

maya 'dhyaksena prakrtih suyate sacaracaram (IX:10)  
"It is prakrti, it is nature that does all this. But I am the overseer, because of My presence."

These two verses together have given rise to fantastic metaphysics, philosophy, and theology, and beautiful art. I'm not saying anything is wrong here. There is a theory that God - usually Shiva - sits on a tiger skin in deep meditation, and Parvati - His Shakti - dances in front of Him. Shiva is lying down, and Parvati dances on His chest - symbolising that, in the presence of God, His nature, His Shakti - prakrti - creates, sustains, and destroys the entire universe. We have divided the one into these two - prakrti and God - as if it is possible for someone to divide me and my nature. Take my nature away; what am I? Take me away; what is my nature? Can you separate me from my nature? Is my nature something tangible a substance, an organ which can be amputated and taken away? Throughout the world, people have done this in the name of religion, philosophy, science, art, and psychology, trying to create a division between man and his nature. It is not possible. And, trying to create a division between God and His nature, we use these expressions: 'God is a silent witness', and "Nature - prakrti - does everything'. That is the philosophy that is spun out of these few verses which we are studying now.

There are three propositions:

Number 1: God created the universe, because it is His nature.

Number 2: God did not create the universe, but His nature created the universe.

Number 3: the nature is able to create the universe, because of the presence of God - God sits there as supervisor, and nature dances and creates the universe.

This is simple theology. We can all pretend to have understood this, and go away quite happy, without realising that even here there is a tremendous lesson. If these three propositions are clearly understood - not believed in, then life does not create any problem at all. The mind does not ask, "Why does this happen?" God created the universe, it is His nature; and whatever happens in that universe is also part of His will, His nature, His divine plan.

For a moment, we will take leave of this theology and philosophy, and come to our own daily life. We go to sleep and dream. After we have woken up in the morning, we begin to wonder, "Why did I dream?" Many of us try to psychoanalyse ourselves, and find the reason why - for instance - in that dream I had two horns. A dream is a dream, isn't it? What more do you want to know about it? Till we abandon this idle quest for a cause, we won't enjoy, understand, or appreciate, the beauty of the whole thing - that here is something that is happening in spite of myself - avasam. I'm dreaming, and the dream is happening - not because I want it to happen, not because I want to avoid it, but because it happens. You do not will yourself into a dream, you do not invite a dream - if we could all invite happy dreams, we would all be dreaming happily every night! It

doesn't happen. As soon as I fall asleep, a different world emerges; and, in that world, the will doesn't operate at all, my own petty desires have no validity whatsoever, and my likes and dislikes are not taken any notice of. Such is the world of dreams, with its own pleasantries, its own nightmares. A dream is allowed to flow - allowed is a wrong word - by me, in spite of myself, without my desiring it, without my resisting it - and it flows naturally. That's the wonderful lesson I have learned from a dream. That is enough for me.

I do not enquire why I dreamed this particular dream last night, I don't want to analyse any of these things, but I come face to face with this phenomenon of dream, and I see quite clearly that the dream had nothing whatsoever to do with my personal will - if there is such a thing, it had nothing whatsoever to do with what I like or dislike. It was all obviously based on me, but not quite related to me. I don't know if you know the difference - it was my dream, not your dream - it was 'based on me', but though it was my dream, I had no control over it. The dream would not have happened if I had not slept, or if I had not created the conditions necessary for that dreaming. The dream happens because I am dreaming, because of me - and yet it is happening in spite of me. Its contents, its nature, its progress, its drama, is independent of me. That is precisely what Krishna is saying in relation to this cosmic dream.

Instead of considering these few verses as the utterances of Krishna, an incarnation of God, if every one of these first person singular pronouns is taken to mean oneself, me, a tremendous truth emerges. You were asleep a few hours ago. As you are waking up, your nature - which was dormant till then - begins to stir. You begin to hear, not because you want to hear, but naturally and non-volitionally, 'in spite of yourself', because it is natural for the hearing apparatus to hear. So, my nature begins to stir, but not because I want to wake up. Why do you wake up at all? It sounds an absurd question. It is a question which we have never seriously asked ourselves. It is natural to wake up. No other answer makes sense.

Once we have learnt to use the expression 'it is natural', then we have discovered the key to the meaning of life itself. At the conclusion of sleep the body-mind complex wakes up, the senses wake up - naturally, and there is a flow. One has to be careful here; maybe it is a flow to and from, a swinging flow - and, in the case of most of us, it is an externalised flow. We have not asked that crucial question, "Why am I waking up?" If I had asked that question seriously, the answer would have been clear: "It is natural. There is no why". Then the eyes would have continued to perform their function of seeing. This natural seeing takes place, not because I want it. When the seeing is linked to "I want it, I desire this", the flow is externalised, I am shooting it out. For instance, when a friend of mine comes, I look at her and smile; when someone I don't like comes, I frown. The eyes do not do that naturally. When you look at a person whom you like, the eyes look. When you look at a person you don't like, the eyes look - they don't say "I look at only blondes, not dark haired people".

So, if we discover that word 'naturally' right at the moment of waking up in the

morning, we discover the key to the meaning of life; and we realize that these verses, which tradition ascribes to God, His Nature, creation, and all that goes on in it, may also refer to oneself.

prakrtim svam avastabhya visrjami punah punah bhutagramam imam krtsnam avasam prakrter vasat (IX:8)

Animating My Nature, I again and again send forth all this multitude of beings, helpless by the force of Nature." All these things take place: I wake up, then the body-mind complex also wakes up and begins to function - not because I want to gain something, nor because I hate something and wish to avoid it, but naturally - avasam - 'in spite of myself', which means I am not prompting the body to function one way or the other. The body-mind complex functions naturally - without volition, without effort. Then we can also say as Krishna says in the next verse:

na ca math tani karmani nibadhnanti dhanamjaya (IX:9)  
"These actions that happen in My Nature do not bind Me."

What binds? What is bondage? Bondage arises only on account of desire. "I like this to happen this way." If accidentally, your private wish happens to coincide with what happens, you say, "Ah, I knew it was going to happen this way. I worked for it. I made it happen. I willed it. I did all sorts of positive thinking". Your thinking did nothing whatsoever! It would have happened that way in any case - with you, without you, in spite of you. If you kept a log-book of how many times you had been positive-thinking and how few times you succeeded, you would have become wiser, and dropped that positive thinking. Like a gambler, just because you won a few times, you think gambling is good. You don't keep an account of how often you have misjudged, how often you have wished for something, and the opposite happened. All that is forgotten in the excitement of one so-called success, and the success did not belong to you. It happened because ... there was no 'because'. You would have discovered that long ago if you had understood that all events are natural.

Whatever happens, happens. In that life, there is no bondage. Bondage arises when you desire something to happen, or you desire something not to happen. If your action springs from your own likes and dislikes, you are caught already, whatever happens. Please dramatise this within yourself: the movement of your awareness is flowing out, completely forgetting the centre, completely forgetting itself. It seems to reach out - happy if what you wanted to happen happened; unhappy if what you wanted to happen did not happen; or what you did not want to happen, happened. There, the centre is completely lost. You are taken for a big ride, and your centre is left somewhere.

If the awareness is not flowing out - if you are aware that this is happening - when your eyes are open, and they see someone, in those eyes, there is no feeling at all that this is my friend, or this is a stranger. In a little while, the eyes see someone else, and the mind begins to stir and says, "Ah! Charles, I know him".

Watch carefully. "I know him, he is my friend, he is a good boy. I like him" - you may even use that word 'like', but watch carefully. The eyes see this young man and, in that sight, there is nothing called friend, and there is nothing called foe or stranger, and there is balance. The mind remembers: "He is Charles, he is a good boy, I like him". Who says that? The mind says that - and yet there is no self-abandoning externalised flow here. It is steady, established, firmly rooted. Who is firmly rooted? The awareness is firmly rooted in itself; and, in that awareness, mental activities take place, physical activities take place, sense activities take place. Why not? It is not that; therefore, the yogi would shy away from using the words 'like' and 'dislike'. I have seen a few great yogis who have freely expressed their feelings; but, in their case, there is no externalised flow of consciousness. That is what is meant by maya 'dhyaksena prakrtih suyate sacaracaram. This awareness is there in full - awareness which is fully awake, fully enlightened. And, in the light of that awareness, nature functions - my own nature.

The eyes see, the mind functions in the presence of this awareness - but this awareness is not something which can be separated, cut off from nature; nor can the nature be divorced from this awareness. They are together, they function together, because they are not two, but one. It is when you try to create a division in this, that you run into difficulty, you become absent minded. You tell yourself, "Oh yes, a yogi should not use 'I like' or 'I don't like' ". So, when you look at him, you think, "He is my friend. No, he is not my friend." This is what Carlos Castaneda calls 'Internal dialogue'. Then you become absent minded. The yogi is not absent minded. There is full awareness, and there is constant dynamic activity in that full awareness. The two are together, one, Chit-Shakti.

In the initial stages of our spiritual endeavour, there may be a need to ensure by strenuous effort that actions do not spring from our desires and cravings, fear, and hate. When one sees that these stirrings of energy or actions are natural, that all activities are natural - then that state of mind or awareness becomes natural. You see the beauty of it. First, there may be something not so natural - it looks as though I have to make an effort. For instance, I'm looking at him, he is a very good friend of mine, a wonderful boy, he took me to his farm. Now, when I think of that while standing in front of him, my attention has gone somewhere else - to his farm, to last year. There is a desire to please him, so that in future he may still be good to me. All that is not natural. At that point, it is necessary for me to become aware of all this. The moment this awareness is made aware of itself, it cancels out that desire, because desire is not part of nature at all. My eyes see him, there is no desire in that. My mind thinks of him as a friend, there is no desire in that. But desire arises - God knows from where - and seems to pollute this natural activity or natural event. When the awareness is made to become aware of itself in the beginning, that awareness clears the field of all these cravings, likes, dislikes, and fears, and the naturalness of this event is restored. I continue to see him, the mind continues to think of him.

When this is clearly understood by the mind and the intelligence, then the whole thing becomes natural, and therefore completely effortless.

## 5. Five

When we speak to God and His nature, there is unfortunately a tendency to regard these as 'out there', nothing to do with us. Whenever we point out or speak of these, the arm stretches out, for no apparent reason, and makes it look as though what we are talking about is out there. You ask the Swami: "Swami, will you be coming here again next year?" He says, "His will" - the hand goes up, as if God is sitting on the roof! If the arms were not there at all, what would you do? You do not point to any direction; then there is a complete and total inner revolution, because of the absence of an outer gesture. That is the truth. Even if you use your limbs, that is the truth.

