

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

BHAGAVAD GEETA – 9

*“Kingly Science,
Kingly Secret”*

“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”

**TEXT
28.09**

Reflections by
SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA





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List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:

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1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
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6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
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13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
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A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Samskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

– The Author, February 2019, Shivaratri Day

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text
29.09



राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

THE BHAGAVAD GEETA – 9

“Kingly Science, Kingly Secret”

Sri Veda Vyasaji

Reflections

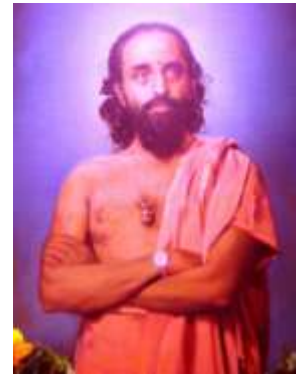
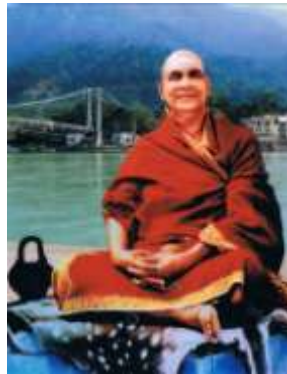
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on the 11 Lectures delivered by **Swami Advayanandaji**

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23rd May – 2nd June, 2013



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Personal Dedication

1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan

who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;

2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj

the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;

3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)

for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;

4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji

my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.

BHAGAVAD GEETA – 9

“Kingly Science, Kingly Secret”

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

अथ नवमोऽध्यायः ।

राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः

THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

Discourse – 9 (34 Verses)

“Supreme Science – Supreme Secret”

INTRODUCTION

AT THE HALFWAY MARK of the *Geeta*. Lord Krishna is confident that his student can be let into the “Greatest Secret” of Life. He has been listening with rapt attention, **Anusooyave**, “without criticizing” (see verse 1) the message delivered so far and without any jealousy or pettiness of mind. As a reward for that, the Lord considers that it is time to impart to him the secret teaching.

Brahma Jnana is the unique knowledge which deals with Liberation from the endless round of births and deaths. This state of liberation frees us completely from all the sorrows of Samsara, the worldly existence. How this happens and what is the underlying principle behind it, is going to be the absorbing subject of this Chapter.



BHAGAVAD GEETA – 9
“Kingly Science, Kingly Secret”

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9.1 THE SECRET & THE SCIENCE

(Verses 1-3, 3 No.)

THE FIRST THREE VERSES are the 'Advert' by which Arjuna's mind is rivetted to what is about to be told to him. The Divine Teacher is quite familiar with all the techniques of salesmanship – He has to attract his student's mind before delivering His teaching.

Verse 1: *The Royal "Secret"*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ ९-१॥
śrībhagavānuvāca |
idaṁ tu tē guhyatamaṁ pravakṣyāmyanasūyavē |
jñānaṁ vijñānasahitaṁ yajjñātvā mōkṣyasē:'śubhāt || 9-1||

	<i>Shree Bhagavaan Uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Blessed Lord said:</i>
1	<i>Idam tu te guhyatamam,</i>	<i>To you indeed, this the greatest secret</i>
2	<i>pravakshyaami anasooyave;</i>	<i>I shall declare, for you do not <u>cavil</u>*;</i>
3	<i>jnaanam vijnaana-sahitam,</i>	<i>this is knowledge <u>combined with experience</u>,</i>
4	<i>yat jnaatvaa mokshyase ashubhaat.</i>	<i>by knowing which, you shall be free from the sorrows of life.</i>

* "Cavil" = make petty or unnecessary objections.

1 Idam: "this". The Chapter begins with this harmless looking word, meaning "this". Yet, to one like Acharyaji, every word is pregnant with meaning, and he brought it out in full measure. *This* knowledge is not something new. We have spoken of it already in Chapter 2, at the very outset. It includes that knowledge of the past; it also includes what the Lord is about to reveal now; and it includes what is yet to come in the later discourses.

In other words, this simple word *Idam* is meant to encompass the whole PLAN of the knowledge Sri Krishna has in mind to convey to Arjuna.

There are two important points that the Lord brings out in this opening stanza:

1-2 i) Guhyatamaam: This is the superlative form of the adjective "secret", i.e. it is the "most secret" or "greatest secret". It implies that there is something else that is a plain secret, and something else that is "more secret". What are they?

Firstly, why is it a secret? For humans, knowledge is considered a secret if it is not known to our senses, if it is not available to all our present means of being made known. This turns our mind to the Vedas, where such knowledge is enshrined.

Within the Vedas, there are three levels of knowledge: the secret, the more secret and the most secret.

The Secret: the first level of knowledge available is that of the Karma Kanda, which deals with Dharma or the laws governing this universe, especially in the context of how we can obtain what we desire. The Karma Kanda describes the knowledge by which we can fulfil any desire of our mind in a lawful manner.

The More Secret: Then comes the next level of knowledge. To the one who approaches the Vedas for a higher knowledge, the Vedas have certain Upasanas which prescribe the forms of worship by which one can raise one's consciousness above the ordinary desires, and fulfil a deeper urge within. The Upasana Kanda does that. Bhagavat Bhakti or devotion to the Lord is the theme of this portion. It takes one to a point of selflessness which is needed for the next stage of knowledge.

The Most Secret: We now come to the third level of knowledge, the ***Guhyatamaam*** which is the Jnana Kanda or Upanishads of the Vedas. This is the highest secret taught in the Vedas. Knowledge here takes us beyond the realm of Samsara, it is completely fulfilling, it takes us to the realm of immortality. Through this knowledge one can escape the power of the Lord's Maya or Delusion, and regain oneness with the Eternal Reality.

A big claim? Yes, that is indeed the real nature of this "Most Secret" knowledge, which the Lord is about to reveal to His dear disciple.

3 ii) *Vijnana Sahitam*: "*combined with practical experience*". The second fact about this knowledge is that it is not just a theoretical, but a practical means of realizing the Truth by direct experience of it.

The earlier two types of knowledge mentioned above are knowledge where one has to wait for the results to follow. In the case of Karmas or actions, the results take a definite time before they manifest. For example, a farmer sows seeds now and harvests them only several months later. In the Upasanas also, the worship done now, has to wait till death to take one to the heavenly worlds that are the desired goal of the Upasaka.

However, in the third type of knowledge, the Brahma Jnana, the result is immediate. The knowledge, when grasped beyond any trace of doubt, has the power to remove one's ignorance then and there, immediately, while one is still living!

This is the distinctive difference between this knowledge and any other.

Freedom From All Sorrow

4 What is the special result of this supreme knowledge?

***Mokshyase Ashubhaat*:** This knowledge is given with the promise that it "*removes all sorrows from our life*" for good. A tall promise? May be, but the Lord is making it, which cannot be dismissed lightly.

Anubandha Chatushtaya:

Acharyaji also explained that this opening verse contains all the four points by which the reader's mind is connected to the text, as follows:

i) ***Adhikari: Anasooyave*** – one who does not cavil, is the qualification of the student.

ii) ***Vishaya: Jnanam*** – Brahma Jnana, knowledge of the Self, is the subject.

iii) ***Prayojana: Mokshyase Ashubhaat*** – the purpose is to free us from all sorrow.

iv) Sambandha: **Pravakshyaami** – what the Lord is about to say is directly connected with the Prayojana of the text. There is a *Sadhya-Sadhika* relationship established between the means and that which is accomplished by the means; between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.

Verse 2: *The Royal “Science”*

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।

प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम्

॥ ९-२॥

rājavidyā rājaguhyaṁ pavitramidamuttamam |

pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyaṁ susukhaṁ kartumavyayam || 9-2||

1	<i>Raaja-vidyaa raaja-guhyam,</i>	<i>Royal science, royal secret,</i>
2	<i>pavitram idam uttamam;</i>	<i>the <u>supreme purifier</u> is this;</i>
3	<i>pratyaksha avagamam dharmyam,</i>	<i>realizable by <u>direct</u> intuitive knowledge, according to <u>Dharma</u>,</i>
4	<i>susukham kartum avyayam.</i>	<i>very <u>easy</u> to perform and <u>imperishable</u>.</i>

More praise of this knowledge follows, and it gets more *enticing*! The Salesman in Sri Krishna puts a stamp of “Royalty” on His product, and in quick succession we see Him firing eight marketing epithets one after another. Arjuna is driven to a psychological high. Surely, he has to succumb to this sooner or later!

1 1. “It is a Royal Science”: This is something which was known to all State rulers of those days. Acharyaji clarified that this was not simply so that they could dominate over the people, but because the knowledge has certain special characteristics:

- i) It made them perfectly disciplined and self-controlled to rule others;
- ii) It gave them a universal vision, taking away any narrow egoistic outlook. It broadened their outlook so that they could ‘feel’ the problems of the people over whom they ruled, and enable them to empathise with them; and
- iii) It freed them from all selfish desires, so that they could rule as instruments of the Lord for the benevolence and welfare of their subjects.

This is why Kings sought this knowledge. This is why India was well-known to have had a string of great ruler-saints in history, for example, King Janaka; and in recent times, Chatrapati Shivaji and the Queen of Jhansi.

1b 2. “It is a Royal Secret”: We now take up another aspect of “secret” from the common standpoint. Why is it a secret? This is about such a subject that:

- i) Even if someone hears of it, it is only a few qualified people who will understand it.
- ii) It is a secret because it is lodged beyond the senses and mind, so even when a person understands it, it remains a secret!

2a 3. “It is a Purifier”: Most secrets are scandalous. This one is not. This secret is ‘*Pavitram*’, it purifies the one who knows it. If one takes a bath in this secret once, he does not ever need to bath again in it.

The secret is regarded as being superior to Prayaschitta or actions done to purify the effects of Paapa or sin. However, this knowledge is of such a nature that it wipes away not just the sins but also the sinner! Prayaschitta takes away only Paapa, not Punya. But Punya also binds one to Samsara. This knowledge, has the power to remove all Punya as well, by converting it to Chitta Shuddhi or purity of mind.

