

XII. The Yoga of Devotion

Summary of Twelfth Discourse

The twelfth discourse indicates that the path of devotion is easier than the path of knowledge. In this path the aspirant worships God in His Cosmic Form of the Supreme Personality. He develops a loving relationship with Him, adores Him, remembers Him and chants His glories and Name. He thus effects union with the Lord and attains not only His formless aspect but also the Lord as the manifest universe.

The path of knowledge, whereby the aspirant meditates on the formless Brahman, is more difficult as he has to give up his attachment to the body from the very beginning. He has to have dispassion for the things of the world.

How to practise devotion? Krishna asks Arjuna to fix his entire mind on Him. As often as the mind wanders it should be brought back to the Lord. If this process of concentration is difficult he should dedicate all his actions to Him, feeling that it is His power that activates everything. If this also is beyond his ability, he should offer all his actions to the Lord, abandoning the desire for their fruits. He should take complete refuge in Him. The devotee who surrenders himself to the Lord attains perfect peace.

The Lord goes on to describe the qualities that a true devotee possesses. He neither attaches himself to anything nor does he have any aversion to things. He has a balanced mind under all circumstances. He is not agitated by the happenings of the world, nor does he himself cause any agitation in others. He is perfectly desireless and rejoices in the Lord within. He sees equality everywhere, being untouched by sorrow, fear, honour as also dishonour. He is perfectly content as he has surrendered his entire being to the Lord.

Arjuna Uvaacha:

*Evam satatayuktaa ye bhaktaastwaam paryupaasate;
Ye chaapyaksharamavyaktam teshaam ke yogavittamaah.*

Arjuna said:

1. Those devotees who, ever steadfast, thus worship Thee and those also who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested—which of them are better versed in Yoga?

COMMENTARY: The twelfth discourse indicates that Bhakti Yoga is much easier than Jnana Yoga or the Yoga of knowledge.

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Mayyaaveshya mano ye maam nityayuktaa upaasate;
Shraddhayaa parayopetaaste me yuktatamaa mataah.*

The Blessed Lord said:

2. Those who, fixing their minds on Me, worship Me, ever steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, these are the best in Yoga in My opinion.

*Ye twaksharamanirdeshyamavyaktam paryupaasate;
Sarvatragamachintyam cha kootasthamachalam dhruvam.*

3. Those who worship the imperishable, the indefinable, the unmanifested, the omnipresent, the unthinkable, the eternal and the immovable,

*Samniyamyendriyagraamam sarvatra samabuddhayah;
Te praapnuvanti maameva sarvabhootahite rataah.*

4. Having restrained all the senses, even-minded everywhere, intent on the welfare of all beings—verily they also come unto Me.

*Klesho'dhikatarasteshaam avyaktaasaktachetasaam;
Avyaktaa hi gatirduhkham dehavadbhiravaapyate.*

5. Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the Unmanifested; for the goal—the Unmanifested—is very difficult for the embodied to reach.

COMMENTARY: The embodied—those who identify themselves with their bodies. The imperishable Self is very hard to reach for those who are attached to their bodies. Their restless minds will not be able to get fixed on the attributeless Self.

*Ye tu sarvaani karmaani mayi sannyasya matparaah;
Ananyenaiva yogena maam dhyayanta upaasate.*

6. But to those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, meditating on Me with single-minded Yoga,

*Teshaamaham samuddhartaa mrityusamsaarasaagaraat;
Bhavaami nachiraat paartha mayyaaveshitachetasaam.*

7. To those whose minds are set on Me, O Arjuna, verily I become ere long the saviour out of the ocean of the mortal Samsara!

*Mayyeva mana aadhatwa mayi buddhim niveshaya;
Nivasishyasi mayyeva ata oordhwam na samshayah.*

8. Fix thy mind on Me only, thy intellect in Me, (then) thou shalt no doubt live in Me alone hereafter.

*Atha chittam samaadhaatum na shaknoshi mayi sthiram;
Abhyaasayogena tato maamicchaaptum dhananjaya.*

9. If thou art unable to fix thy mind steadily on Me, then by the Yoga of constant practice do thou seek to reach Me, O Arjuna!

*Abhyaase'pyasamartho'si matkarmaparamo bhava;
Madarthamapi karmaani kurvansiddhimavaapsyasi.*

10. If thou art unable to practise even this Abhyasa Yoga, be thou intent on doing actions for My sake; even by doing actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection.

*Athaitadapyashakto'si kartum madyogamaashritah;
Sarvakarmaphalatyaagam tatah kuru yataatmavaan.*

11. If thou art unable to do even this, then, taking refuge in union with Me, renounce the fruits of all actions with the self controlled.

*Shreyo hi jnaanamabhyaasaat jnaanaaddhyaanam vishishyate;
Dhyaanaat karmaphalatyaagas tyagaacchaantir anantaram.*

12. Better indeed is knowledge than practice; than knowledge meditation is better; than meditation the renunciation of the fruits of actions; peace immediately follows renunciation.

*Adweshtaa sarvabhootaanaam maitrah karuna eva cha;
Nirmamo nirahankaarah samaduhkhasukhah kshamee.*

13. He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving,

*Santushtah satatam yogee yataatmaa dridhanishchayah;
Mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa me priyah.*

14. Ever content, steady in meditation, possessed of firm conviction, self-controlled, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me.

*Yasmaannodwijate loka lokaannodwijate cha yah;
Harshaamarshabhayodwegairmukto yah sa cha me priyah.*

15. He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, and who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety—he is dear to Me.

*Anapekshah shuchirdaksha udaaseeno gatavyathah;
Sarvaarambhaparityaagee yo madbhaktah sa me priyah.*

16. He who is free from wants, pure, expert, unconcerned, and untroubled, renouncing all undertakings or commencements—he who is (thus) devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

*Yona hrishyati na dweshti na shochati na kaangkshati;
Shubhaashubhaparityaagee bhaktimaan yah sa me priyah.*

17. He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, and who is full of devotion, is dear to Me.

COMMENTARY: He does not rejoice when he attains desirable objects nor does he grieve when he parts with his cherished objects. Further, he does not desire the unattained.

*Samah shatrau cha mitre cha tathaa maanaapamaanayoh;
Sheetoshnasukhaduhkheshu samah sangavivarjitah.*

18. He who is the same to foe and friend, and in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment,

*Tulyanindaastutirmaunee santushto yena kenachit:
Aniketah sthiraamatir bhaktimaan me priyo narah.*

19. He to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, of a steady mind, and full of devotion—that man is dear to Me.

*Ye tu dharmyaamritamidam yathoktam paryupaasate;
Shraddhadhaanaah matparamaa bhaktaaste'teeva me priyaah.*

20. They verily who follow this immortal Dharma (doctrine or law) as described above, endowed with faith, regarding Me as their supreme goal, they, the devotees, are exceedingly dear to Me.

*Hari Om Tat Sat
Iti Srimad Bhagavadgeetaasooapanishatsu Brahmavidyaayaam
Yogashaastre Sri Krishnaarjunasamvaade
Bhaktiyogo Naama Dwaadasho'dhyaayah*

Thus in the *Upanishads* of the glorious *Bhagavad Gita*, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the twelfth discourse entitled:

“The Yoga of Devotion”