God and His nature are not 'out there', but everywhere - which brings God and nature intimately close to us. But even that expression is inadequate; because, when you say 'intimately close to me', the 'me' is still standing out apart from the totality.

maya 'dhyaksena prakrtih suyate sacaracaram (IX:10)

"Because of my presence, nature - my nature - is able to create and sustain the entire universe." Forget God and all this and, as you recite these verses, recite them of yourself. "Because of 'me', all these things take place. Because of my being, my nature functions." Then this abstraction called God and His nature are immediately transformed into 'my being' and 'my doing'. What is God in the macrocosmic sense, is the self - I - in the microcosmic sense; what is nature in the macrocosmic sense, is the body-mind complex in the microcosmic sense; there is such an intimate connection between the cosmos and the me. I am the me, I am the cosmos, I is the cosmos. The same nature, which shines out there as the trees, plants, and living beings, shines here as the body. The same mind that thinks through these billions and billions of beings, thinks through this body-mind complex. Looked at this way, you can understand the next verse very beautifully.

avajananti mam mudha manusim tanum asritam param bhavam ajananto mama bhutamahesvaram (IX:11)

"Foolish people do not recognise me when I am embodied." This verse is - for obvious reasons - taken to mean a lot of things. It says, "God descends in human form, and fools do not recognise it." So, I say, "My Guru is God incarnate - do you believe it or not?" If you say, "No", I call you a fool, this verse is my authority. People who are not guru-worshippers, but who are worshippers of an Avatara, like Krishna, Rama, Jesus, or Buddha, do exactly the same thing. One person says, "God came into this world as Krishna; if you don't recognise it, you are a fool." Someone else says exactly the same of Jesus Christ. The authority is exactly the same. All this is permissible, in the sense that, somewhere, we have to make a beginning. Only if I am dull and immature, will I not recognise the immanence of God in those divine beings, whom millions of people worship throughout the world. It does not matter at all whether He belongs to my cult, my race, my religion, my society, or my community - thousands of people worship Him. For

instance, thousands of people worship someone whose name you may have never heard - Lao Tzu. If someone comes along and says, "Do you believe that Lao Tzu is an incarnation of God?", there need be no hesitation at all in you saying, "Yes. If you people worship Him as God, I also believe". Not insincerely, hypocritically, but sincerely.

Another verse, which occurs towards the end of the tenth chapter, demands this:

yad-yad vibhutimat sattvam srimad urjitam eva va tad-tad eva 'vagaccha tvam mama tejomsasambhavam (X:14)

"Whatever is glorious in this world, whatever is prosperous, whatever is strong and vital in this world, that is a manifestation of God. Worship it, recognise God there. That is a manifestation of a small part of me".

This is the beauty of My Guru, Swami Sivananda. Whatever the critics might say about a religious leader, if he had a following of his own, My Master would say, "Yes, recognise him as great - a mahatma. Those thousands of people recognise him as a divinity, what do you gain by opposing all that?" Even if you do not see it, there must be something in that person. Drop your prejudices, and look again. Possibly you may find it.

Do you see the beauty here? If somebody scandalised that person, as soon as you look at him, that scandal jumps up in your own mind. Then you look at that person again, and realise that there are thousands of people who are admiring him, adoring him, worshipping him - that too is something divine. Your prejudice drops away; and possibly then and there you will learn to see something different. One of the tragedies of fanaticism and proselytism is that, when you are fanatically devoted to your cult, your guru and your religion - which is perhaps not so bad, it leads you to the next step unawares - that you refuse to see the same truth shining and functioning somewhere else, in some other form, in some other way. Who are you to judge? The same God and the same nature in the cow produces milk, the same God and the same nature in the cobra produces poison. What do you want? Would you like the cobra to give you some milk and the cow to yield poison? Or would you like everything except milk to be abolished? The same God and the same nature must inevitably function in his own infinite ways.

We make a beginning somewhere - perhaps with what great masses of people worship as incarnations of God - present or not present: Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ, anybody. Then we learn to recognise this divine presence in someone who is living close to us, our guru. Then we learn to recognise the same presence in someone who is not my guru, but the guru of some others. If the mind expands like this, it is possible that one day you read this verse and suddenly a new meaning arises: "People do not know Me clad in a human garb." The finger does not point out there, but at yourself. People do not recognise Me clad in the human garb. You think, "Maybe this is what it means. Maybe it is supposed to awaken in me the realisation that I am not the little personality that I have associated myself with all these years. The being is something quite different from what the mind conceived of as the personality, and from that which was

reflected in my intellect." All these verses make sense immediately - once again in a different light.

This being is uninvolved in the behaviour, the doing - but without the being, the doing does not take place! If the being is not there, related to this body-mind complex, then the body and mind do not function. But it is not the being that functions, it is the body-mind complex that functions. For instance, if I tie you down to a bed, you can lie there and imagine that you are doing all sorts of fantastic things - but you would be able to do nothing except in your imagination. All those ideas have to flow through this body-mind complex - first the mind and then the body - and yet the body can function, and the doing can happen only when the being is there. The being can only manifest itself, realise itself, through the doing. For instance, how do you know how powerful you are? How do you know how intelligent you are? How do you know how efficient you are with your hands and feet? Make a little statue, like Julie, then you know! Otherwise you just sit here and think, "Oh, I am a great artist". And, as most of us do, when someone else makes a statue, we criticise: "It's not so good". It is very easy to say it is not so good. How do you know what your capabilities are, what your powers are, except when you realise them? So, the being realises itself in the doing.

If you enter into the spirit of it, you suddenly realise with a jolt that all that happens in the universe is the realisation of God, the infinite. All these silly questions that arise in our mind, "Why is his hair like that?", and "Why does that young man go bald?", vanish. This is the infinite - and so it is. Instead of comparing one with the other unfavourably, you might even compare, but realise the infinite potencies of the infinite. If you make about fifty statues, telling yourself that each one has to be distinguishably different from the other, and all of them have to have human features - one head, two arms, two legs, two ears, one nose, one mouth, two eyes, etc. - how many varieties can you make? Fifty? A hundred? But look at this world - no two people are completely and totally alike. With the same amount of components, whoever created, has created an infinite variety - which shows that the infinite is capable of infinite manifestations; and, the diversity exists only to glorify God in this manner. The doing is the glory of the being; the being is the essence of the doing. If it is not there, there is no doing; if the doing is not there, the being does not realise itself. That's it.

I come back to what is called myself, and suddenly I realise that there is this being and this doing - action, behaviour - the behaviour of the mind, the body, and the personality. The personality is able to behave in a certain way only because of the presence ... of what, I do not know. That presence itself is not involved in this doing, but the body-mind complex is incapable of functioning without it.

In this human semblance, it is the same divine that functions - param bhavam ajananto mama bhutamahesvaram. "Because they do not recognise that this Being is supreme, the lord of nature." That is, it is not as if this being and the doing, this being and the behaviour, God and His nature, and Self and the

Nature, can be divorced from each other, and treated as if they are independent of each other - but a simple statement of existential fact is given. For instance, I am speaking; if I want to, I can keep quiet - that is within my power. I am speaking the english language; if I want to, I can stop and start talking in hindi - that is also within my power. The being has, as it were, a certain control over its own self-realisation. One who understands this, understands everything about behaviour, and how to modify that behaviour. The behaviour can be modified only by altering the inner state of consciousness, by bringing about a change there, but not by cosmetic, external changes - mama bhutamaheśvaram. In the same way, the Cosmic Being can also bring about a complete change in the Cosmic nature, when He wills it.

"I am the Lord." Even when you contemplate this for a moment, you realise that your attention is flowing inward - from the doing towards the being, from the behaviour towards the being - in order to find the source of behaviour, the source of doing. The source of doing and the source of behaviour is being. That it all! That is the secret.

moghasa moghakarmano moghajnana vicetasah raksasim asurim cai 'va prakrtim mohinim sritah (IX:12)

If you do not do that, if you are caught up in the behaviour, the doing, if you are not paying attention to the being at all, then you are unaware and deluded. Then the mind - consciousness, which arises in this encounter between the being and the doing, gets muddled; and, since the doing seems to be more obvious than the being, it gets involved more in the doing, and foolishly imagines that the doing itself can be manipulated. I am deluded because I am very busy with the doing, and with the re-arrangement of the behaviour - an absurd game!

All my hopes are in vain, because they are pinned to the manipulation of behaviour - the being is still untouched. Somewhere, the vision is blurred. Instead of rectifying that I am superficially changing my behaviour which is fruitless, futile - moghasa moghakarmano moghajnavicetasah - because there is the stupid perversion of vision, and my awareness is clouded.

Raksasim asurim cai 'va prakrtim mohinim sritah. Two expressions are used in this chapter - asura prakrti and daiva prakrti. Asura prakrti means diabolical nature, daivi prakrti is divine nature. What is the difference between diabolical nature and divine nature? Is there some kind of a devil which is as much a reality as God? Do we accept that there is for ever and ever a God, and for ever and ever a devil, one opposing the other all the time - so that I must take care to see that I go closer to this God, and away from this devil? Such an interpretation is also given to this in the Bhagavad Gita, "There is divine nature and there is diabolical nature". This is often interpreted to mean, "Do not go anywhere near so-and-so or his disciples. He is the devil, and they are the devil's disciples; and our guru is God, and we are God's disciples". If you go and ask the disciples of the other person, they will probably say exactly the same thing - "Our guru is God, your guru is devil". This battle goes on. Can I not see through this, and understand

that when the awareness flows outward, and remains busy with the superficialities - with the world as the world, not with the world as it really is, which is the nature of God, I am closer to the diabolical nature.

Sura and asura have also some other meaning. Sura means light, and asura means darkness, non-light. The divine is like daylight, brilliant - and the undivine is darkness. When I am unaware of myself, and I am busy trying to gain something in the outside world, with your co-operation or exploitation, I am playing with darkness. I do not know if I can make this quite clear. What is the one thing it is possible for me to know? Myself. One may argue that, if I know myself thoroughly and well, it is possible that I might also similarly know who you are, what you are, and what your actions are like - vaguely, theoretically. But in practise, if it is at all possible for knowledge to arise, it can only be knowledge concerning myself, never knowledge concerning you. Maybe some great enlightened beings may know our nature, and what is going to happen to us, but I am talking from our level. The only thing that can be clear to me is myself - not you. When I am busy with you, I abandon this effort at self-understanding, I am an asura - devil - working in darkness, dealing in darkness, meddling in darkness. If you understand that clearly, you will probably contemplate on this, and derive a lot of inspiration. It is because we are all the time trying to understand and misunderstand others, without understanding ourselves, that all the other evils of lust, anger, greed, hatred, and jealousy, arise. If, on the other hand, I am sincerely seeking for self-knowledge, all these things will disappear instantly.