2b 4. “It is Supreme”: It leads one to the Supreme goal of life, reaching which one never needs to return to this life of sorrow and misery. Worldly secrets cannot match it!

3a 5. “It is Realisable Directly”: This secret is such that it can only be known directly by intuition. The senses cannot grasp it, and nor can the mind.

3b 6. “It Complies With Dharma”: This knowledge is such that one who realizes its fruit, will always tread the path of Dharma (Righteousness) without ever deviating from it. He simply cannot do anything that is wrong.

Adharmic or unrighteous means lead to inauspicious results. Anything that we get ‘for a song’, does not stay for long. Worthy results take time and effort to come.

4a 7. “It is Very Easy & Joyful”: The word Susukham is derived from ‘Sushtu + Sukham’; it means “easy and brings great joy”. The path that Lord Krishna is proposing for Arjuna is not like “promising gold in Mars, just waiting for transport to be brought to Earth!” (Pujya Gurudev’s example.) It is a path that can be trod by anyone, who has sincerity of heart and a strong urge to free himself from the glittering delusions of Maya.

4b 8. “It Cannot be Destroyed”: The fact that this path offers something permanent is very attractive. Everything about Maya is ephemeral, and the person who has seen through Maya’s falsity will not be interested in temporary solutions. This knowledge promises something that is Indestructible. Immediately the attention of the right person is drawn towards it, at the very mention of the word ‘indestructible’.

And so Sri Krishna’s advertising campaign comes to an end on this solid note. He has fired eight bullets at Arjuna’s mind from close range. Every one of them is a positive point to win over His ‘customer’. But a good salesman does not stop there. He always adds a note of caution about the ill-effects of not buying into the deal.

In the next verse, we see the Lord do exactly that!

Verse 3: *The Faithless Are Doomed*

अश्रद्धाणाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परन्तप ।

अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि

॥ ९-३॥

asraddadhānāḥ puruṣā dharmasyāśya parantapa |

aprāpya mām nivartantē mṛtyusaṁsāravartmani

|| 9-3||

1	<i>Ashraddadhaanaah purushaah,</i>	<i>Persons <u>without any faith</u></i>
2	<i>dharmasya asya parantapa;</i>	<i>in this path of Dharma, O Parantapa –</i>
3	<i>apraapya maam nivartante,</i>	<i>without attaining Me, they return</i>
4	<i>mṛityu-samsaara-vartmani.</i>	<i>to this world, that is fraught with <u>Death</u>.</i>

A contrasting picture is presented here, of what happens to one who does not hear, or take to heart even if he hears, the “Kingly Science and Kingly Secret”. And what is the basis of the contrast? It is just one single factor: **Shraddha** or “Faith”.

1-2 Firstly, we learn from this how much value Sri Krishna places on **Faith**. It is the single factor which separates two opposing pathways in life.

In spiritual pursuit, the goal is not visible, not tangible as a solid object before our senses. For this reason, much of the early phase of spiritual life has to be taken on faith from what we hear about it from responsible, trusted spiritual Masters. As is the strength of our faith, so will be the magnitude of our effort to reach the “unseen” Goal.

A Word on Faith

However, Acharyaji said the following to remove the doubt people have about this path. He said:

“Faith is a leap by the intellect into the unknown with the possibility of succeeding. Faith is the beginning. Just as our faith in the ability of the eye makes us use it to obtain knowledge of form, so too, the scriptures and words of the Guru are the ‘eye’ of spiritual knowledge. If due to lack of faith, we refuse to use it, we are the losers – we simply do not get the knowledge.”

For this reason the Lord has singled out Faith as the one factor which sorts out success from failure on the spiritual path.

An example was given in class. A blind man in a room which had one doorway to it used a stick to tap the wall until he found the door. An observer saw that when he was about to reach the doorway, he had an itch, tucked the stick under his arm to scratch himself while still walking on. When done with the scratching, he had walked past the door. That ‘itch’ is called lack of faith. It is what makes us lose our way.

3-4 What is the end result of lack of faith? The person, without finding the ‘doorway’ to the Lord, returns unsuccessful back to the realm of transmigration, the endless round of births and deaths to which his life of sensuality condemns him.

This verse, by presenting the opposite scenario, creates the necessary faith in us to pursue this most rewarding of all ventures available to man – the only venture that will crown his life with meaning and inner richness.

Sri Krishna’s sales campaign is now over. It is all in the hands of the customer to agree to listen to the secret, or to say, “Thanks for your time, Sir, but I think I’ll try some other place.” The next section starts with an Arjuna whose ears are glued to Sri Krishna’s spellbinding divine lips.



9.2 THE SECRET LAID BARE

(Verses 4-6, 3 No.)

THESE ARE CRUNCH verses of this Chapter. They contain three essential principles of Brahma Jnana, which have to be meditated upon until all doubts arising regarding them are removed. When these principles are made alive by putting them into practice in daily life, we become well-set to attain the *summum bonum* of life.

Each verse expounds a principle of Brahma Jnana. Here is their summary:

Principle 1: *I pervade everything.* (from Relative viewpoint) (verse 4)

Principle 2: *I am the Substratum of all beings.* (Absolute viewpoint) (verse 5)

Principle 3: *All beings are Superimposed upon Me.* (Absolute view) (verse 6)

This is the “Kingly Science, Kingly Secret” . . . Please read this with extra attention.

Verse 4: *i) “I Pervade Everything”*

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः

॥ ९-४॥

mayā tatamidaṁ sarvaṁ jagadavyaktamūrtinā |

matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṁ tēṣvavasthitah

॥ 9-4॥

1	<i>Mayaa tatam idam sarvam</i>	Principle 1: <i>By <u>Me</u> is <u>pervaded</u> all this</i>
2	<i>jagat, avyakta moortinaa;</i>	<i>world, in My Unmanifest form;</i>
3	<i>mat-sthaani sarva bhootaani,</i>	<i>i) all beings <u>exist in Me</u>, (explained by Principle 1 & 3)</i>
4	<i>na cha aham teshu avasthitah.</i>	<i>ii) but I <u>do not dwell</u> in them. (explained by Principle 2)</i>

Relationship Between Brahman & Universe

1 Brahman (**‘Me’** or the Lord) pervades “all this”. What is “all this”? It is the entire macrocosm, the total gross and subtle universe. The entire creation is pervaded by the Lord, who represents the Supreme Brahman. This is **Principle 1** of Brahma Jnana.

2 Cloth is pervaded by cotton. Both cloth and cotton are Vyakta, or perceivable. That is not the relationship between the universe and Brahman, since Brahman is not perceivable but the universe is. Behind the perceptible external form of the universe, there is the imperceptible **Avyakta**, the Formless or Unmanifest, that is not known to the senses.

Every object in the universe has five attributes: Sat, Chit, Ananda, Naama and Roopa (Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, name and form). Of these the first three are attributed to the Imperishable part of the object, namely, Brahman; and the last two are attributed to the Perishable part of the object, that which is not Brahman, or the not-Self, that which is apparently real only. The first three are Avyakta; the other two are Vyakta.

Name and form are pervaded by Satchidananda Brahman. This Brahman is ‘Me’, the Lord Supreme, Sri Krishna’s essential Being. Sri Krishna is speaking to us from that Highest level in which He is always rooted, though He has taken a human form.

Two statements on Brahman are now mentioned. The first of these is from the relative standpoint, and is explained by Principle 1. However, when seen from the Absolute standpoint in 5 (next verse), it is reversed and then it can only be explained by Principle 3. The second statement is explained from the Absolute standpoint by Principle 2 in the next verse. All will become clear at the end of verse 6.

i) “All Beings Exist in Me” – Explained from Relative Standpoint by Principle 1

3 From the fact that Brahman is all-pervading, arises the relative viewpoint that all beings exist in Brahman. This is logical only from the relative standpoint of creation. From the Absolute viewpoint, this is not true. The whole matter is explained fully in verse 6.

ii) “But I Do Not Dwell In Them” – Explained by Principle 2

4 The all-pervasiveness of Brahman cannot explain this line. An example to illustrate this statement would be the snake and rope. The snake exists in the rope, but the rope cannot be said to exist in the snake, because the snake is something imaginary. The rope’s existence is primary and independent of the snake; the snake’s existence is secondary, and illusory; it depends on the existence of the rope.

In the same way Brahman does not dwell in the beings, since beings are illusory. The existence of beings depends on Brahman.

Verse 5 **ii) “I Am the Substratum of All Beings”**

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।

भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः

॥ ९-५॥

na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya me yōgamaiśvaram |

bhūtabhṛnna ca bhūtasthō mamātmā bhūtabhāvanah || 9-5||

5	<i>Na cha mat-sthaani bhootaani,</i>	<i>i)’ Nor do beings exist in Me <u>in reality</u> – (can only be explained by Principle 3, next verse)</i>
6	<i>pashya me yogam aishwaram;</i>	<i>Behold the wonder of My <u>divine Yoga</u>!</i>
7	<i>Bhoota-bhrit na cha bhootasthah,</i>	Principle 2: <i>The Support of all beings, but not <u>dwelling</u> in them,</i>
8	<i>mama aatmaa bhoota-bhaavanah.</i>	<i>I Myself am the efficient cause of all beings.</i>

5 This statement is the opposite of statement i) above; hence, it is referenced as i)’ :

i)’ “Nor do beings exist in Me in reality” – from the Absolute viewpoint.

The words “in reality” tell us that this view is from the Absolute viewpoint; in Vedanta only the Absolute is taken as Reality. The apparent contradiction between statements i) and i)’ is explained by **Principle 3** in the verse 6.

6 A glimpse of the Substratum principle that follows is given here. “Divine Yoga” refers to the union or association of Brahman with His Creative power, Maya. From this “Divine Yoga” comes all of creation. In creation, the name and form are the Maya aspect, whilst Sat-Chit-Ananda is the Brahman aspect.

7 Principle 2 is now stated and it makes it clear that since Brahman is the Substratum for beings, they are dependent on Brahman, not the other way.

This means that they can dwell in Brahman, but Brahman cannot dwell in them. This is the explanation for statement ii).

8 This is a way of saying that, as the Substratum of all beings, Brahman becomes their efficient cause. The superimposition is always dependent on the Substratum. Thus the Substratum becomes the **Efficient Cause** of the superimposition. The material cause of the superimposition is Maya, and is discussed in the next section.

This ties up with what we have said in Pada **6**. The name and form arise from the material cause, while Sat-Chit-Ananda arise from the efficient cause.

Verse 6: *iii) “All Beings are Superimposed on Me”*

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय

॥ ९-६॥

yathākāśasthitō nityaṁ vāyuh sarvatragō mahān |

tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni matsthānītyupadhāraya

|| 9-6||

9	yathaa aakaasha-sthitah nityam,	Just as, always resting in the space,
10	vaayuh sarvatra-gah mahaan;	the air moves everywhere;
11	tathaa sarvaani bhotaani,	even so, Principle 3 : All beings
12	mat-sthaani iti upadhaaraya.	rest in Me – this you should take note of.

Illustration of Space & Air

9-10 Space is in the position of a substratum to Air. The air is superimposed on Space. Space is independent, Air is dependent on Space. What happens to the Air does not affect Space at all. The air can be hot or cold, Space is not concerned. Air can be moving or still, Space is unconcerned. Air could be polluted or clean, Space is unaffected.

In the same way the actions and thoughts of beings does not affect the Substratum, Brahman. The superimposed beings do not affect Brahman at all. This is the meaning of Superimposition, the third principle of Brahma Jnana.

11-12 Here we have **Principle 3**. “All beings are Superimposed on Me”.

Brahman is the only unchanging Reality. Everything else is a superimposition upon this Reality. A superimposition can never be real in itself. If it is real, it means there are two realities. This is illogical. Thus, the superimposition has to be unreal.

The Contradiction Explained

We are now in a position to explain the contradiction between **3**, “all beings exist in Me”, and **5**, “Nor do all beings exist in Me”. It has already been said that the former is from

the relative standpoint of this world, while the latter is from the Absolute standpoint. We are looking at the same phenomenon from two different angles; The explanation is:

3 To describe Brahman as “all-pervading” is possible only from the relative standpoint. From the Absolute standpoint the term ‘all-pervading’ can have no meaning as the Absolute is dimensionless. Space is an element and is unreal. Hence, only from the relative standpoint can we say “All beings exist in Me”.

5 From the viewpoint of Brahman, beings are all unreal superimpositions. How can they be given the status of reality of existing in Brahman. They simply do not exist! Hence, from the viewpoint of the Absolute, “Nor do beings exist in Me in reality.”

The Table below helps to see the whole picture clearly:

	PRINCIPLE 2	PRINCIPLE 3
1	SUBSTRATUM	SUPERIMPOSITION
2	BRAHMAN	MAYA
3	ABSOLUTE REALITY	RELATIVE UNREALITY
4	EFFICIENT CAUSE	MATERIAL CAUSE
5	SAT-CHIT-ANANDA	NAME & FORM
6	UNCHANGING, UNMOVING	EVER-CHANGING, MOVING
7	INDEPENDENT	DEPENDENT



9.3 THE LORD'S PRAKRITI (MAYA)

(Verses 7-10, 4 No.)

WE NOW FOLLOW UP the knowledge of the Absolute Brahman (given in the previous section) with how He manifests through His macrocosmic Upadhis or conditionings in creation. The moment we speak of Creation, Brahman's executive power, Prakriti, enters the scene. For Brahman + Prakriti produces Creation.

This section deals with Prakriti, the Power of the Lord. Prakriti is also called Maya, due to Her illusory aspect of deluding mankind.

Verse 7: *Prakriti – the Upadana Karana (Material Cause)*

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम्
sarvabhūtāni kauntēya prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikām |
kalpakṣayē punastāni kalpādau visṛjāmyaham || 9-7||

1	<i>Sarva bhootaani, kaunteya,</i>	<i>All beings, O Kaunteya,</i>
2	<i>prakritim yaanti maamikaam;</i>	<i>merge into My Prakriti (nature)</i>
3	<i>kalpa-kshaye punah taani,</i>	<i>at the end of a Kalpa; and again they,</i>
4	<i>kalpa aadau visrijaami aham.</i>	<i>at the beginning of the next Kalpa, I send forth.</i>

1 The verse shows that the **Upadana Karana** or ultimate material cause of creation is Prakriti. The reference here is verse 8.17.

2-4 The **Prakritika Pralaya** cycle is the largest we were told about in Chapter 8, referring to Brahmaji's lifetime. Another term for it is Maha Pralaya. At this time, everything gets merged into Prakriti itself, and is sent forth at the beginning of the next Kalpa.

The purpose here is to show that even at the time of the most complete dissolution of all the worlds, Brahman still remains in Existence. He, the Lord, is beyond the pale of Prakriti and unaffected by dissolution; how much less by the day and night of Brahman!

Verse 8: *Brahman – the Nimitta Karana (Efficient Cause)*

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात्
prakṛtiṁ svāmavaṣṭabhya visṛjāmi punaḥ punaḥ |
bhūtagrāmamimaṁ kṛtsnamavaśaṁ prakṛtērvāśāt || 9-8||

1	<i>Prakritim swam avashtabhyah,</i>	Having animated My own <u>Prakriti</u> ,
2	<i>visrijaami punah punah;</i>	I again and again <u>send forth</u>
3	<i>bhoota-graamam imam kritsnam,</i>	all this <u>multitude</u> of beings,
4	<i>avasham prakriteh vashaat.</i>	helpless by the force of nature.

1-2 The Supreme Lord, Brahman, is the **Nimitta Karana** or efficient cause of this creation. He is the one who ‘wills’ creation to happen.

The philosophical term used to explain this Cause is that Brahman simply willed, and creation began. Another way of explaining it is that He made a determination, a Sankalpa. Here, in the Geeta, the expression used is **Avashtabhyah**, “having animated” or “breathed life into” His Prakriti.

3-4 Avasham: “helpless”. This is another very expressive word. Do the created beings have any say in the matter? According to this description, the innumerable beings have no choice of their own in the matter of coming into creation. They are “helplessly” drawn into the stream of creation by the force of Prakriti, and by the animation of Brahman.

The point we are asked to always keep uppermost in these theories is that Brahman is the support of creation, but unaffected by it. Sri Krishna is speaking from Brahman’s view.

Verse 9: *Brahman is Indifferent and Unattached*

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ।

उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु

॥ ९-९॥

na ca mām tāni karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya |

udāsīnavadāsīnamasaktam tēṣu karmasu

|| 9-9||

1	<i>Na cha maam taani karmaani,</i>	These acts appear to be <u>Mine</u> but do not
2	<i>nibadhnanti, dhananjaya;</i>	bind Me, O Dhananjaya;
3	<i>udaaseenavat aaseenam,</i>	like one <u>indifferent</u> to them, I sit
4	<i>asaktam teshu karmasu.</i>	<u>unattached</u> to these acts.

The idea we closed with in the last verse, is taken up in this entire verse, but with emphasis on Brahman’s **indifference** and **detachment** from the whole process.

The Changelessness of Brahman

The indifference and detachment of the Lord from His creation is just one way of looking at creation in order to bring out the fact that Brahman does not change due to the process of creation that He sets in motion. He remains the unchanging witness of His creation.

A key principle in Vedanta philosophy is to have one supreme factor which is an absolute constant. Everything else can then be measured with reference to that constant factor. If there were not this constant to relate everything to, it will be impossible to posit any Reality. By definition Reality is taken to be that which does not change. In Vedanta, that constant, unchanging baseline is Brahman.

9.4 RECOGNISING THE EMBODIED LORD

(Verses 11-13, 3 No.)

AFTER HAVING SEEN how Creation takes place, we now extend that to a very special case of creation: What happens when the Lord Himself decides to come personally into creation taking on a human body? In a case like that, although He comes with all the divine powers, why is it that most people do not recognize Him in that form as the Lord?

This short section discusses this special human manifestation of the Lord – the Avatara, with focus on how to recognise Him, His powers, and His mission on earth.

Verse 11: *I Am Largely Unrecognised*

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्

॥ ९-११॥

avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanumāśritam |

param bhāvamajānantō mama bhūtamahēśvaram

|| 9-11||

1	<i>Avajaananti maam moodhaa,</i>	<i>Fools <u>disregard</u> Me,</i>
2	<i>maanushheem tanum aashritam;</i>	<i>when I dwelt in human form.</i>
3	<i>param bhaavam ajaanantah,</i>	<i>They know not My higher being</i>
4	<i>mama bhoota maheshwaram.</i>	<i>as the great Lord of all beings.</i>

1-2 Avajaananti: “they do not know Me”. The Lord is faced with a very common problem from ignorant Man: When He is not seen by them in His role as the supervisor behind Prakriti, then people say “He does not exist”. When He takes the human form and comes in their midst to do some major task, then the same doubting people do not recognize Him and begin to sneer at Him.

It is clear that the Lord’s Avatara is not for the sake of the ignorant beings. They will not recognise Him. To one who is immersed in the affairs of the lower nature, the Lord’s Higher Being is just as unrecognizable even though He has come in flesh and blood. To a man who is blind, what does it matter whether it is day or night?

The Lord comes for the sake of the saintly, religious, God-fearing devotees who wish to cross over Samsara and come to Him permanently.

3-4 Because they do not know Me, they do any one of the following three things: i) they disregard Me; ii) they do not respect Me; or iii) they go to the extent of even reviling and criticizing Me. These are the meanings one can take from *Avajaananti*. Although only the first type is mentioned, the other two types have to be considered included.

The higher ideal is the only thing that links a human being to the Supreme Lord of Lords. Until such an ideal pervades our life, it matters little whether God is visible or invisible

– both are of no value. In fact, if He is perceivable, it is worse for the ignorant, because their criticism is additional demerit for them, and sets them further back.