This diabolical nature is also called raksasa. There is not very much of a distinction between raksasa and asura, though there are etymological differences. In practise, probably no great distinction exists - but one thought occurs: raksasa is one who is fond of raksa. I use that word merely to give you an idea of the closeness of the two words raksas and raksa. Raksa means protection - guarding, sitting on your treasure, so that nobody shall take it away from you. Such a nature, which accumulates possessions, and which regards this as 'mine and nobody else's', is diabolical.

That is the only devil that there is in the world - not a devil in a certain personal form, but only this diabolical nature that neglects self-knowledge, and endeavours to understand - and therefore misunderstand - everybody else.

There is also a very beautiful sanskrit couplet which reminds us that such a person is completely lost. "He who neglects the eternal, and runs after the impermanent, loses both," says the verse. Why? Because he has deliberately neglected the eternal - which is lost so far as he is concerned. He is going after the impermanent; but, before he goes and catches it, it is also gone. A lovely little story to illustrate this. A man caught a big fish which he put on the shore. Then he saw another fish, a little smaller, but still large enough, so he quickly went into the water to catch that fish. That slipped, and the first one jumped into the water, and was also lost! This story is told to illustrate the nature of greed. But then it also illustrates the simple truth that here is something which you can know - the

only thing that is close to you, that is permanent so far as you are concerned - yourself. Try to get to know that much better, intensely, instead of running around, trying to figure out why the world has come into being, etc., what others are thinking, and how to guide them and manipulate them, and so on.

mahatmanas to mania partha daivim prakrtim asritah bhajanty ananyamanaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam (IX:13)

Note the juxtaposition. Fools behave in that way. How do the non-fools, the wise ones behave? Mahatmas are great men whose consciousness is expanded - how do they behave? They are alive to daivi prakrti, divine nature. And what is divine nature? It is when the awareness flows towards the Self, constantly investigating the Self. They think, "I do not know why you are behaving as you do, but I must certainly know why I am reacting to you in the way I do, why I am behaving in this way."

Lest I should forget, I might add here that, what I have been saying so far, should not be interpreted to mean that the yogi is a selfish, self-centred person - quite the contrary. If a selfish thought, emotion, or feeling, arises in me, I am immediately conscious of it, and I realise that this is a foolish game - immediately; whereas, if I am engaged in some kind of what you call humanitarian philanthropic activity, I might get lost, I might not detect this selfishness. So, while not discouraging humanitarian and philanthropic activity, the yogi is keen on observing the Self and its activities. I must work, I must do good, no doubt, but I must also be good. These were the commandments of My Guru Swami Sivananda: be good and do good. Doing good is essential, of course, but not without being good. Daivim prakrtim asritah - the awareness is constantly flowing towards the Self, to detect any undivine feelings, any undivine thoughts that might arise, and deal with them, then and there.

Bhajanty ananyamanaso. "They worship me, they adore me constantly." Bhajanty also may mean, they contemplate, they resort to. If you are fond of the theistic approach, to you it will mean that you would be constantly contemplating the Omnipresence of God. But if you are not so theistically inclined, then it means your self - bhajanty ananyamanaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam. "He considers the Self his own Self." Whether I have a separate self from your self, we are not going into now; there is a distinct feeling of my self - let me get close to it, let me become completely aware of it. Then I might discover that it is non-different from you. "Constantly contemplating the self and its activities, its thoughts, its emotions, its movements."

Jnatva bhutadim avyayam. "Realising that the sources of behaviour are there in the Self, in God." Bhutadim bhuta means the elements of which the world and my body are composed; adi means beginning, source. If you hold these two meanings in your mind, you realise something wonderful: God is the beginning, God is the source - therefore the world, my body, and mind, cannot know what that Being is - cannot know Him, cannot know the Self. But, as God - or the Self - is the source, from God all these are flowing. This body and this world are not something

despicable, they are not evil, but a flow from the divine - very much like one's own dream objects - arising in one's own consciousness - jnatva bhutadim avyayam.

When you enter into the spirit of this, two things become immediately clear. One - there is a reverence towards all life, towards all beings. I realise that whatever may be a man's external appearance, he too has come from the same source. However ugly something in the world may look, that also has had its origin in the divine. Two - in regard to one's own body-mind complex, there is a certain vigilance, a certain respect and control of a very beautiful kind. I realise that even this body has been willed into being; it is the manifestation of God's own dream - the God who is inside, within this body. God's dream is this body. There is a respect towards it, an attitude of reverence; and also, at the same time, a distrust of the movements of mind, which says, "I must do this, I must ... " All that seems to drop away. Desire, craving, and aversion, drop away without struggle, without effort. That is self-control of a very beautiful and different kind.

## 6. Six

How are we to live without making life a problem for ourselves and for others? If our life does not become a problem, either to ourselves or to others, it is divine life; and, if it does become a problem to ourselves and to others, it is diabolical life.

There is a rather strange attitude that we often come across in life, of people telling us that they are made to do what they don't want to do. Is there something outside of me that compels me to do it? There may be a split, a conflict, a contradiction within myself - that is understandable. Intellectually I think 'I should do this' or 'I should not do this', but emotionally - or by past habit or by my biological nature - I am forced to do it. For instance, I want to fast for fifteen days - but the day after I decide, I become hungry before breakfast time. Here I am not being compelled by some agency outside myself, but by a confusion of my psychological and biological nature - the psychological nature being habit, and the biological nature being the mere functioning of a living organism.

There is definitely no demon outside of ourselves. If there is one, he is somewhere within.

avajananti math mudha manusim tanum asritam (IX:11)

"The person of diabolical disposition does not recognise the divine indwelling of the human form, the human appearance." You could apply it to Krishna, to Buddha, to Jesus Christ, to your Guru. Or, you might apply it to yourself - then the meaning becomes absolutely clear. That intelligence which refuses to recognise the indwelling presence is diabolical - it is flowing out all the time, seeking something outside itself. Divine nature, on the other hand, recognises the indwelling presence.

mahatmanas to mam partha daivim prakrtim asritah bhajanty ananyamanaso jnatva bhutadim avyayam (IX:13)

So, first there is a recognition of the indwelling presence in this, which is called my body. When you hear those words 'in this which is called my body', you find you are not looking at me, but looking into your own body to see what there is within. It is in that sense that the Bhagavad Gita might also be interpreted to mean the message of the indwelling God - not some Krishna who taught some Arjuna on a battlefield, not the voice of God who is somewhere else, but God who is within - the indwelling presence. The person of divine disposition is immediately aware of the indwelling presence.

That which dwells in this which is called my body, also dwells in that which is called your body, and therefore the expression used here, mahatmanah, is very beautiful. Atma means self. Here it is mahatmanah - that is, the self is not something which is small, which dwells only in me. This which dwells in me has suddenly become huge - mahatmanah. The intelligence that recognises this

indwelling presence, suddenly realises its own immensity, because the indwelling presence is a spirit, and the spirit is not confinable by matter. Not that it is not confined, but it is not confinable by matter. So, if the spirit is not confinable by matter, it is everywhere, or at least as wide as my inner vision can reach. If I am unable to reach to the next solar system or the next galaxy, that is only because my vision is slightly limited. Otherwise, this spirit pervades everything that I can conceive of.

How are they able to arrive at this understanding? Because they realised, "I am the origin of all beings, including the elements - earth, water, fire, air. All have had their origin in that spirit." Realising it, one feels an immediate omnipresence. He recognises the indwelling presence because that is closest - immediate. Though it is immediate, and therefore easily available, easy to reach, it is not confined, and therefore it is an immediate omnipresence. That is why Krishna has said right from the very beginning: "This yoga is extremely simple and easy because it is immediate". The truth is closest to you, you do not have to go searching for it elsewhere; it is here, and that which is here, is everywhere, and therefore it becomes an immediate omnipresence.

He who recognises this immediate or indwelling omnipresence, does not lose this awareness whatever he is doing, and with whomever he comes into contact. Otherwise we run into the diabolical disposition - I forget myself, and I think you are my friend, you are my enemy - you are the source of my happiness, you are the source of my unhappiness. You, you, you, all the time. The attention is 'there'. When the attention is flowing out in that manner, apparently leaving its own centre, it becomes diabolical. The mahatma - or the holy man or yogi - who is aware of this immediate, indwelling presence, realises that it is that indwelling presence which is common to all. When the yogi looks into himself and sees this indwelling presence, then and there he realises that that presence is also there in the other person. Then there is love. Only that is called love, the rest is humbug. It is not the 'I love you' contract. Contract in contraction; and here it is mahatmanah - expansion. It is not an expansion with an outward movement, but the realisation of the immediate omnipresence - bhajanty ananyamanaso. Therefore, it is possible for the yogi to be ever active in this world, doing all that has to be done, without ever losing awareness of his centre. It does not mean that the yogi should sit and look at his nose all the time - 'highly centred'. That is not highly centred, he is stuck! Being centred, the awareness expands, and there is all sorts of activity without the awareness of the centre being lost.

Ananyamanasah - it is an extremely difficult, if not impossible term to translate. I'll give you the literal translation: ananya means 'not other', and manasah means 'minded'. What does it mean? These great yogis bhajanty - are devoted and ananyamanah - not other minded. That is, the yogi is able to function in this world with a mind that is undistracted, with a mind that is unshaken from its centring - without implying that it is stuck there. The mind remaining completely centred, he is yet able to function in the world as if he is anybody else. That's it.

In the Bhagavad Gita, elsewhere, it is specifically said:

saktah karmany avidvamsa yatha kurvanti bharata kuryad vidvams tatha 'saktas cikirsur lokasamgraham (III:25)

"Even as a fool works and lives here with all his attachments and affections - love and hate and all that - the wise man also would busy himself externally in the same fashion, but with a tremendous inner difference - unattached." The wise man is centred in God, in the self, whereas the fool has yet to find his centre.

satatam kirtayanto mam yatantas ca drdhavratah namasyantas ca mam bhaktya nityayukta upasate (IX:14)

Satatam kirtayanto math - they are constantly singing my glories. Yatantas ca drdhavratah - they are very firm in their resolves. Namasyantas ca mam bhaktya - they prostrate to me all the time. Nityayukta upasate - and they are permanently united with me. Upasate means worship, as well as sitting near.

What does it mean? How is this man going to be active in this world? This teaching is given first and foremost to a warrior standing on the battlefield who is supposed to get up and fight. What kind of teaching is this? Satatam kirtayanto mare - all the time singing my glories. You are welcome to interpret the 'me' to mean that all this means Krishna. It is quite right, there is nothing wrong in that interpretation. But, what are you and I to do?