Verse 12: *Those Who Do NOT Recognise Me*

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
 राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ ९-१२॥
 mōghāśā mōghakarmāṇō mōghajñānā vicētasah |
 rākṣasīmāsurīm caiva prakṛtiṁ mōhinīm śritāḥ ॥ 9-12॥

1	<i>Mogha-aashaah, mogha karmaanah,</i>	<i>Of vain hopes, of vain actions,</i>
2	<i>mogha-jnaanaah vichetasah;</i>	<i>of vain knowledge, and senseless,</i>
3	<i>raakshaseem aasureem cha eva,</i>	<i>of the nature of Rakshasas and Asuras,</i>
4	<i>prakritim mohineem shritaah.</i>	<i>they verily are possessed of Delusion.</i>

1-2 Mogha: “useless, vain, unfulfilling”. This is a common word meaning something that does not add any value to life, something that has no benefit. Being used three times tells us that we should pay special attention to this quality and weed it out of our lives.

These are Duratmas or “sinners”. They fall into three grades, related to each other step by step:

- i) **Mogha-Aashaah:** This is the man of vain hopes, holding *futile desires*.
- ii) **Mogha-Karmanaah:** The man of futile desires, does *futile actions* to satisfy them.
- iii) **Mogha-Jnaanaah:** To do futile actions, he goes about acquiring *futile knowledge*.

3 Rakshasas & Asuras: Rakshasas are filled with the quality of Tamas. Tamas does not necessarily mean one who sleeps. Asleep or awake, he can be troublesome in both. When asleep, he may trouble others only by snoring! When awake, he is worse – he is vile or vulgar in all that he does. He is always intent on hurting someone, just for the fun of it. He derives joy in hurting others. This is *Rakshasi Buddhi*, governed by very strong **HATE**.

The other type, called Asuras, are overwhelmed by Rajas. They can be very intelligent people, but they use their intelligence only to add to their search for pleasure. Their lives are empty (since God has no place in it); they fill the vacuum with something exciting, always looking for thrills. “Eat, drink and be merry” – this is their motto. This is their epicurean philosophy. It is *Asuric Buddhi*, governed by very strong **LIKES**.

4 These three categories of Duratmas are **Mohinee**, filled with delusion. They have no clarity and their minds are always very restless. Such people find it impossible to recognize the Lord. The Lord is too subtle for their perception.

The sieve of their mind has large holes; fine sands of divinity cannot be held in it.

Verse 13: *Those Who DO Recognise Me*

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
 भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ ९-१३॥

1	<i>Mahaatmaanah</i> tu maam, paartha,	But the <i>Mahatmas</i> , O Partha,
2	<i>daiveem prakritim aashritaah;</i>	partaking of My divine nature,
3	<i>bhajanti</i> ananya manasah,	<u>worships</u> Me with a mind devoted to nothing else,
4	<i>jnaatvaa bhoot-aadim avyayam.</i>	<u>knowing</u> Me as the imperishable Source of all;

1 Mahatma: the “great-souled”. Typical of Sri Krishna’s style, He now paints the opposite picture. This is the one who is completely identified with the Lord.

2 Daiveem Prakritim: “divine nature”. This nature is elaborated in the early part of Chapter 16. Its opposite, Rakshasic and Asuric Prakriti, is elaborated in the rest of Chapter 16. These are the pure-hearted souls with a “divine nature”. They do not bear ill-will towards any beings. They are not inflamed by Kama, Krodha or Lobha (desire, anger and greed). Their minds are free from these three, which are gateways to hell.

All Mahatmas were once Duratmas, i.e. all great souls were once sinners. The saint is a sinner who never gave up trying to improve. A saint is a sinner whose bundle of dirt has been washed away by the soap of virtues. It is Paapa that makes one unattractive to God. By clearing away Paapa, one can make himself pure and attractive to the Lord.

Two Types of Mahatmas:

The previous verse revealed three grades of Duratmas, sinful people. In this verse, we have two types of Mahatmas:

3 i) Bhajanti: This is the Bhakta of the Lord, who is full of love and exclusive devotion and adoration of Him. His mind does not see anything other than the Lord. By such exclusive devotion, he reaches the Non-dual state of a Jnani. He has realized his oneness with the Lord through sheer devotion to Him. He is very hard to find.

4 ii) Jnaatvaa: This is the Mahatma who arrives at the same oneness with the Lord through knowledge of God, of the scriptures, and of Dharma. He practises deep Self-enquiry, and removes from his nature all that is contradictory to the nature of God. His path is more difficult than the Bhakta. He is even harder to find than the Bhakta.

Ultimately, the two types merge into one type – the God-realised sage. There is no difference in the Goal reached; only the path to it is different.

It is for such “great souls” that the Lord takes birth as an Avatara, for they can and do recognise Him, and assist Him in His Mission.



9.5 THE LORD'S DEVOTEES

(Verses 14-19, 6 No.)

(Verses 14-19, 6 No.)

THIS SECTION FOCUSES on the two types of devotees who recognise the Lord when He takes on a human form and comes as the Avatara. The two types are the Bhakta and the Jnani. More is said about each of them. The actual qualities by which they may be identified are given in the first two verses.

In the four verses that follow, more is about the Jnana Bhakta, details of which we shall note as we progress.

The purpose of this section is to build up a benchmark in our minds of what to strive towards, whether we choose the path of Bhakti or of Jnana. To Lord Krishna, there is no difference between the two. One may choose any, according to his mental or intellectual temperament. The goal arrived at by both is the same.

Verse 14: *The Prem Bhakta*

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः ।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ ९-१४॥

satataṁ kīrtayantō māṁ yatantaśca dṛḍhavrataḥ |
namasyantaśca māṁ bhaktyā nityayuktā upāsate ॥ 9-14॥

1	<i>Satatam keertayantah maam,</i>	<i>The devotee always <u>glorifies</u> Me,</i>
2	<i>yatantah cha dridha vrataah;</i>	<i>and <u>strives</u> to be firm in his vows.</i>
3	<i>namasyantah cha maam bhaktyaa,</i>	<i>And <u>prostrating</u> before Me with devotion,</i>
4	<i>nitya yuktah upaasate.</i>	<i>he is ever steadfast in his worship.</i>

Of the two types of Mahatmas described in the previous verse, this verse expands on Type i) the pure devotee of the Lord, whom we call the **Prem Bhakta**. The first word, **Satatam**, “always”, may be taken to apply to all the four practices described in this verse.

How do the Bhaktas worship the Lord? The word ***Bhajanti*** was used in verse 13., Here it is expanded, and we see that there are actually four means used by a Bhakta to maintain remembrance of God. They are described by each Pada in turn:

1 Keertayantah: “*glorifying*” Me. When the devotee is unable to hold the mind’s attention due to tiredness of the mind, he resorts to a different technique – he begins to sing the glories of the Lord. This is a very effective way of retaining the mind’s attention on the Lord, by engaging the tired mind on the sweet and soothing singing of His Name.

The theory is this. The energy is externalised. While Tamas has a hold over his mind, the devotee diverts it into the attractive and enjoyable physical form of singing Keertans, chanting the Lord's Name or Names, reciting some Suktams that glorify the Lord, and so on.

Tamas is thus creatively bypassed. When the Tamas phase passes away, the devotee returns to silent, mental remembrance of the Lord. In this way, remembrance remains Satatam.

2 Yatantah: “unceasing striving”. This becomes the common factor throughout for all the worship. Remembrance is unbroken. It is Satatam.

It requires enormous will-power to practise unbroken devotion to the Lord. The devotee makes a firm resolve, **Dridha Vrata**, in order not to falter for lack of will-power. This shows the glory of the true devotee of the Lord.

3 Namasyantah: “prostrating”. However, it is difficult for all to practice such intense Bhakti, or, even to stay in it for long periods. When the devotee’s mind begins to flutter again, then he changes his technique but continues with the remembrance of the Lord. As he had done using Keertans, he now diverts the mental energy into Pooja or worship of the Lord. He practices bowing down again and again to the Lord’s *murti*. In this way the mind is usefully occupied and diverted from its tiredness. The Rajas is allowed to pass safely and creatively. Thereafter, the devotee returns to the Sattwic silent remembrance.

1 and **3** are intelligent means to retaining the mind’s attention on God. Swami Sivananda was very fond of both practices to keep hold of the mind during Tamasic and Rajasic phases which the mind sooner or later has to pass through.

4 Nitya Yuktah: We come now to the fourth method of holding the mind on God. This is the pure Sattwic state which is the most sought state. It is an inner, silent state of absorption in Bhakti. It is the deepest level of Bhakti, and is possible only for the most advanced devotee. Such a devotee’s mind flows continuously, like a stream of ghee poured from a vessel (this example is used in *Upadesh Sara*). Due to the predominance of Sattwa, the mind actually takes the form of the Lord, all stray thoughts are completely absent, and only a single thought pervades the mind – that of the Lord.

Verse 15: The Jnana Bhakta

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
 एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ९-१५॥
 jñānayajñēna cāpyanyē yajantō māmupāsātē |
 ēkatvēna pr̥thaktvēna bahudhā viśvatōmukham ॥ 9-15॥

1	<i>Jnaana-yajnena cha api anye,</i>	<i>Others also, offering the ‘wisdom-sacrifice’,</i>
2	<i>yajantah maam upaasate;</i>	<i>worship Me in sacrifice of various kinds;</i>
3	<i>ekatvena, prithaktvena,</i>	<i>others as the sole support, or as Duality,</i>
4	<i>bahudhaa vishwato-mukham.</i>	<i>or as the “All-faced”.</i>

This verse expands on the Type ii) Mahatma described in the verse 13 whom we can call the **Jnana Bhakta**. How does the Jnani worship the Lord? The word used to describe him in verse 13 was **Jnaatvaa**. He is the one who acquires an in-depth knowledge about the Lord’s true nature to assist him in focussing his mind on the Lord.

This verse itself is further expanded in the next four verses, from 16-19. This verse provides the “contents” for verses 16-19 as follows:

Verse 16: **Yajnena** – as the Jnana Sacrifice;
 Verse 17: **Ekatwena** – as the Sole Support;
 Verse 18: **Prithaktwena** – as Duality;
 Verse 19: **Vishwato-Mukham** – as the “All-Faced”.