It is possible to look at it from a slightly different angle, not totally deviating from the orthodox interpretation, but from a slightly different angle. Even when I am not vocally speaking of the self or God, is it possible for me to be established in that centre, centred in God, in the self, and speak and talk and sing and do whatever has to be done? Then, whether or not you use the word God, Krishna, Rama, Jesus Christ, Buddha, and all the rest of it, it contains the spirit of this message. Every word comes from that centre - which means that every word is transmitted into something divine. I believe the reason why the Hatha Yogis evolved the system of the chakras, and enshrined the alphabets on the petals of those chakras, was to symbolically suggest that, if you are firmly centred there, all your speech becomes divine.

If it is not considered blasphemous - there is no special extraordinary glory in that word 'god'. G & O & D are three letters of the alphabet. If you are playing with plastic letters, and you happen to throw them down, a child might pick them up and put them in another order: dog. So, it is not in the alphabets themselves that the glory lies, but with what awareness the word is used - or any word is used.

I was thinking of it the other day when somebody asked about the indiscriminate use of bija mantras - they are some kind of special mantra - Aim, Hreem, Kleem, Hram, Kreem, Hruum. They are words of tremendous power, and it is considered necessary to handle them with care. If you use them

indiscriminantly, something bad might happen; if you use them properly, you might be able to fly in the air. Often it is suggested that the power lies in the word itself, in the mantra itself - in the vibrations, if you want to use a nicer word. I was wondering if that is so simplistically true. Take for instance the syllable 'kreem', which is a bija mantra dedicated to the Goddess Kali. If that sound 'kreem' itself had some extraordinary power, then all of us must be going up in smoke all the time! You use the word 'cream' quite often, and children use the syllable 'kreem' dozens of times a day - ice cream! So, there is something else. If that something else is added onto it, then this mantra becomes all powerful. And what is that? The awareness of this immediate omnipresence. When that awareness is cultivated, then the sound that emanates from you, from that centre - that centre which is your sushumna contains all the sounds, all the alphabets, whatever you say is divine! It is said of Baba Nityananda that, when somebody would go to Him - and it seems He was not easily accessible, Baba would sometimes abuse him and throw him out. And that person would go away feeling blessed, because any sound that came from Nityananda was divine. Whatever sound comes from such a holy man is all the time holy, and therefore, whatever speech emanates from Him, is holy. Only they who recognise this immediate omnipresence salute the Lord in all. We all greet each other, but I don't know how truly we are greeting the lord in each other.

Again we must reaffirm this truth - that it is not as though they feel they are inferior - they are nothing and you are god - and they are saluting you, but they are saluting the omnipresence. There is a beautiful tradition in the teaching of Baba Muktananda where he says, "Salute your own Self". So, when you greet someone else, you are saluting your own Self. This way, the awareness of this immediate omnipresence is not lost. Otherwise, you are just greeting some body - "Hello, how are you?" There, your attention is gone, distracted; but, when it is rooted in this immediate omnipresence, when you salute someone else, there is genuine comprehension of the Self.

Nityayukta means constantly united, upasate means they worship or they adore. Another simpler meaning of upasate which I like is 'sit near'. Wherever you are, you are close to God. That is what is meant by the word 'worship' - to sit close to God, close to the spirit.

jnanayajna ca 'pyanye yajanto mam upasate ekatvena prthaktvena bahudha visvatomukham  
(IX:15)

"There are others," says Krishna, "who worship me through what is called jnana yajna." What we are doing here is jnana yajna. And, here again - yajanto mam upasate - by this form of worship, by this form of yajna or adoration, others worship me - or sit close to me. We are all sitting close to God now, to the self now, because our attention is again and again drawn to the centre by one method or the other, in one way or the other. These people who have recognised the immediate omnipresence, worship Me. Bahudha visvatomukham - "knowing that my face is everywhere, my mouth is everywhere, my presence is everywhere" - mukham literally means mouth.

There is a very beautiful verse in the eighteenth chapter:

svakarmana tam abhyarcya siddhim vindati manavah (XVIII:46)

"Whatever you do, you are really doing to God" - unfortunately you are unaware of it; and, this unawareness makes it diabolical. Whatever you are doing, you are doing because the divine willed it so, whatever you are doing, you are doing to the omnipresent. If God is omnipresent, you can do nothing else! But, because you are unaware of it, you are behaving as if you are guided by a devil.

Visvatomukam - it's very beautiful to hold this picture in your mind: my mouth is found everywhere - wherever you offer, whatever it is, it is I who am receiving it. You don't have to go miles to offer a fruit to God. Just give it to the nearest person; you are sure that God's mouth is there to receive it. If you are aware of it, you are blessed; if you are unaware of it, you will regard yourself accursed. This will become even more clear if the concept of yajna is understood. In most religious ceremonies in India, there is a fire - it is considered a holy fire, and sometimes two or three people sit around that fire and offer some ghee and sometimes other foodstuffs into the fire - and the feeling of those who participate in this is that this fire is the mouth of God, and they are offering the ghee etc. into that mouth. This symbolism is used extensively in the Bhagavad Gita also, because obviously this custom was prevalent in the days of Krishna. Apart from the ritual called yajna, where you offer all sorts of food grains into the fire, there are other methods which can be interpreted on the basis of this symbolism. Jnana yajna is one of them. And what is the jnana yajna here? Jnana or wisdom is the offering. In that orthodox fireworship, someone takes something and offers it into the fire; and here, jnana or spiritual knowledge is the offering, the speaker is the person who makes the offering, and the audience is the fire - the mouth of God. See the beauty here? If this is understood, you see that the audience is more elevated than the speaker - though the speaker may temporarily sit elevated!

The aspiration that exists in the heart of the audience is God, the mouth of God, and into that mouth of God, the speaker pours knowledge as an offering, as an oblation. This is the symbolism of jnana yajna. Krishna insists that all our actions can similarly be performed in that spirit. When you are eating, the food is being offered as an oblation into the mouth of God - gastric fire.

aham vaisvanaro bhutva praninam deham asritah pranapanasamayuktah pacamy annam  
caturvidham (XV:14)

"I am present in your body as the gastric fire, digesting all your food".

So the spirit - or the divine - being omnipresent, can be adored in millions of ways, in all ways.

aham kratur aham yajnah svadha 'ham aham ausadham mantro 'ham aham eva' jyam aham agnir  
aham hutam (IX:16)

"But then, please also remember", says Krishna, says God, says me, says the self, "that I am the performer of this worship, I am the worship itself, I am the offering, I am the mantra which accompanies this worship." That is the immediate omnipresence. If it is recognised, then it is not difficult to recognise that the same spirit that sits here, sits there and listens. At this point in space, it is called the speaker, at that point it is called the listener, but the distinction is superficial. The distinction is only of the dress, the spirit not being confinable to this body. This spirit dwells here, and the same spirit dwells there, and only because of this is communication possible. Otherwise, communication is not possible. Just as an example - this is not philosophically, or in fact true - the tape recorder also listens to all this, but there is no communication, because the tape recorder is not of the same spirit as me, it is not on the same wavelength as I am. So, if we are able to talk to each other, it is because you and I are absolutely one. Why are we still talking? Just fun! Only if that understanding arises, is communication possible, otherwise it is not. If I think you are on an inferior plane, then it is impossible for anything to be communicated. If you think I am on an inferior plane or a superior plane, then there is no communication. For communication to take place, we must both realise that we are exactly on the same level. So, here, the transmitter of the message and the receiver of the message are both of the same substance - the divine - and the message that is conveyed is also divine. The whole affair is divine!

pita 'ham asya jagato mata dhata pitamahah vedyam pavitram aumkara rk sama yajur eva ca  
(IX:17)

"I am the father of this world, the mother, the dispenser of the fruits of actions, and the grandfather; the thing to be known, the purifier, the sacred monosyllable - Om, and also the Rig-, the Sama- and the Yajur-Vedas." There were some mantras used from the Vedas in the Yajna ritual - and here. Krishna reminds us that even the Vedas are myself. That's quite simple if you regard 'myself' as Krishna - God, or if you regard it as your self - I am the one that understands the Vedas, I am the one that remembers the scriptures, I am the one that studies the scriptures. It is obviously not the body, but the spirit within; and therefore, that spirit, which studies, understands, repeats, recites, and uses the scriptures, is itself the scripture. That is the scripture; the scripture is the self. Whatever you study, that is your self. Otherwise, do you mean to say that all these texts that you have studied are all microfilmed and built into the brain? No. They have become you, you have become they - that is because there is no spiritual distinction between the two.

gatir bharta prabhuh saksi nivasah saranam suhrt prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam  
bijam avyayam (IX:18)

Why were the ritualistic sacrifices performed, and how were they performed? They were performed, not only in what is known as vedic India, but everywhere in the world; and, if you study the old testament, you have fantastic descriptions of offerings - burnt offerings, fire offerings, all sorts of things. The Christians modified it and simplified it - even as the Buddhists or the Arya Samaj's

simplified it, but this spirit of sacrifice is found everywhere.

To whom is the sacrifice directed? To God - prabhuh. Why do you offer these sacrifices to God, realising that he is the creator, the sustainer, and the redeemer - or the destroyer - whichever way you look at it? This means that you are afraid that something may go wrong with your life, and you are offering something in worship, in sacrifice to God. e.g. "Ah, I'm expecting a child. You are the creator, O God; may the child be born well." That's the first problem. Now that this child is born and we are all here in a small family, "God, may we live without trouble". Can one, without condemning these rituals, enter into the spirit of it?

gatir bharta prabhuh saksi nivasah saranam suhrt prabhavah pralayah sthanam nidhanam  
bijam avyayam (IX:18)

"I am all these, I am the source of everything". Whether you consider it Krishna, Christ, Buddha, or God, or the Self which is the immediate omnipresence, that is the source of all. "That is my dwelling place" - it is here - "In it, I will dwell and have my being, and into it, I will be absorbed". I am in it already, in spirit, and one of these days the form also will be reabsorbed into it. When one sees this, one is immediately released from fear - there is no need for placating Gods. The climax is coming in a couple of verses.

tapamy aham aham varsam nigrhnamy utsrjami ca amrtam cai 'va mrtiyus' ca sad asac ca 'ham  
arjuna (IX:9)

It was stated in an earlier chapter that these rituals are meaningful. Why are they meaningful?

yagnad bhavati parjanya ya jnah (III:14)

"Only when people do these rituals, or worship or sacrifice would there be rain". That was the primary school lesson - that you must kneel down, fold your palms, and dig your nose between your hands. That's how you should pray! This is the lesson that is essential at that stage - but here it is expanded and explained a little further.

How does it happen that, when people worship, adore, and perform sacrifices, rain falls! Krishna says, "I am the sacrifice, and now I say, I am the rain also". Tapamy aham aham varsam - "If there is heat, that is also me; if there is rain, that is also me. I told you that rain falls in response to your sacrifices. This sacrifice is me too! I am the sacrifice and I am the rain." If you are able to realise this, you are freed from fear, anxiety, and worry, and all the rest of it. The indwelling omnipresence knows, because that is the spirit of sacrifice, and that is rain. When that spirit of sacrifice is rejected, is ignored by you, then there is drought or famine or trouble. That trouble turns your attention towards this truth, enables you to become aware of this - then there is rain. It is quite simple - nigrhnamy utsrjami ca.

There was another motivation with which these sacrifices were performed, and

that was that I should be freed from death, I must become immortal, which is given expression to in the beautiful vedic prayer: mrthyor mam amrtam gamaya. Krishna, with probably a twinkle in his eye, says: amrtam cai 'va mrtyus ca. "I am both death as well as immortality." Again please - I'll repeat it as often as I use this word 'I'. The 'I' may mean this Self in this body. The Self in this body is both mortal and immortal - something passes away, something changes; and in and through all those changes, something is. This is with reference to this microcosm, and the same thing applies to the macrocosm. All these will perish one of these days; but in all this perishability, there is some thing imperishable. Amrtam cai 'va mrtyus ca - So, what are you afraid of? Are you afraid of death? Something will have to change - what you are afraid of, will have to change! Something undergoes change constantly, and there is some kind of constancy in this change. If you and I were not afraid to grow up into men and women, why should we be afraid to grow a little older, and a little later grow into something else? This has to undergo a change; and, in and through all that, there is a changelessness. You can go on juggling around with what is changing and what is unchanging - e.g. the physical body is changing, the causal body is not changing - and all the rest of it. As long as we recognise that there is something which undergoes change, and something else which doesn't change, which cannot change, which is unchangeable - not only unchanging but unchangeable, then the fear of change disappears, so that we don't have to worship with this idea. We don't have to worship God, or perform these sacrifices on account of fear.

Do worship - please! With pleasure, with gladness, with delight - but don't let fear drive you to the churches. Go please, not only on Sunday morning, but every day, three times a day, and if possible come here also for satsang! But not out of fear, not out of desire, not out of craving, "I want something, or I am afraid of something, so I go to the temple" - this is a ridiculous state of affairs. Whereas, if you recognise this, your whole life will become an unending sacrifice. Sad asac ca 'ham arjuna

What you call reality and what you call unreality, even that is Me. In other words, there is nothing really which is unreal, because what is unreal is apprehended by the intelligence, by my awareness. How can the unreal be apprehended at all? These are merely words - 'unreal' is merely a word without a corresponding substance.

traividya mam somapah putapapa yajnair istva svargatim prarthayante to punyam asadya surendralokam asnanti divyan divi devabhogan (IX:20)  
te tam bhuktva svargalokam visalam ksine punye martyalokam visanti evam trayidharmam anuprapanna gatagatam kamakama labhante (IX:21)

This is the summing up of rituals. I didn't want to say condemnation of rituals, because Krishna doesn't really condemn anything. What happens if you worship God, engage yourself in sacrifices - because you are afraid, or because you have a need, or you crave for something? Are these rituals totally valueless? Oh no. In the words of the Sermon on the Mount, 'They have their reward'. They who stand at street corners and shout and yell their prayers, they have surely their reward.

That is exactly the spirit of these two verses. They who perform these sacrifices and worships and so on, they have their reward - they go to heaven, and they dwell there for as long as their moneys lasts, their travellers' cheques. You earn some merit through performing all these ceremonies; and, as long as the religious merits earned through such ceremonies last, you live in heaven - whether such a heaven is in outer space or here on earth - which is a good life, or an inward psychological satisfaction. When that merit is exhausted, you return to this world of pain and death, and carry on as before, with only your past tendencies, born of ignorance, to guide you.

## 7. Seven

Prayer has many expressions in sanskrit: yajna and upasana are used a lot in this chapter. Yajna is a sacrifice or offering. Upasana means worship, any form of adoration, but in a more literal sense it means 'sitting near, sitting close to'. If we bear this factor in mind, it may become easier to understand Krishna's approach to worship, to adoration.

Why do we pray? Why do we think of God at all? When do we think of God, and what sort of a God do we think about? We think of God when we are in trouble. There was a great mystic in India called Kabir, who has sung a very beautiful song, in which he said: "People think of God only when they are miserable, not when they are happy. If they learn to think of God when they are happy, they would never become unhappy." If people learn to remember God when they are happy, that remembrance itself will keep them happy; but, we remember God when we are unhappy, miserable, afraid, anxious.

If we look at this phenomenon very closely, we see it is because we need some help. We call upon God, and that naturally implies that (1) I am quite conscious of my helplessness, and (2) I am also conscious that that being, on whom I am calling now, is able to help.

Most often, the prayer becomes ineffective, because of insincerity. When we are praying, even in distress, we are still insincere. Why? Because we have not explored all the avenues available to us already, we are not on the precipice. Only when you come to the edge of the cliff, can you really and truly, honestly and sincerely say, "I am conscious that I am helpless". We pray now - for health, for this, for that - but we have not exhausted our own resources or the resources already available to us, with the result that the prayer is insincere, lukewarm. Our prayer in effect means: "Well, God, I would like you to come and help me, but if you are a bit busy now, I'll go to the doctor." There the prayer is not sincere, there is no energy in it. If I am a sick man offering that prayer - upasana, where am I sitting now - close to God or close to the doctor? I'm closer to the doctor than to God, so there is no upasana here - there is no prayer, but mere curiosity mongering.

There must be the direct awareness that I am helpless, and at the same time, there must also be the awareness of a being, a power, a force, an entity - or a non-entity, whatever you may wish to call it, which has the power and the capacity, and which will therefore be able to help. "I am helpless. That power is capable of helping me", naturally means that you are certain that That is at least somewhat more powerful than you are. When I am helpless, I don't seek the help of someone who is weaker than I am. So, I am weak, you are strong; I am sick, you are life itself; I am poor, you are the source of all wealth and prosperity; I am miserable, you are bliss. That is what we are praying. All our mantras say this: "Oh God, you are omnipresent; oh God, you are omnipotent; oh God, you are supreme; oh God, you are infinite; oh God, you are all-life; oh God, you are all-

love. I don't have any of these, please can you help?" What is needed here is sincerity, and that sincerity should become aware of my inability, my weakness, my helplessness.

When the 'me' is shaky, it looks for help, and that which it looks for - or looks up to - is what is called God. I must be sincere, and I must look for something which is not the me, not of me; so, I pray to "God which is heaven." If that God is in heaven - I'm not discouraging this expression, I must also be in heaven in order to be near. Or, I must recognise that that heaven is within me - then it is probably easier to get close to this God. Without getting close to God, your sincerity is doubtful.

It is not so much for God's sake that you must be near him, but for your own sake; because, if you are not close to the presence of God, you are likely to clutch at whatever you find near you - a doctor, a friend, or something else - that something being as weak and as stupid as you are. It is like two people who are both drowning clutching at each other - they only go down faster.

So, in order that I may receive this help, I must get closer to this divine presence; and there, aware of my helplessness and of the ability of the divine presence to come to my help, I must open up and pray. In that prayer there is a 'dangerous' element, which is perhaps one of the reasons why such a prayer is not encouraged by the priests. A person who is able, sincerely and honestly, to realise the weakness and the impotence of the ego and of the unhappiness or the misery that the 'me' constantly generates, will perhaps discover the futility of depending upon the 'me'. You see the trouble here!

I go on praying day in and day out: "God, please help me, today my finger is aching." "God, please help me, today my tummy is aching." "God, please help me, today I am having nothing to eat." "God, please help me, today my clothes are all torn." One day, I realise that, as long as the 'me' is working, it is going to throw up distress signal after distress signal - day in and day out. Chuck it! Now there is bliss. You might do that one of these days. Therefore, what are called the religious leaders of the world, do not recommend that. They prefer you to go to the temple. "Come to the temple, come to the ashram, we'll pray for you. Today you come for this, tomorrow you come for something else, and the day after tomorrow you come for another something else. Keep coming - we'll help you."

The day I really face the simple truth that all these incentives to prayer keep coming up in me because the 'me' is stupid, foolish, weak, and finite, I say: "Alright, me! You can stay there. You are going to create more trouble. I don't want you. Good bye!" When the 'me' is abandoned, upasana or thinking of God becomes natural.

I have been praying to God for abc. I have now realised that abc are not the only three letters in the alphabet - there are 23 more, and if the 'me' is allowed to go on praying, it will keep on praying for a to z. So, I don't want. In prayer, when I

sat close to this divine presence - upasana - I felt spiritually uplifted, blissful, peaceful. Why should I not have that peace, that joy, that divine presence, without begging? This is what one asks some time or the other - and then one drops all these 'prayers for', and is content to pray.

That could be another interpretation of the verses we studied last week. If I go on indulging in ritualistic worship, I'll go to heaven, and come back again and again. I'll give you an example. You go on asking for something. e.g. "God, I want my constipation to be relieved - please help me." "Ah it's gone. Now I feel quite happy." That's heaven - until this thing builds up again. Twenty-four hours later the same trouble; so, you are back on the solid earth. Again you have to pray. Every time you pray, some load is taken off - that is why I chose constipation; but, very soon this load builds up again.

Instead of doing that:

ananyas cintayanto math ye janah paryupasate tesam nitya bhilyuktanam yogaksemam vahamy aham (IX:22)

Drop this silly habit of 'praying for', but keep the habit of praying, of constantly thinking of God, of constantly being aware 'I am in his presence.' The 'me' is still very much there, but it is constantly close to this omnipresence. It is a very tricky business. I am not denying that I am aware that I am Swami Venkatesananda - I am sitting here and talking to you - but, side by side, there is also this awareness that, since the divine is omnipresent, it is close to me. If this awareness can be raised, then you are never far from the divine presence, and, at some point, you realise that you can never be separated from it.