Verse 16: Yajnena – 1. The Jnana Sacrifice

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
 मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम्
 ahaṁ kraturaham yajñāḥ svadhāhamahamauśadham |
 mantrō:'hamahamēvājyamahamagnirahaṁ hutam || 9-16||

1	<i>Aham kratuh aham yajnah,</i>	<i>I am the <u>Kratu</u>; I am the Sacrifice (Yajna);</i>
2	<i>swadhaa aham, aham aushadham;</i>	<i>I am the <u>offering</u> to the manes; I am the <u>medicinal herb</u>;</i>
3	<i>mantrah aham, aham eva aajyam,</i>	<i>I am the <u>Mantra</u>; I am also the <u>ghee</u>;</i>
4	<i>aham agnih, aham hutam.</i>	<i>I am the <u>Fire</u>; I am the <u>oblation</u>.</i>

This is reminiscent of verse 24 in Chapter 4, wherein everything pertaining to the Havan was Brahman alone. Here, “I” refers to Brahman. It is represented by all the seven items involved in a Yajna or sacrifice. Each item becomes a symbol for Brahman. This is the **Jnana Yajna** performed by the Jnani.

Verse 17: Ekatwena – 2. The Sole Support (Non-Duality)

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
 वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च
 pitāhamasya jagatō mātā dhātā pitāmahah |
 vēdyam pavitramōṅkāra ṛksāma yajurēva ca || 9-17||

1	<i>Pitaa aham asya jagatah,</i>	<i>I am the support of this world;</i>
2	<i>maataa dhaataa pitaamahah;</i>	<i>the <u>mother</u>, <u>father</u> and the <u>grandsire</u>;</i>
3	<i>vedyam pavitram omkaarah,</i>	<i>I am <u>OM</u> – that one purifier to be known;</i>
4	<i>rik saama yajuh eva cha.</i>	<i>I am also the <u>Vedas</u> – the Rig, Sama and Yajur.</i>

- 1 Ekatwena:** “sole support”. This is the practice of Advaitic Oneness, asserting Non-duality or the oneness of Brahman. The Jnani aims to get firmly established in the Self.
- 2** At first, the Supreme Being is seen as one’s all-in-all, as mother, etc.
- 3** Then comes identification with the sound symbol, Om, which stands for Reality.
- 4** All the Vedas, i.e. all knowledge, is itself seen as nothing but the Reality alone.

Verse 18: Prithaktwena – 3. The Distinct Duality

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम्

॥ ९-१८॥

gatirbhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṁ suhṛt |

prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṁ nidhānaṁ bījamavyayam || 9-18||

1	<i>Gatih bhartaa prabhuh saakshee,</i>	<i>I am the <u>goal</u>, supporter, Lord, and witness;</i>
2	<i>nivaasah sharanam suhrit;</i>	<i>I am the <u>abode</u>, the shelter, the friend;</i>
3	<i>prabhavah pralayah sthaanam,</i>	<i>I am the <u>origin</u>, the dissolution, the foundation;</i>
4	<i>nidhaanam beejam avyayam.</i>	<i>I am the <u>treasure</u>, the seed and the imperishable.</i>

1-4 Prithaktwena: This is Saguna worship infused with knowledge of Brahman. In this stage of Jnana, a trace of Duality still lingers between the Jnani and his Beloved Lord. Whatever form is used by the devotee to focus his mind on the Absolute, has in it a trace of Duality. Nevertheless, the knowledge or consciousness that the form is none other than the Non-dual is always there, but the Jnani is unable to remove the Duality altogether.

An example of this state is Paramahansa Ramakrishna, who adhered firmly to the worship of Mother Kali even when he was already experiencing unique spiritual states of trance. It was then that the Lord sent him a Vedantic Guru to take him across the Saguna barrier and into the experience of the formless Brahman.

Verse 19: “Vishwato-Mukham” – 4. The All-Faced Form

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन

॥ ९-१९॥

tapāmyahamaṁ varṣaṁ nigrhṇāmyutsrjāmi ca |

amṛtaṁ caiva mṛtyuśca sadasaccāhamarjuna || 9-19||

1	<i>Tapaami aham, aham varsham,</i>	<i>I am the ¹<u>Heat</u> by which ¹<u>rain</u> is produced,</i>
2	<i>nigrihnaami utsrijaami cha;</i>	<i>I ¹<u>withhold</u> and send it forth;</i>
3	<i>amritam cha eva mrityuh cha,</i>	<i>I am ¹<u>Immortality</u> and also death;</i>
4	<i>sat asat cha aham, arjuna.</i>	<i>both ¹<u>Existence</u> and non-existence am I.</i>

Vishwato-Mukham: This is the third and most expansive stage of Jnana Yoga. It goes a step beyond the above two. Holding the same attitude of Oneness of Brahman, the Jnani yearns to behold Him in the whole manifested creation. He sees all as Brahman alone. This is the peak of the Vedantic experience of Non-duality in the world.



9.6 WORSHIPPERS & THE WORSHIPPED

(Verses 20-25, 6 No.)

(Verses 20-25, 6 No.)

WE TAKE A CLOSER look at the differences in devotional practices among various devotees. This is in addition to the categories of devotees already studied in Chapter 7.

The broad categories are as before, but the focus here is more on the goal that each devotee attains. We have three verses in each category:

A. Devotees who approach the Lord – verses 20-22:

- i) *Sakaama Bhaktas*, worshippers having a desire. (Verses 20, 21)
- ii) *Nishkaama Bhaktas*, worshippers who are totally selfless. (Verse 22)

B. Devotees who approach 'Other Deities' – verses 23-25:

This follows up with a new perspective on Chapter 7, verses 20-23.

A. DEVOTEES WHO APPROACH THE LORD

(Verses 20-22, 3 No.)

Verse 20: *The Sakaami Bhakta - 1*

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
मश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान्

॥ ९-२०॥

traividyā māṁ sōmapāḥ pūtapāpā
yajñairiṣṭvā svargatim prārthayantē |
tē puṇyamāsādyā surēndralōka-
maśnanti divyāndivi dēvabhōgān

|| 9-20||

1	<i>Traividyaaah maam somapaah poota paapaa,</i>	<i>The knowers of the three <u>Vedas</u>, the drinkers of Soma, purified from sin;</i>
2	<i>yajnaih ishtvaa swargatim praarthayante;</i>	<i>worshipping Me by sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven.</i>
3	<i>te punyam aasaadya surendra lokam,</i>	<i>They reach the holy world of Indra, the Lord of Heaven;</i>
4	<i>ashnanti divyaan divi deva bhogaan.</i>	<i>and enjoy in heaven the divine pleasures of the Gods.</i>

Verse 21: *The Sakaami Bhakta - 2*

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।

एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना

गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते

॥ ९-२१॥

tē taṁ bhuktvā svargalōkaṁ viśālaṁ

kṣīṇē puṇyē martyalōkaṁ viśanti |

ēvaṁ trayīdharmamanuprapannā

gatāgataṁ kāmakāmā labhantē

॥ 9-21॥

5	<i>Te tam bhuktvā swarga lokam vishaalam;</i>	<i>They, having <u>enjoyed</u> the vast heaven world,</i>
6	<i>ksheene punye martya lokam vishanti;</i>	<i>when their <u>merits</u> are <u>exhausted</u>, enter the world of the <u>mortals</u>.</i>
7	<i>evam trayi dharmam anuprapannaah</i>	<i>The injunctions of the three Vedas do they religiously abide by.</i>
8	<i>gata agatam kaama kaamaah labhante.</i>	<i>The state “going and returning” (Samsaric cycle) do they attain, endlessly <u>desiring desires</u>.</i>

1 These are God-fearing people who adhere to the rules of the “Game of Life”, following the righteous path, incurring no new sin, and who have no remnant of sin in them.

2 They are not renunciates, for they do have some desires. However, they come to the Lord for all their wishes to be fulfilled. And for that reason, as we saw in Chapter 7, they are a cut above others who go to “Other Deities”.

3-4 Everything is pleasant and auspicious as we read the lines of this and the next verse. One sees in them a group that is blessed by the Lord to get what they desire as it is within the bounds of Dharma. They are noble, charitable, service-oriented, and without any pettiness. They are able to “purchase their ticket” to the heavenly worlds with their ‘merits’.

The world of Indra is one with many rare kinds of lordly pleasures and comforts. Those who go there within this category, i.e. as the devotees of the Lord, do not have any problems to face. They are well taken care of there. They have earned their right to go there and enjoy these pleasures for a long time.

5-6 When all their merits have been spent, it is time for these souls to come back to earth to continue their spiritual journey.

7 They continue to abide by the rules of Dharma, in order to earn more merit in doing so, and get fresh opportunities to go back for another trip to these worlds of pleasure.

8 In this way, they continue “going and coming” to and from the heavenly resorts. However, as they are Bhaktas of the Lord, it gradually dawns upon them that even these heavenly pleasures have no end. Wisdom dawns and they realize that the Punya they gather can be put to better use by converting it to **mental purity**. They practice the worship of the Lord with greater intensity. The Lord, seeing their change of heart, pulls them more and more towards the path of desirelessness or Nishkaama.

Verse 22: *The Nishkaami Bhakta*

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

॥ ९-२२॥

ananyāścintayantō mām yē janāḥ paryupāsātē |

|| 9-22||

1	<i>Ananyaah chintayantah maam,</i>	<i>Thinking of no other than Me,</i>
2	<i>ye janaah pari upaasate;</i>	<i>those men who worship Me alone;</i>
3	<i>teshaam nitya abhiyuktaanaam,</i>	<i>to those who are ever self-controlled,</i>
4	<i>yoga kshemam vahaami aham.</i>	<i>I take care of all their bodily requirements.</i>

1-2 These Bhaktas begin to surrender themselves more and more, and give their all to do the Lord's work. They begin the spiritual path proper in a desireless manner.