To begin with, you at least feel: "Perhaps I have been separated from this divine presence because I feel that I am an entity in myself, and I still have to contact this God. I still have to close my eyes or fold my palms or look at some symbol in order to pray." It looks as if there is some kind of a division between me and this divine omnipresence, this immediate omnipresence. Surely, God is near, so that it becomes easy for me to remember this immediate omnipresence as often as I like. I am never far - ananyas cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate - they who sit near to, and therefore worship and adore Me - tesam nityabhiyuktanam yogaksemam vahamy aham - I look after their welfare. Here, the word 'yoga' is used in a very different sense. In that phrase, it means 'bringing what one does not already have'. I do not have something, and that is brought to me - that is also yoga!. Ksema means, I have something and it is protected, taken care of. So, yogaksema here means welfare, in the sense that what I need will be supplied, and what I have will be well taken care of.

Who is it that supplies my needs; and who is it that is going to take care of what I already have? That which is close to me, but beyond the 'me'; which is in me but beyond the 'me'; which is aware from moment to moment what is needed - and finds it. For example, if you had some toast this morning, perhaps you are aware that the grain that you consumed this morning was harvested a couple of years

ago, and was grown a few months earlier than that. Since then, it has been moving slowly towards you from the farm to wherever it is stored, then to the flour mill, then to the baker who bakes the bread, and suddenly it jumps into your mouth. "Ha, I've reached my destination!" That is called yoga.

What is that intelligence that organises this? The intelligence that is in you, but beyond the you, which determines that Janet is going to be hungry on the morning of Sunday 9th. One trusts this intelligence, one knows that it is aware of this. The yogi who has ceased 'praying for', and who still prays, is aware of this phenomenon - therefore, without praying for freedom from anxiety, he is free; without praying for peace, he is at peace; without praying for happiness, he 'is' happy.

There is one snag in this approach - which makes it a bit rare in this world. That is, if I belong to this category of prayers, will I seek medical help or not? Will I work, or will I say, "Alright, God will take care of everything, I don't have to do anything," and go to sleep? There is hypocrisy there again. The first fellow says, "There is no God to look after me; I will have to look after myself", which is one form of egoism. The other devotee-crook says, "God will look after me; I don't have to do anything here after".

So, once again, upasana has to be clearly understood. I am sitting close to this divine. He is near, so that I listen. I'm not idle, and I do not resist what is called a righteous impulse that arises within, but from beyond the 'me'. I don't desire, I don't pray for anything - but I am not averse to anything; so, if a doctor comes along and says, "Swami, can I have a look at you?", I don't say, "No, no, I'll take off my shirt only to God". That sort of arrogance is stupid.

The difficulty here is that the egotistic arrogance is so strong that it doesn't want to yield, and it is all the time making use of one thing of the other, e.g. I am making use of the divine presence in order to promote my happiness. That is precisely what you are asked not to do!

Sit close to the divine presence and let everything else take its natural course. Do not determine, do not decide what God should do. Then you might discover that God's Grace might reach you, as health, happiness, and prosperity; and the same God's Grace might reach you as ill-health, suffering, and adversity - all are welcome. I am prepared for adversity, but if some prosperity comes along - no harm, no objection; I am prepared for ill-health, but if somebody says, "Come on, I'll put a comfrey bandage round you" - no objection at all. I am prepared for all this - but I am not lethargic, tamasic, and world-rejecting. I am sitting close to God, and observing whatever happens as the Grace of God.

ye'py anyadevatabhakta yajante sraddhaya 'nvitah to pi mam eva kaunteya yajanty  
avidhipurvakam (IX:23)

"One who is unable to apprehend or become aware of this divine within, worships other deities."

If you have understood that much, these verses are simple; but devotees of Krishna would obviously say that 'me' means Krishna, and other Gods mean Rama, Hanuman, Siva, Christ, Buddha etc. But if you take the line that we have taken this morning, it is possible to see that constant remembrance in the previous verse meant of the innermost Self, beyond the 'me'; and they who are unable to reach within might resort to any concept or ideal of God, of something which is beyond the 'me', which is superior to the 'me'. Not any other help.

The Biblical prohibition of setting up of a god other than God - which is reflected in the Islamic teachings too - refers to this. If you are in trouble, seek God's help. Don't think that your wife or children, your husband, or your attorney will be able to fix it - that is 'the other' help. Don't treat these things as God. Don't treat your bank balance as your God. Don't treat your relations as God, thinking that they are here to protect you; because they are also sinking in the same boat. When all of us are sinking, we don't clutch at one another, but we look for a life-raft, something which does not sink. So, when they said, "Do not take gods other than God", what was meant was, "Don't treat all these as your God. Don't treat something which is itself perishable, which is itself in danger, as your support."

One whose mind is not mature enough to realise this immediate omnipresence, may have to seek some help. He resorts to a symbol - not for the sake of the symbol, but for the sake of the divine in it. That's the beautiful thing. When you worship, you don't worship any stone, but a certain fashioned stone - which means that that piece of stone reminds you of God. However, since by definition God is omnipresent, that stone also contains within it the divine presence, just as this body does. So, it is the divine presence within 'me' that worships the divine presence in the image. Since you cannot recognise the divine presence beyond the 'me' within yourself, you are resorting to the divine presence in the image - in the image, not confined to the image, not made of the image.

ye'py anyadevata bhakta yajante sraddhayda' nvitah

It is not the mechanical worshipper of other deities who reaps the benefit, but the worshipper who is endowed with supreme faith. He who knows, he who understands that the omnipresent is present in that image, reaps that benefit. One of these days, when his heart is pure, he will realise, 'that which I have been worshipping there, in the image, is already here in me' - and the worship stops.

aham hi sarvayajnanam bhokta ca prabhur eva ca na to mam abhijananti tattvena 'tas  
cyavanti te. (IX:24)

"There is no harm in worshipping any of these," says Krishna, "because I am there in all."

Once again, you can take it as the declaration of Krishna - of God, who says, "I am in all these," or you can interpret it to mean 'I' - that immediate omnipresence beyond the 'me' - 'I am there'. What I call Swami Venkatesananda - the 'me' - is a limitation; but, beneath this limitation, behind this limitation, unlimited by this limitation, is the 'I', the omnipresence, the infinite. 'I' in the context is really the initial for Mr. Infinite. Not the ego, but the infinite. In English, you always write

the 'I' in capitals, whether it comes in the beginning, the middle, or the end of a sentence, to show that it is divine, it is infinite. One realises that that which he has been worshipping there - the 'I' or the infinite - is here.

aham hi sarvayajnanam bhokta ca prabhur eva ca

The Lord says, "I am this infinite, the object of all adoration, not only by you, but by all"; but since the 'me' is not conscious of it, when I think God is not omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, I am in trouble. It is then I have to pray and make this God know what I want - a denial of the omniscience of God - and I have to go somewhere - to my meditation room, a temple or church - a denial of God's omnipresence - to pray - and having offered all this prayer, I am still looking round to see if he could do it or not - a denial of God's omnipotence. It is when the 'me' does not have this faith, when the 'me' does not know the nature of God in truth, that one runs into difficulty. Na tu mam abhijananti tattvena 'tas cyavanti te - "They do not realise the divine, the essential nature of the divine, the true nature of the divine, and therefore they go round and round."

yanti devavrata devan pitrn yanti pitrvratah bhutani yanti bhutejya yanti madyajino 'pi mam (IX:25)

"You may worship whom you like; you may worship what you like."

This is another angle; and a beautiful angle. There is even a suggestion here that, if you want to worship each other, go on - husbands worshipping wives, wives worshipping husbands. What is the result? The result will be that you will get what you worship. So, if you want your husband's affection, worship him. If you want your wife's affection, worship her. Whatever you worship, you will get. Yanti devavrata devan. If you worship the gods, you go to them; or they come to you. Pitrn yanti pitrn vratah. If you are devoted to the father, you will also go to the father. Bhutani yanti bhutejya. If you are interested in the spirit world, worship the spirits; you will also become like them. Bhutani can also mean the worldly objects; if you are devoted to the worldly objects, go on - you will reach them. Afterwards, you may realise that this is not what you really wanted to get - then you can come back; yanti madyajino 'pi mam - and if you are seriously interested in realising the divine omnipresence, you'll get that.

And how do I adore, how do I worship God?

patram puspam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati tad aham bhaktyupahrtam asnami prayatatmanah (IX:26)

What is needed by God is sincerity, pure and simple; devotion, pure and simple. Knowing that everything in the universe is the creation of God, you don't have to go about gathering expensive things for worshipping God. Whatever you wish to offer, offer. This again can also mean worship of one another, service to one another, charity to one another, helping one another. We used to encounter this in the ashram in Rishikesh: it is possible that, after living in the ashram for a week or two, a young man leaves a donation of one hundred rupees. It's alright for him; but, if a very high official of the government lives there for a few days,

and sees him putting one hundred rupees in the donation box, what does he do? He thinks, "I can't also offer one hundred rupees, the same as an ordinary young man, it's infra dig. To measure up to him, I must offer a donation of at least one thousand rupees, even five thousand rupees. I don't want to; I can't afford it. To throw a hundred rupees there makes me equal to him - but five thousand rupees is difficult for me." So, what does he do? He goes away without doing anything. "Please don't do that", says Krishna. Whatever you wish to give, give. Whatever you can use in worship, please use. It refers not only to the sort of worship that you perform, but to all the other forms of worship that have so far been discussed - helping one another, serving one another, exchanging tokens of love amongst one another. Don't think that a gift is valuable only if it is expensive or extraordinary.

Whatever you give, give with love - patram puspam phalam toyam - even a leaf or a flower, a fruit, or even a glass of water. Yo me bhaktya prayacchati. Whoever gives this, or any of these, with great devotion and love and affection, that gift is accepted with delight. Why? Because it generates love in the heart, and that love is God. That love which is beyond the 'me', which is not of me, which is not contained in the me - that love is God.

yat karosi yad asnasi yaj juhosi dadasi yat yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurusva  
madarpanam (IX:27)

Now we come to the aspect of worship called para puja. First you worship the deities in the images; then, gradually, you begin to understand that the God you worship there is within you, and now the further understanding arises that if God is omnipresent, He can be - and He is - adored through whatever I am doing. Not only when I exchange gifts with you, not only when I give you something and regard that as worship, but whatever I am doing is all directed towards this omnipresence. Yat karosi - whatever you do. Yad asnasi - whatever you eat. That is, whatever I am doing, not only to other bodies, but even to this body.

Slowly, a change comes over. First, I saw God in a symbol, an image; I worshipped that God there. Then, I saw God in some respectable people, let's say, and I gave them gifts and so on. Then, if I find a poor man, in him also I see God and give him something - but, please remember that the holy man is something special, the poor man is special. Then, even that is gone; I begin to see that I don't have to make any distinctions. Whatever I am doing to all these people, I am doing to God. Wait a moment, there is one person left - I am excluding myself. So, that sort of charity - or whatever it is - is also limited. When you say, "Oh I can starve; I must feed the hungry", you are an egotist. Why do you want to be so special? Doesn't your body feel hungry? Feed it! You are still identifying yourself with the body when you say, "No, I can go hungry. I must feed everybody else". It means there is a terrible vanity which says, "I am this body and I am going to excell all these people whom I regard as God." I am supposed to see God in all and, seeing God in all, I am going to excell all of them, be a super god, by saying, "I can feed all of you; I don't want anything for myself. So I am superior to all of you." There is a lot of hypocrisy here. Yat karosi - whatever you do. Yad asnasi -

whatever you eat. Whether you are looking after this body or other bodies, please remember God who is in every body.

Yaj juhosi dadasi yat - whatever you offer in worship, whatever you give in charity - yat tapasyasi - whatever form of austerity you may be practising, even that is offered in worship to God - tat kurusva madarpanam. All these are offerings to God; and, whether they are directed towards this body or towards other bodies, they eventually reach the immediate omnipresence of the divine.

subhasubhaphalair evam moksyase karmabhandhanaih samnyasayogayuktatma vimukto mam upaisyasi (IX:28)  
"If you live in this manner, you are instantly freed from the reactions of the actions that you perform."

A very tricky statement, which means that, whatever happens afterwards, you regard as God's Grace; because, whatever actions proceeded from me were offered to this immediate omnipresence - to this God - who is everywhere, in everybody. For instance, I put something into the mouth realising that it is offered to the indwelling presence. What happens afterwards is again His Will. There is no problem.

So, one who lives in this manner, is instantly freed from the pleasant and the unpleasant reactions that follow the actions. They may superficially appear to be pleasant or unpleasant, they may appear to be good or not so good - but they are all divine.

Samnyasayoga yuktatma - that is called sannyasa yoga. All that we have been discussing these past few weeks, is called sannyasa yoga. If you can live in that manner, you are a sannyasi; vimukto - you are free, mam upaisyasi - you will forever live close to Me, near Me, in Me.

## 8. Eight

The questions "What should I do?" and "What should I not do?", quickly turn into "What am I? Who am I?" But, when we begin to inquire into "Who am I?", the response that we seem to get is not so much the truth concerning who I am, but something else - because I am the enquirer - or 'I' is the enquirer, and what I am looking for is 'I'. I am looking for myself. What does that mean? So, the investigation often becomes a non-starter.

Immediately, we are confronted with all sorts of peripheral problems. Unfortunately, the response that I get when I look within and enquire "Who am I?", is "I am a miserable wretch. My karma is bad, I was born at the wrong point, under the wrong stars. My destiny is bad, and somehow I am being visited by trouble after trouble, calamity after calamity." I'm sure that most or all of us feel that we are born in the wrong place, at the wrong time, so that we are being made to do things which we don't want to do, and on account of that and so many other factors we are constantly unhappy.

It is not so much behaviour we are concerned with, but the being, because the behaviour naturally follows the being. If I am a dog, I bark; if I am a Swami, I speak - it's as simple as that. The behaviour is the function of the being; but, instead of enquiring into the being, when I am looking at the being, the being becomes an object of me, the self, the subject; and in that object - which is a projection of myself, I only see all these problems. I don't see the being yet - though I may even begin to rationalise that, since I see a misfit and a miserable person, that must be my nature. And yet, here we are told that the first person singular is singularly unique and universal, that it is the infinite, it is the immediate omnipresence. It is the omnipresence, but here, in this 'me', it is immediate, whereas, in 'you' or 'he', it is a bit more distant, and therefore a little more difficult of comprehension. If this God or this 'I' is universal, infinite, why am I born in this state, subjected to all this unhappiness, whereas she is alright? That's what I think, she doesn't think so! Just as the 'I' is universal, everybody refers to himself as 'I' and the other as 'you'. There is the same problem when it comes to happiness. I always feel that I am unhappy, you are happy. But that is precisely the expression that you are going to use when talking to me! This again seems to be a universal problem; and Krishna comes back to his favourite theme.

samo 'ham sarvabhutesu na me dvesyo 'sti na priyah (IX:29)

"I am universal, I am the same in all." Sarvabhutesu may mean, all beings, and also even the elements, in the sense of earth, water, fire, and so on. I look at that, and I see something that is obvious, but which has missed our attention all the time. Water is wet, fire is hot, and yet both are vital elements, universal elements, each inseparable from its function. Water flows down, fire rises up. Each is indispensable in its place, for its function. There is a revelation there. Why don't we then realise that in exactly the same way, whatever be the 'I', the first person singular, that is as it should be. It is the 'me' again that created a problem. The

memory - me is merely the memory - or thought creates a difficulty where none exists. It creates a division in what is indivisible - the first being the division between I and me. That is, all the time, I am fighting with myself - as if it were possible. It's an absurd game. You start with 'I hate myself', and somewhere en route you pick up a thing called 'I love myself'; and then think at the other extreme - you have got a thing called 'I realise myself'. Good grief! Even in that 'realise myself', there is a division which is obviously absurd - and that absurd division is created by thought, by the 'me' again. Having created this division, it creates another thing called 'I-you' division. So, first there is the 'I-me' division, then there is the 'I-you' division, and then there is the 'I-he' division. He can be made to stand for God. So, there is a three-fold division where none exists.

When you read these verses, it is good to look at both interpretations, and view the universe from the two obvious angles. One, the theological angle - that it is God who is speaking to us. Therefore the 'mam' or the 'me' in the verses refers to God who is somehow omnipresent, though we also exist. Or, you may take the other interpretation that wherever 'mane' or 'me' occurs in the scripture, it refers to the subject - not to the me, which is nothing but response of memory or thought, but to the 'I', the infinite, which is both immediately cognisable here and omnipresent - the infinite which is in me.

Samo 'ham sarvabhutesu - "I am equal, I am the same in all beings." You may say that God is the same in all of us, or you may say that 'I' is the same in all. Never mind who it is, everyone calls himself 'I', and thinks of himself as 'I'; and that 'I' is universal and common to all. I may think of myself as inferior to you, but that 'I' is the subject there, and the 'myself' is the object of this thought. It is the thought which creates this 'myself'! There is no myself which is inferior, except as is determined by the thought that projects it; but the self, 'I', is universal, neither inferior nor superior.

As you go on reflecting, investigating this truth, suddenly, like a flash, you realise that this 'I-myself' division is thinking. When the thinking stops (or is dropped), then there is no 'I-myself' division, and there is no thought "I am inferior", "I am superior".

So, first of all, the inner division disappears, and when the inner division disappears, at the same moment, the outer division is gone. When I don't think of myself, I don't think of myself as superior or inferior - which means in relation to you. The 'you' also has gone, at the same time. Simultaneously, this 'I am happy, I am unhappy' also disappears. That is also a thought, and that is also the result of comparison. For instance, if all of us are in the same boat that is sinking, no-one thinks he is happy or unhappy. We are all the same, to whom are you going to complain? It is only when I see that you are not what I think I am, you ride in a car and I have to walk, that the thought arises in me, "I am unhappy, you are happy; I am in adverse circumstances, and you are prosperous" - otherwise there is no question.

Pain and pleasure are physical, pain and pleasure may be experienced, but happiness and unhappiness are thought-created; and, thought creates these only when it begins to compare my situation with yours. When this inner conflict or contradiction or division between 'I' and 'myself' has come to an end, then the 'I' doesn't compare itself with anything else - na me dvesyo 'sti na priyah. Suddenly you realise - first the orthodox interpretation - that God does not love someone especially and dislike somebody else. God has no favourites. The other interpretation is that there is nothing called 'I love myself', 'I hate myself', or 'I pity myself'. These are ridiculous, meaningless expressions. When self-pity, self-hate, and self-love - all of them revolving around selfishness - drop away, there is happiness of a very different sort, something which cannot be defined. That is what the yogis call bliss.

ye bhajanti to mam bhaktya mayi to tesu ca py aham (IX:29)

"When in this manner, the yogi strives constantly to remain harmonised." That is what yoga means, that is what devotion means, that is what bhakti means, that is what love of God means - 'to remain harmonised'. When a person is so completely and thoroughly harmonised, then God dwells in him, and he dwells in God; or, there is self-realisation. This is not an event which arises in one's biography on a fine morning, and there is the end. It is not as if, one fine morning, I attain this complete three-fold harmony - I-me, I-you, and I-he harmony - and, from there on, I'll be totally free from all problems. That's absurd, because life is motion, life is constantly moving, and if you, in the pride of the so-called self-realisation, sit down and relax, life overtakes you. You are left behind in your own misery, and the whole thing starts all over again. Here, what is needed is constant awareness of the indivisibility of the infinite. If you let go of this truth for one moment, then ignorance arises again. That is why, in the previous verse, Krishna had warned us:

ananyas cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate. (IX:22)

"Constantly dwelling in nothing but God, in nothing but the self, in nothing but this cosmic consciousness, in nothing but this consciousness or awareness that the Self is universal."

api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananyabhak sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah (IX:30)

There is a problem here. All this is excellent if you are born in the right community, in the right atmosphere, and you live in the right environment. For instance, if you go to the Himalayas, stay in an ashram where everybody is orange-robed, where it is possible to go into this transcendental state. You wonder: "Unfortunately, I have been a vicious creature, and my tendencies and my habits are all wrong. I smoke, I drink, and I do this, I do that. Seems to be a hopeless thing. What shall I do?" Krishna says, "You missed the point." In the previous verse, there was this declaration that the self is in all elements - water that goes down, fire that goes up, air that stays up, earth that stays down. In all

these, the Self is there, the 'I' is there. "So, why do you think", says Krishna, "that, just because you think you have been vicious, that you are ineligible for self-realisation?" Self is real! Even if you are and have been a vicious person, the Self is real in you. It is the Self, it is the 'I' that forms the subject of the mind that enables you to think that I am vicious! It is the mind that thinks I am vicious. It is the mind that is vicious. It is the mind that generates viciousness. It is the mind that has taken the imprint of past vicious conduct, vicious thought, word, and deed. But, what has the Self got to do with it? Just as the other man thinks he is great, you think you are vicious. When the thought has been dropped in both, you are both absolutely equal. The sleeping saint and the sleeping sinner are both sleeping men. One doesn't sleep six feet above the ground, and the other three feet below! So, when the thought process is suspended, the consciousness or awareness or thought that I am a saint or a sinner becomes invalidated; and, since this whole yoga demands the transcendence of thought by the recognition that thought is the divider in what is indivisible, there is no problem. That is called sannyasa yoga.