3 Desirelessness comes at a price. It requires self-control. Self-control brings many virtues as well as many hardships in its trail. But the blessings in the form of a solid character outweigh everything else. They soon acquire a peaceful outlook on life, and great contentment. They lose interest in amassing wealth and acquiring comforts. Some even deny themselves basic necessities of life.

4 It is then that the all-compassionate Lord begins to take care of their needs, since they spend more and more time in His remembrance and in the service of humanity. The Lord Himself sees to their daily needs. This is the assurance given here.

There is a beautiful saying in the Bible about this state of surrender: *“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

Acharyaji recounted very touching case histories of people who have been miraculously helped even in their personal matters. The saint, Narsi Mehta was helped by the Lord to meet the payment of his promissory note. The Lord arranged for the wedding of his daughter, meeting all the expenses mysteriously.

The Lord also did all the household work for another devotee who wished to go and meet His saints but could not because of the chores. There are many true stories of great Bhaktas in the 14th to 16th centuries, the golden age of Bhakti in Hinduism.

To sum up, three things are essential to be a *Nishkaama Bhakta*:

- i) **Ananyah Chintayantah**: thinking of no other; one-pointed devotion.
- ii) **Paryupaasate**: the worship of the Highest, the Supreme Lord, alone.
- iii) **Nitya Abhiyuktaanaam**: to be ever self-controlled and steadfast.

For such Bhaktas, the Lord promises to take care of every detail of their lives.

B. DEVOTEES WHO APPROACH “OTHER DEITIES”

(Verses 23-25, 3 No.)

Verse 23: *Worshippers of “Anyā Devatas”*

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

॥ ९-२३॥

yē:'pyanyadēvatā bhaktā yajantē śraddhayānvitāḥ |

tē:'pi māmēva kauntēya yajantyavidhipūrvakam

|| 9-23||

1	<i>Ye api anya devataa bhaktaah,</i>	Even those devotees of “ other Gods ”,
2	<i>yajante shraddhayaa anvitaah;</i>	endowed with <u>faith</u> in them, who <u>worship</u> them,
3	<i>te api maam eva, kaunteya,</i>	in truth, O Kaunteya, Me alone do
4	<i>yajanti avidhi poorvakam.</i>	they worship (but) by ‘ <u>misguided</u> ’ methods.

Verse 24: “They Do Not Know Me”

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।

न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते

|| ९-२४||

aham hi sarvayajñānām bhōktā ca prabhurēva ca |

na tu māmabhijānanti tattvēnātaścyavanti tē

|| 9-24||

5	<i>Aham hi sarva yajnaanaam,</i>	Of all sacrifices, I alone am
6	<i>bhoktaa cha prabhuh eva cha;</i>	their <u>enjoyer</u> and the Lord;
7	<i>na tu maam abhijaananti,</i>	but they <u>do not know Me</u>
8	<i>tattwena atah chyavanti.</i>	in essence, and hence <u>they fall</u> (to this world).

Verse 25: That Which One Worships, One Reaches

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।

भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम्

|| ९-२५||

yānti dēvavratā dēvānpitṛnyānti pitṛvratāḥ |

bhūtāni yānti bhūtējyā yānti madyājino:'pi mām

|| 9-25||

9	<i>Yaanti deva-vrataa devaan,</i>	<u>Worshippers</u> of the “ Other Gods ” go to them;
10	<i>pitruun yaanti pitru vrataah;</i>	to the ancestors go the <u>ancestor-worshippers</u> ;
11	<i>bhootaani yaanti bhootejyaah,</i>	to the Elements go <u>worshippers of the Elements</u> ,
12	<i>yaanti madyaajinah api maam.</i>	but <u>My worshippers</u> come to Me alone .

Devotees of “Other Devatas”

This topic on **Any Devatas** was begun in Chapter 7 (verses 20-23). It is being revisited here, with a subtle shift in the focus. In Chapter 7, the focus in all four verses was on some selfish desire which the devotee demanded fulfillment of through “Other Deities”. Here, although the stage is the same, real help is given to such a devotee to teach him how he can make the shift to worship the Lord.

There are two ways in which the Lord helps devotees to change from “Other Deities” and begin to be devoted to Him directly:

A. Correcting Their Faith Through Knowledge

1-2 Devotees, in a general sense, due to Ignorance of the Lord's nature, are unaware of what He is really capable of.

The devotee goes on with what he has been accustomed to doing through the family tradition or social custom. In India every family has a Kula Devata who is worshipped daily in a particular way. Everything is done perfectly, exactly as one has learnt it from the elders. The **Faith** with which the Deity is approached is what the person learns from his family elders. *Nothing of this is being criticized here.* The great spiritual traditions of India are not in question here.

The Lord's concern is to bring to the attention of such a devotee that the same worship has to be accompanied by proper **Knowledge** of who God is. Without that, the whole worship simply reduces to **Avidhi Poorvakam**, i.e. the wrong method or just an external act. When we do not bring to our worship the rich feeling that comes from knowing who God is, it is reasonable to say that it will not bring to us the rewards that God wants us to get. We will merely get the rewards of worshipping our 'own idea of God', which would most likely be uninformed and unrelated to the Truth, and even against the Truth.

Most people are ruled by some desire or other. Thus, they invariably ask the Deity for such things as wealth or fulfilling their family needs, and so on. There is no idea of asking the Lord for something higher that will bring them the spiritual wealth of virtues.

A mere spiritual touch, in the form of some knowledge of the pure path, is all that is required to change such people. Then their whole life can take a pleasant turn.

B. Correcting Their Attitude Through Renunciation

3-4 Closely linked to the above, and resulting from it, is the **Attitude** with which we approach God. If right knowledge is there about the Divine Being, then that knowledge is what makes the person worship the Lord with the correct attitude of humility, surrender, selfless service, faith, reverence, and so on. If this knowledge is absent, how can the proper attitude be present?

For instance, it is very common to see an ignorant person approach his Deity with the thought, "What can God do for *me*?" This is an example of a wrong attitude.

5-8 Acharyaji gave another very good example on attitude. In a town, we know that all water comes from the large reservoir, and is brought to us via the taps. God is the reservoir; the Devatas are the taps through which God delivers the water. Not knowing this, many devotees worship these "taps" and ignore the great reservoir that supplies them. Everything comes from the Lord only.

The Lord says, "I have no problem if they go to the taps; I just wish to tell them that if they come to Me, they can have the whole reservoir!"

C. The Real Truth About the 'Anyā Devatas'

9-12 The Lord is really saying that 'Other Deities' does not mean other physical idols from the idol of Krishna. It would be too puerile of us to think that the Lord will come down to our level and become a jealous God, in competition with other Deities. The true meaning that comes out of this verse is that the deity is what we think of Him in our own mind.

We could be worshipping the picture of Lord Krishna but if we do not have the proper knowledge about who He is, that would be 'Other Deities'. On the other hand, if we

have a sound knowledge about the divinity of the Lord, then whatever form we use to worship God, that form would be the Lord Himself.

So these verses do not challenge what forms we use to worship, but challenge our knowledge of God. Later we will see that the *Geeta* speaks of Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic faith, and each type of faith results in their respective kind of worship. The devotee having proper knowledge of God would fall into the Sattwic category. He will be worshipping the Lord alone, regardless of the form he chooses for his worship.

The big jump here in comparison to what was said in Chapter 7, is that we are now taught how we can become the Lord's devotees. It is by purifying our mind and thereby grasping the correct knowledge of the Lord. Thereafter, whatever we do will be acceptable to the Lord.

Being the Lord's devotees is not a matter of choosing the correct idol to worship; nor is it about going to the right temple; nor being a member of a particular organization; and nor is it about wearing the right colour clothes. *It is solely about knowing who God is, and loving Him with all our heart.* This is the crucial message brought out in these 3 verses.



9.7 THE WORSHIP

(Verses 26-28, 3 No.)

THE LAST PARAGRAPH of the previous section has already placed our one foot into this section. We now have three famous verses of the Geeta, which highlight the glory of the worship of the Lord. They contain the essence of Worship and Devotion. They are verses to be etched in our hearts for life.

Verse 26: *The Lord Accepts the Simplest of Offerings*

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः

॥ ९-२६॥

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ tōyaṁ yō mē bhaktyā prayacchati |

tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛtamaśnāmi prayatātmanah

|| 9-26||

1	<i>Patram pushpam phalam toyam,</i>	<i>A leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water –</i>
2	<i>yah me bhaktyaa prayacchhati;</i>	<i>when offered to Me with devotion,</i>
3	<i>tat aham bhakti upahritam,</i>	<i>that, purely because of the devotion, I</i>
4	<i>ashnaami prayataatmanah.</i>	<i>accept, given by the pure-minded.</i>

In a world where we are being engulfed by materialism, even holy acts such as Poojas and Yajnas have almost become an “endangered species”. Pure devotion and simplicity in practise is rare to find. Worship has largely become a matter of showmanship, where the tendency to outdo another is creeping in very steadily.

Among the group that we have just been speaking about above, due to the absence of knowledge of God, the norm is to make one’s Pooja as gaudy as possible. The Pooja must be the best one in the town. In such a situation, the priests also have played into the hands of Maya and take maximum advantage of the ignorance of the worshippers. By instilling fear in the worshippers that rewards will not come unless they give certain fees, certain material gifts, certain amount of groceries, etc., the priests have successfully turned the ‘tide’ of devotional practice to their favour. Poojas have become a big industry!

Lord Krishna must have been well aware of all this even in those days. In this verse, He makes it clear that His devotees need not stop worshipping Him simply because they cannot afford the exorbitant cost of these Poojas.

1 Patram, Pushpam Phalam, Toyam: “a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water”. The Lord is pleased with even the simplest of offerings, all naturally and, at least at the time of writing, *freely* available. How long these items will remain free is uncertain in this world. These are not man-made products that would boost a trade in manufacturing them. No one would want to offer a plastic flower or plastic fruit to the Lord! They may try it to impress

the “Other Deities”, but not the Lord. These natural products are God-made. God is asking us to offer what He has made; what a good businessman God is!