Sannyasa is abandonment of the false. Yoga is the recollection of the oneness of the real. So *api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananyabhak*. Never mind what you have been so far, never mind even what your mind makes you think you are right now. If that mind can be made to turn around, and face the light, or engage itself in quest of the truth or God or Self - *sadhur eva sa mantavyah samvag vyavasito hi sah* - you have resolved aright. That resolution and that turning around is sufficient. It doesn't matter how far you are from the light of the sun. You see your shadow only as long as your back is turned to the sun. The moment you turn towards the light, you are in the light, you are no longer in darkness.

Once again, we should remind ourselves that it is only from a relative point of view - which means the psychological or mental point of view - that there are these differences of good and evil and all that. The infinite has no such ideas, no such notions, no such thoughts. It 'is', everywhere, at all times! So, to the infinite there are no distinctions. The distinction exists in the mind, and it is valid as long as the mind functions. That is, what we are saying should not be interpreted to mean, "Oh its ok. There is nothing called good, and there is nothing called evil." As long as the mind functions, there is good and evil. Watch out! As long as you make a distinction between happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and pain, there is also good and evil. But, when we are engaged in the investigation of the infinite, these things are seen already as mere ideas without any validity.

So, the person who thinks he has been vicious, and who is full of evil qualities, he thinks he is full of evil qualities. Even he is redeemed if he turns towards the light. What is the indication that he has turned towards the light? That he will not walk in darkness anymore. That is your famous, 'Go ye and sin no more'. You have been walking in darkness so far, because you have turned away from light. Right, turn round and face the light. There is no darkness. You will not sin anymore, because you are facing the light now.

ksipram bhavati dharmatma sasvacchantim nigacchati kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah  
pranasyati (IX:31)

Ksipram bhavati dharmatma - "Instantly he becomes a good man";  
sasvacchantim nigacchati - "and he attains to supreme peace". The last bit is very  
beautiful - kaunteya pratijanihi ne ma bhaktah pranasyati - "promise that a  
devotee never perishes." One who walks towards the light, walks in light, and he  
does not even stumble. One who walks in the light, never gets lost. You may still  
make a mistake. For instance, something may be glittering there, you pick it up,  
thinking that it is something precious, and find it is a shell. Throw it away. But  
that mistake, unlike the mistake that you made previously when you were  
walking in darkness, is immediately detected. Because there is light, you are able  
to see it. If you step on a thorn because for a moment you didn't see properly,  
when you sit down, you can see the thorn, because the light is there. That is the  
beauty - because the light is there, all these things that you might do on account  
of past habit-pattern, are immediately detected and remedied. Unlike the person  
who is walking in darkness who doesn't even know what has happened, and so  
goes round and round and round. Once a person has turned towards the light, he  
is never deceived, he is never led astray, and he is never lost.

mam hi partha vyapasritya ye pi syuh papayonayah striyo vaisyas tatha sudras to pi  
yanti param gatim (IX.32)  
kim punar brahmanah punya bhakta rajarsayas tatha anityam asukham lokam imam prapya  
bhajasva mam (IX.33)

These two verses are together. There is a bit of a controversial idea here. Please  
remember, it is still Krishna, God incarnate, talking to Arjuna the student. I'll  
give you the literal translation. "One who resorts to me - women, business people,  
traders, workers, and one of a sinful birth - even they are redeemed. If this is so,  
how much more then the brahmins, priests, who are holy, and kings and royal  
sages." That sounds a bit funny. After all this 'transcendentalism' and  
'universalism', suddenly you come with a thud to cranky castism. Maybe that  
interpretation is also alright. When such a statement occurs in a text such as this,  
one has to bear in mind the context, the time, and the system that prevailed at  
that time. The system that prevailed at that time was universally - that women  
were ineligible for religious life. If you study the rules and regulations concerning  
monks and nuns in monasteries and so on, you'll be surprised at the distinction  
that was made. Probably throughout the world this existed at that time. Women  
were not supposed to be highly religious or eligible for tremendous spiritual  
quest; traders were condemned by their very profession to dishonesty; and  
workers hardly had the time and the inclination to go into these matters. This  
was the prevailing notion at that time. Now these things don't exist any more.  
Having said all that, I must also remind you that, in some of the great spiritual  
texts called the Upanishads, we are again and again told of great women who  
were mighty spiritual giants. If you care to, you might look up some of the  
Upanishads. One Upanishad called Brihadaranyaka Upanishad gives us a few  
names like Maitreyi and Gargi - women who could hold their own in spiritual  
debate with the mightiest of geniuses. So, these were also there. Krishna says,  
"Even they can come to me, and even they can be redeemed." The table is not

completely turned over, but Krishna gives it a tilt.

This happened a few thousand years ago. It is also possible to look into this from what has come to be known today as the unisex point of view, that men are not men just because they grow a beard, and women are not women because they look different. There is a lot of man in woman, and there is a lot of woman in man, these being dependent upon the nature and the characteristics of the person. What are the nature and characteristics of the female? Two simple hints can be given, and then you can contemplate and draw up more inspiration from it. One is constantly to be at the receiving end - wanting, asking for, receiving, craving. The other is to guard, to hold on to something, to protect something and, in that process, to get attached to something. These may be found in a man, and they may not be found in a woman; so, here we are not talking about women, but the female characteristic. Krishna merely points out, "If you have these characteristics, it may be difficult for you to engage yourself in the spiritual quest, which demands renunciation, giving up - which vaguely is a masculine characteristic. So, you need some masculinity here - you must be able to throw it away, give it up, and be unattached. So, whether you are a man or a woman, if you have these female characteristics, there is a possibility that the spiritual quest will be difficult for you. Whether you are a man or a woman, if you have the other characteristics of renunciation, of non-attachment, non-clinging, non-holding, then it is possible that you are eligible for it.

Having understood the first, the trader is even simpler. Look at the characteristic, instead of getting hung up on the idea that, since he is a businessman, he is ineligible. He may be a businessman, but inwardly he may not be a business character. What does a trader do? He is constantly bartering. "I want what you have, I'll give you money. You want what I have, pay me money." This attitude is antithetical to spirituality. One who engages in barter may never be able to see the oneness in all. The conscience that takes dishonesty to be part of business is a deadly conscience. There is one person who says, "Well, this is very sinful, and I hate to do this, but I have to. Sorry. This is my only qualification. I can do nothing else; so, I am doing business." That's one point of view. The other point of view says, "This is right, this is business." The mafia philosophy! Profiteering, profit making is antithetical to spiritual life. Can you give that up?

All these are direct contradictions of the spiritual quest, where the oneness of everything is revealed. And, in the same way, the attitude of the worker who constantly suffers from an inferiority complex, and treats everybody else as a boss, to be feared, obeyed, and, if possible, disposed of, is also unsuitable to the spiritual quest. So, Krishna says, "Look within, and see if these characteristics exist within you. And, even if these characteristics exist, if you turn towards me, you will be redeemed."

Kim punar brdhanah punya - a brahmin is not a brahmin just because he was born of brahmin parents, but he must be a holy one - punya. Bhakta - devotees. Rajarsayas - even though they are kings, they are also seers. So, there are kings,

princes, and warriors, who are still able to see the truth. Why is it so? You understand that the brahmin, the priest, is able to, because he studies the truth constantly, and is devoted to a religious life. Even though it may not be spiritual, he goes on pretending to be spiritual. Why was a king, a warrior, regarded as more eligible to the spiritual quest than the other three we mentioned? Because of the fact that, perforce, he is a soldier, an abandoner. You cannot become a soldier if you have any love for your life. You have to give up, you have to be ever ready to give up your life, everything that you possess, in order to be a good soldier. So, these people will make good swamis, sannyasis.

*anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam (IX:33)*

Never mind what station you were born into, turn towards the light. Then you will see the light, you will walk in this light. All the distinctions that the mind created - that I am happy, I am unhappy, the others are happy, I am born in a bad station and the others are better - all these stupid notions will disappear, and you will walk in light.

Don't think that you are miserable and the others are not miserable. Anityam asukham lokam. These are the two fundamental characteristics of this world, and existence in this world: impermanence and unhappiness. You think you are miserable and the others are quite happy; go and ask them, touch their heart - you will find that everybody in this world is miserable. Everyone, without exception. This is the nature of existence, no-one is ever really satisfied with what they get. No-one is really contented, no-one's ambitions can ever be fulfilled, satisfied. They reach out for more and more and more. Krishna says, "I am not saying this because you are like that, but because this is the nature of worldly existence." Realising this, constantly turn towards the light. Bhajasva mam - you can take it as either "Worship God" or "Be religious" or "Constantly enquire into the nature of the self."

Who am I? I am not a miserable creature. I am not unhappy, because unhappiness belongs to the thinking mind - which is again common to all, not only to me. The real 'I' is beyond this thinking mind, and when the thinking mind is suspended, the 'I' is not unhappy at all, nor is it happy in the ordinary sense of the word. So, those problems are disposed of.

Anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam. There is rather a funny angle to the interpretation of this. Asukham means unhappy; anityam means impermanent. I also take it to mean that if you think you are being subjected to unhappiness, please remember that it is impermanent. This unhappiness is not going to be a permanent thing for you; so, don't cry. The whole world, everything is impermanent, even unhappiness.

*manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji math namaskuru mam evai 'syasi yuktvai 'vam atmanam matparayanah (IX:34)*

This is rounding off the whole teaching. When you engage yourself in the

investigation of the Self or God, make sure that it is comprehensive, that it is integral investigation. Don't think that, because you wear a nice orange robe, or a nice mala around the neck, or shave your head and appear to be holy, that that will do. You may do that - there is no condemnation here at all, and there is no criticism. But, manmana bhava - let the whole mind be saturated with the divine, with the quest, with the investigation. Whatever be your approach, whatever be your method, whatever be your practise, let that involve the total mind. Madbhakta - be devoted to me; madyaji - and whatever you do, do it for my sake; mam namaskuru - and whomever you see, see God in that person, see God in all. Mam evai 'syasi yuktvai 'vam atmanam matparayanah - when you are thus devoted to me - in the words of the Bible again - with all your heart, with all your strength, with all your mind, and with all your being, then there is no doubt that you will reach me and live in me. For, as Krishna had said a few verses ago, "I am present in them, and they are present in Me. I am in them, and they are in Me", because, the division which was assumed to exist, which the mind had created in a state of ignorance, is abolished. The I-self division is gone, the I-you division is gone, and the I-he division is gone.

In that state, whatever one does, one does for the sake of God, or for the sake of the Self. And, whatever one is devoted to, in that, the person sees only God or the omnipresent Self. This is integral yoga, this is sannyasa yoga.

Hari Om Tat Sat