God allows us to have the feeling “I am offering” because He sees only our love behind it, nothing else. He is so considerate, that He makes it as easy and affordable as possible for us to do His Pooja. He has eliminated any excuse we may rig up for not doing His Pooja.

2 Bhaktyaa Prayacchhati: “when offered with devotion”. The Lord only looks at our heart when we give Him an offering.

3-4 Prayat Aatmanah: “pure-minded”; this is another thing that pleases the Lord greatly. The purity of the devotee’s mind. Are we giving the Lord something in order to impress the people that have gathered at the prayer? Are we holding the prayer in order to magnify our ego? Are there any such hidden intentions in our mind when we perform Poojas? Those are the searching questions we need to ask ourselves. If we have a wrong intention, it means it is coming from an impure mind.

Verse 27: Offering Our Actions to the Lord

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्

॥ ९-२७॥

yatkarōṣi yadaśnāsi yajjuhōṣi dadāsi yat |

yattapasyasi kauntēya tatkurushva madarpaṇam

|| 9-27||

1	<i>Yatkaroshi yadashnaasi,</i>	<i>Whatever you <u>do</u>, whatever you <u>eat</u>,</i>
2	<i>yajjuhoshi dadaasi yat;</i>	<i>whatever you <u>offer</u> in sacrifice or <u>give</u> in charity,</i>
3	<i>yat tapasyasi, kaunteya,</i>	<i>whatever you <u>practise</u> as austerity, O Kaunteya,</i>
4	<i>tat kurushva mad-arpanam.</i>	<i>do it as an <u>offering</u> to Me.</i>

It may startle most of us that the Lord actually says that it is quite all-right even if His devotee does not offer Him anything material. Perhaps, He may have remembered that there are deserts in this world, and all these items are not available there. Then what does the devotee do?

1 The Lord has a practical answer to this: “You can offer Me your actions, can’t you? You have to act, so offer that act to Me. *Whatever you do, make it an offering to Me!*”

We can offer our eating, our bathing, and Acharyaji mentioned our shaving of the moustache, that is, our ego! The Lord will accept all of these. Thinking is an act – we can even just offer our thinking to Him. How much easier can it get! Really speaking, the Lord is wanting only one thing – *He wants us to give ourselves to Him*. Are we prepared to make that offering to Him? He would just love that.

Giving all our actions means that we better make sure we do not do anything wrong. How can we give him evil actions?

2-3 In making His suggestions, the Lord makes sure that He asks us to do “acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity”. These are all Nitya Karmas that are approved by the Lord. In Chapter 18 we will learn more about the indispensibility of these three actions.

9.8 GLORY OF LORD'S WORSHIP

(Verses 29-34, 6 No.)

TO KNOW WHAT IT means to be the Lord's devotee, we need to get acquainted with His Divine Nature, His Infinite glories, His immortal, indestructible Being. Then we will know what the Lord expects from us.

In these last six verses of this Chapter, the Lord has a few surprises for us – for instance, about His equal treatment of all devotees; His deeply compassionate nature to bring into His fold even the most sinful person; and His availability to everyone, no matter what their inborn tendencies are. We clearly see that He is supremely Divine, approachable and fair; that He rewards pure devotion, simplicity, sincerity and self-sacrifice; and that He is impartial to all. He does not recognize caste, creed, denomination, and other man-made barriers. He is Justice Himself – everyone has the same chance to approach Him.

Verse 29: *The Lord is Not Partial to Any*

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम्

॥ ९-२९॥

samō:'haṁ sarvabhūteṣu na mē dvēṣyō:'sti na priyaḥ |

yē bhajanti tu māṁ bhaktyā mayi tē tēṣu cāpyaham

|| 9-29||

1	<i>Samah aham sarva-bhooteshu,</i>	<i>The same am I to all beings,</i>
2	<i>na me dweshyah asti na priyah;</i>	<i>to Me there is none <u>hateful</u> nor <u>dear</u>;</i>
3	<i>ye bhajanti tu maam bhaktyaa,</i>	<i>but those who <u>worship Me</u> with devotion</i>
4	<i>mayi te teshu cha api aham.</i>	<i>are in Me, and I am also in them.</i>

Some devotees may come to the Lord with the following complaint: “Don’t You have a partiality for Your devotees, for those who love You? You always seem to be giving them more than You give the others, the so-called non-devotees or devotees of “Other Deities”. Why, You also seem to be caught up in Raga-Dwesha just like us!”

The Lord Himself Explains:

1-2 The Lord holds no secrets when questioned like this. His answer is: “Yes, I do admit that I have said and acted like that, but I am NOT partial. It is not out of partiality that I have treated My devotees in a special way. Let Me explain:

“I am equal to all. Any difference you see is due to something else. I do not place people in categories such as Bhaktas and non-Bhaktas. No one is special to Me and no one is hated by Me. Let Me tell you the real reason why there is this apparent difference.

3-4 “The difference is due to the devotees themselves. Those who worship Me with devotion, knowing fully My Divine Nature, My glories, and My Omnipresence, Omniscience

and Omnipotence, they abide in Me of their own will. Something happens to them, not because of Me but because of them. They remain in ME; their minds become so pure that they take up My form. So they are not away from Me even for a single moment. And, I have to admit, I, too, remain in them!

“You see, I do not run into them; they run into Me. When their mind becomes so pure, I have no choice but to enter it – not out of any partiality, but because that is My very nature. Anyone can draw Me into them by such pure-hearted devotion. So, “They in Me” means their minds have taken My Form. And “I in them” means their purity has attracted Me into them. What can I do? I am helplessly a slave of My devotees!

“Thus, it is not because of My love or hate. Like fire that is equal to all in giving its heat, I too am equal. If you sit far away from Me you will not feel My warmth; those who sit near Me are quite comfortable. Do you understand the difference now?”

A Simile: Crystal on a Red Cloth

Here is a simile from Sri Shankaracharyaji to help us understand what the Lord has just said. There is a principle called “Swaccha Dravya Sambandhi Vastu”. It works like this: Something that is very pure such as a clear crystal, when placed on a red cloth, will take on the colour of the red cloth because of its own purity. Another opaque crystal on the same cloth will not appear red, because of the impurity that is in it.

Another example is that a clay pot cannot reflect the light of the sun as distinctly as a mirror can.

In the same way, a devotee who has a pure heart, reflects God’s glory abundantly, whereas someone who does not have that purity cannot do so. It is not the Lord’s partiality but the devotee’s superior quality that makes the Lord manifest Himself more clearly in him.

Verse 30: Value of Right Resolve

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः

॥ ९-३०॥

api cētsudurācārō bhajatē māmananyabhāk |

sādhurēva sa mantavyaḥ samyagvyavasitō hi saḥ

|| 9-30||

1	<i>Api chet su-duraacharah,</i>	<i>Even if the most sinful</i>
2	<i>bhajate maam ananya bhaak;</i>	<i><u>worships Me</u>, with devotion to none else,</i>
3	<i>saadhuh eva sah mantavyah,</i>	<i>he, too, should be regarded as <u>righteous</u>,</i>
4	<i>samyak vyavasitah hi sah.</i>	<i>for he has rightly <u>resolved</u>.</i>

1 In this verse we see a spectacular example of the Lord’s compassion for all people. The Lord does not reject the sinful and send them to hell for eternity. We have the case here of a ‘Su-Durachara’, which means “one who is the most despicable and most villainous sinner; who has done every possible crime, who is obnoxious and irredeemable by nature; who has not left out any vile deed undone.”

2 Such a person is considered here as a case-history. The heap of sin is so vast that even the scriptures do not have a Prayaschitta suitable enough for him! Even such a person,

when he takes a U-turn in life, the Lord smilingly looks at him and encourages him to come to Him. Because he has had a change of heart, he becomes, in the eyes of the Lord, worthy of being honoured, no matter what his past was.

One who has rightly resolved to “turn over a new leaf”, is no longer seen as a sinner by the Lord. In the flood of devotion that arises in his heart, all his sins are washed away.

Prayaschitta for Sins

One may tend to doubt this statement. Can it be true? Can this actually happen? These are some of the reactions from people. Acharyaji explained: Sin is of two types:

- i) *Ajnana Krita*: those that are unknowingly done;
- ii) *Kaamahata Krita*: those that are knowingly done.

The first can be removed by Prayaschitta (expiatory actions), as given in the Smritis. The second cannot be removed like that. They require a special treatment. Prayaschitta cannot work here. However, if the person does Prayaschitta, he can get freed from the social stigma of his deed, the social ostracism that he would otherwise have to face. He can render himself passable for interacting with society once again. But the sin is still there.

For such a person, only a complete change of heart, turning himself to the Lord with a repentant heart, and becoming devoted to Him can transform him and purify him of the stain on his soul. Devotion to the Lord is the only remedy for Kaamahata Krita.

THE STORY OF ANGULI MALA

Acharyaji ended this verse with the narration of the story of a man known as Anguli Mala. He lived at the time of Lord Buddha, who knew of his ways. His name was itself an introduction of his character. He was a robber. He used to kill people and make a garland or *mala* from the fingers (*anguli*) of his victims.

One day, this man who brought fear into the hearts of people, saw the Buddha going for his walk. He walked behind him with intent to molest him. The Buddha walked a little faster, not out of fear, but to teach a lesson. Anguli Mala quickened his pace, and was now running after the Buddha. Not being able to catch up, he shouted, “Stop! Or else...” The Buddha turned around, and facing him calmly said, “I have stopped, but you have not”. At once the robber seemed to understand what Buddha meant. He became a disciple.

The people wanted him brought to justice. Buddha defended the man and said, “He has corrected his ways. He is not a sinner any longer.” To Anguli Mala the Buddha advised that he should never retaliate whatever people may say to him or do to him. He should accept it as a sort of punishment. One day when the Buddha felt that the time was ripe, he told Anguli Mala to go to a lady who had severe pains. He asked him to say aloud, “If I, Anguli Mala, am pure, let this lady’s pain go away.”

At first the ex-robber could not agree to this. The consciousness of the sin was still on his mind. He confessed he could not say that honestly. The Buddha knew that the sin consciousness was the only thing standing in the way of his disciple’s enlightenment. He insisted on Anguli Mala carrying out this instruction. Anguli Mala took courage and did what he was asked to. The lady’s pain stopped at once. Anguli Mala realized now that he was freed from his sin. What Prayaschitta could not do, Love for the Lord did!

Verse 31: The Devotee is Never Destroyed

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति

॥ ९-३१॥

kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śaśvacchāntiṁ nigacchati |

kaunteya pratijānīhi na mē bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

|| 9-31||

1	<i>Kshipram bhavati dharmaatmaa,</i>	<i>Soon he becomes righteous,</i>
2	<i>shashvat shaantim nigacchhati;</i>	<i>and attains to <u>eternal peace</u>;</i>
3	<i>kaunteya prati jaaneehi,</i>	<i>O Kaunteya, know for certain</i>
4	<i>na me bhaktah pranashyati.</i>	<i>that My devotee is <u>never destroyed</u>.</i>

1 Kshipram: “very quickly”. One who has taken a U-turn in life, becomes virtuous. All his tendency towards vice is eliminated. He becomes transformed. He becomes eligible for the Brahma Tattwa taught in verses 4-6.

2 Shashvat Shaantim: “Eternal Peace”; this is the ultimate fruit of the spiritual Sadhana. This does not mean getting it immediately as a reward. It implies going through all the Sadhanas leading up to the goal. The whole spiritual journey is implied in “attains”. It all happens in good time. This verse has only speeded up the report; it cannot speed up the Sadhana. How long it takes is not the point here. What is important is that even in the case of such a hopeless sinner, there is hope of transformation if only he makes up his mind to turn towards the Lord and completely put the past behind him.

The devotee of the Lord can then boldly declare, “I am no more Ratnakar; I am on my way to becoming a Valmiki. All my sins have been destroyed by the Name of the Lord.”

3-4 The Lord’s devotee shall never perish. Fearlessly he can march on!

The story of Tulsidas is a good example. He was deeply infatuated with his wife. Even when she went to her parent’s home for a few days, he could not bear her absence. He went through stormy weather to see her at night. He climbed up to her balcony on a snake, thinking it was a rope. His wife told him, “If you had as much love for Rama as you have for my body, you will realise God in no time.” That was the moment his soul was waiting for. He made the U-turn and eventually realised his Beloved Rama.

Verse 32: “My Path Open to All”

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम्

॥ ९-३२॥

mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya yē:'pi syuḥ pāpayōnayaḥ |

striyō vaiśyāstathā śūdrāstē:'pi yānti parām gatim

|| 9-32||

1	<i>Maam hi paartha vyapaashritya,</i>	<i>For, taking refuge in Me, O Partha,</i>
2	<i>ye api syuh paapa-yonayah;</i>	<i>they also who may be of sinful birth –</i>
3	<i>striyah vaishyaah tathaa shoodraah,</i>	<i>women, traders, and labourers –</i>
4	<i>te api yaanti paraam gatim.</i>	<i><u>even they</u> attain the Supreme Goal.</i>

A SOCIAL CONTROVERSY

There are two controversial issues raised by social activists against this verse:

- i) The stigma attached to “taking refuge”; and
- ii) The stigma of being classed into a “sinful birth”.

A few reflections are shared here, that may help avoid seeing it as a controversy.

“Take Refuge” in the Lord

People in difficult circumstances often take refuge in someone, or some institution, or some other country. From a worldly perspective, these may be considered to be a sign of weakness, inferiority, timidity, fear, lack of courage, cowardliness, etc. During times of war whole communities that are oppressed may seek refuge in another country. Society’s views on this are wide-ranging and not always encouraging or helpful to resolving the problems.

The remarks in this verse are probably trying to provide some solace and comfort to people who are targeted by society for the work they do or even for being part of “the weaker gender”. There could be strong feelings in society at the time the Geeta was written which made life intolerable for large sections of the community. The Lord seems concerned with these issues and offers a spiritual solution to those afflicted by such social segregation.

Refuge in the Lord as a way out of the social stigma is not how the Lord may be seeing it. The refuge spoken of here is a **spiritual refuge**. If spiritual light is being sought to reduce the pain of social stigma, then the Lord is happy to welcome those who seek it. The Lord is in no way guilty of adding to the stigma or aiming to reduce the stigma, nor is His call to take refuge in Him to be seen as adding another new stigma in society.

The Lord is not offering to resolve social stigmas, for these require measures at the social level. He is offering ‘spiritual refuge’ to comfort the heart. There is nothing controversial about that. Social issues will remain social all over the world, and social forces will resolve or intensify them, as determined by each society’s collective destiny.

The Stigma of “Sinful Birth”

This is a very sensitive issue. Firstly, there is no need to take out one’s anger on the Lord for that which is created by society. Sri Krishna is not responsible for the stigmas attached to certain births. Given the prevailing situation, He is offering to give relief to the pained hearts resulting from such stigma – for that becomes a *spiritual* problem.

If Chapter 4 is re-visited, we will see the Lord’s basis for the caste system. His version is based on sound principles, not a separatist approach. The actual practice of caste does not reflect the Lord’s principle in any way. The ideal and the actual vary considerably, for which the Lord cannot be blamed.

The present verse should not be seen as advocacy of certain attitudes which were generated by the society of that time, and perhaps carried forward to this day. Social issues have to be left for social forces to resolve. The Lord’s concern is not the social issue, but the relief that is within His power to provide to those suffering under the social stigma.

This is the spirit of this verse. The Lord holds out hope to man who is prone not only to temptations and immorality, but also to suffering the injustices within society.

1-2 We have just seen how the most irredeemable person can, if he takes a spiritual turn in life, attain the Lord's Grace and rise to the highest attainment. Here, in a verse that reinforces the compassion of the Lord, the Lord declares clearly that the path to Him is open to anyone, from any caste or creed. The only thing necessary to come to Him is to take refuge in Him, i.e. to surrender to Him.

3-4 This part is dealt with in the block that follows due to its sensitive nature.

Verse 33: *Those With Good Qualities*

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
 अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ ९-३३॥
 kiṁ punarbrāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā bhaktā rājarṣayastathā |
 anityamasukhaṁ lōkamimam prāpya bhajasva mām || 9-33||

1	<i>Kim punah braahmanaah punyaah,</i>	<i>What then to speak of the holy <u>Brahmanas</u>,</i>
2	<i>bhaktaah raajarshayah tathaa;</i>	<i>the <u>devotees</u>, and the <u>royal sages</u>!</i>
3	<i>anityam asukham lokam,</i>	<i>This impermanent and <u>joyless world</u> –</i>
4	<i>imam praapya bhajaswa maam.</i>	<i>having obtained it, do thou worship Me.</i>

1-2 In the light of the previous verse, if people with Vaishya and Shudra qualities can become devotees of the Lord, then what to speak of people who are by nature true Brahmanas and true Kshatriyas! For them it should be a walkover. The point is clearly being made that the pure-hearted with Sattwic tendencies should have no doubt whatsoever as to their eligibility to be the Lord's devotees. If a boulder goes through the gate, surely small pebbles need not even think of having any difficulty!

Arjuna is a Kshatriya. The Lord is as if addressing these words directly to him, and removing any traces of hesitation he may have of following this noble path of virtue.

3-4 The verse closes with a reflection on the “impermanent and joyless world” we have to live in. Having walked into a bad situation, we have no choice but to make the best of it and aim to become His devotee once and for all. This adds more urgency to turn towards the Lord in all earnestness.

The Lord waits with eagerness and open arms to receive those that would pluck up the courage to say “No” to this joyless world. He has something more to offer to His devotees – Immortality and Eternal Bliss!

Verse 34: *The Essence of True Devotion*

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
 मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ९-३४॥
 manmanā bhava madbhaktō madyājī mām namaskuru |
 māmēvaiṣyasi yuktvaivamātmānaṁ matparāyaṇaḥ || 9-34||



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1	<i>Manmanaah bhava mad-bhaktah,</i>	<i>Fix your <u>mind</u> on Me; be <u>devoted</u> to Me;</i>
2	<i>madyaajee maam namas-kuru;</i>	<i><u>sacrifice</u> unto Me; <u>bow</u> down to Me.</i>
3	<i>maam eva eshyasi yuktvaa evam,</i>	<i>You shall come to Me alone, having united</i>
4	<i>aatmaanam mat paraayanah.</i>	<i>your Self, taking Me as the <u>Supreme Goal</u>.</i>

In this concluding verse, the Lord beautifully rounds off on the theme of Bhakti, addressing devotees of all types, from the highest grade to the simplest. This is another verse that makes it in the “Top Ten” charts of verses quoted from the Geeta.

1a The Jnani: “Fix your mind on Me”, says the Lord to the man of knowledge of the Self, who has earlier been described as “the most dear to Me”.

1b The Bhakta: “Be devoted to Me”, says the Lord to the Bhakta who surrenders his all to Him.

2a The Upasaka: “Sacrifice unto Me”, says the Lord to the one who worships Him, even if it is with the desire to go to heavenly worlds. He can reach Him through Krama Mukti. It may take longer, but that is also fine for the Lord. At least he will get there.

2b The Disciple: “Bow down to Me”, says the Lord to the one who regards the Lord as Master.

3 Merely respecting the Lord’s power and supporting the other four types of people in their efforts will also please the Lord. Soon such people too will fit into one of the above three categories. The Lord is quite sure of that.

4 Whatever path one takes to reach the Lord, it does not matter. It matters only that one faces the Lord and marches forward boldly with every step. The feet once planted in the right direction and set in motion, will certainly reach the Supreme Abode!

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे
राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगो नाम नवमोऽध्यायः ॥ ९॥

ōm tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyām yōgaśāstrē śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvādē
rājavidyārājaguhyayōgō nāma navamō:'dhyāyaḥ || 9||

Om Tat Sat!

END OF DISCOURSE 9

“THE YOGA OF KINGLY SCIENCE, KINGLY SECRET”

