

XV. The Yoga of the Supreme Spirit

Summary of Fifteenth Discourse

This discourse is entitled “Purushottama Yoga” or the “Yoga of the Supreme Person”. Here Lord Krishna tells us about the ultimate source of this visible phenomenal universe from which all things have come into being, just like a great tree with all its roots, trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits which spring forth from the earth, which itself supports the tree and in which it is rooted. Sri Krishna declares that the Supreme Being is the source of all existence, and refers allegorically to this universe as being like an inverted tree whose roots are in Para Brahman, and whose spreading branches and foliage constitute all the things and factors that go to make up this creation of variegated phenomena. This is a very mysterious “Tree” which is very difficult to understand, being a product of His inscrutable power of Maya; and hence a marvellous, apparent appearance without having actual reality. One who fully understands the nature of this Samsara-Tree goes beyond Maya. To be attached to it is to be caught in it. The surest way of transcending this Samsara or worldly life is by wielding the excellent weapon of dispassion and non-attachment.

In verses four and five of this discourse the Lord tells us how one goes beyond this visible Samsara and attains the supreme, imperishable status, attaining which one does not have to return to this mortal world of pain and death.

Lord Krishna also describes for us the wonderful mystery of His Presence in this universe and the supreme place He occupies in sustaining everything here. The Lord declares that it is a part of Himself that manifests here as the individual soul in each body. He Himself is the indwelling Oversoul beyond the self. He is the effulgence inherent in the sun, moon and fire. He is present as the nourishing element in the earth. He is the inner witness of all beings. He is the supreme Knower even beyond Vedic knowledge. He is the resplendent Person who is beyond both this perishable phenomenal creation as well as the imperishable individual soul which is a part of His eternal essence. Thus, because He is beyond perishable matter and superior to the imperishable soul (enveloped in Maya), He is known in this world as well as in the *Vedas* as the Supreme Person.

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Oordhwamoolam adhahshaakham ashwattham praahuravyayam;
Cchandaamsi yasya parnaani yastam veda sa vedavit.*

The Blessed Lord said:

1. They (the wise) speak of the indestructible *peepul* tree, having its root above and branches below, whose leaves are the metres or hymns; he who knows it is a knower of the *Vedas*.

*Adhashchordhwam prasritaastasya shaakhaah
Gunapravridhaa vishayapravaalaah;
Adhashcha moolaanyanusantataani
Karmaanubandheeni manushyaloke.*

2. Below and above spread its branches, nourished by the Gunas; sense-objects are its buds; and below in the world of men stretch forth the roots, originating action.

*Na roopamasyeha tathopalabhyate
Naanto na chaadirna cha sampratishthaa;
Ashwatthamenam suviroodhamoolam
Asangashastrena dridhena cchittwaa.*

3. Its form is not perceived here as such, neither its end nor its origin, nor its foundation nor resting place; having cut asunder this firmly-rooted *peepul* tree with the strong axe of non-attachment,

*Tatah padam tat parimaargitavyam
Yasmin gataa na nivartanti bhooyah;
Tameva chaadyam purusham prapadye
Yatah pravrittih prasrita puraanee.*

4. Then *that* goal should be sought after, whither having gone none returns again. Seek refuge in that Primeval Purusha whence streamed forth the ancient activity or energy.

COMMENTARY: That which fills the whole world with the form of Satchidananda, is Purusha. That which sleeps in this city of the body is the Purusha. Single-minded devotion, which consists of ceaselessly remembering the Supreme Being, is the surest and most potent means of attaining Self-realisation.

*Nirmaanamohaa jitasangadoshaa
Adhyaatmanityaa vinivrittakaamaah;
Dwandwairvimuktaah sukhaduhkhasamjnair
Gacchantyamoodhaah padamavyayam tat.*

5. Free from pride and delusion, victorious over the evil of attachment, dwelling constantly in the Self, their desires having completely turned away, freed from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach the eternal goal.

*Na tadbhaasayate sooryo na shashaangko na paavakah;
Yadgatwaa na nivartante taddhaama paramam mama.*

6. Neither doth the sun illumine there, nor the moon, nor the fire; having gone thither they return not; that is My supreme abode.

*Mamaivaamsho jeevaloke jeevabhootah sanaatanah;
Manah shashthaaneendriyaani prakritisthaani karshati.*

7. An eternal portion of Myself having become a living soul in the world of life, draws to (itself) the (five) senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in Nature.

*Shareeram yadavaapnoti yacchaapyutkraamateeshwarah;
Griheetwaitaani samyaati vaayurgandhaanivaashayaat.*

8. When the Lord obtains a body and when He leaves it, He takes these and goes (with them) as the wind takes the scents from their seats (flowers, etc.).

*Shrotram chakshuh sparshanam cha rasanam ghraanameva cha;
Adhishthaaya manashchaayam vishayaanupasevate.*

9. Presiding over the ear, the eye, touch, taste and smell, as well as the mind, he enjoys the objects of the senses.

*Utkraamantam sthitam vaapi bhunjaanam vaa gunaanvitam;
Vimoodhaa naanupashyanti pashyanti jnaanachakshushah.*

10. The deluded do not see Him who departs, stays and enjoys; but they who possess the eye of knowledge behold Him.

*Yatanto yoginashchainam pashyantyaatmanyavasthitam;
Yatanto'pyakritaatmaano nainam pashyantyachetasah.*

11. The Yogis striving (for perfection) behold Him dwelling in the Self; but, the unrefined and unintelligent, even though striving, see Him not.

*Yadaadityagatam tejo jagad bhaasayate'khilam;
Yacchandramasi yacchaagnau tattejo viddhi maamakam.*

12. That light which residing in the sun, illumines the whole world, that which is in the moon and in the fire—know that light to be Mine.

*Gaam aavishya cha bhootaani dhaarayaamyaham ojasaa;
Pushnaami chaushadheeh sarvaah somo bhootwaa rasaatmakah.*

13. Permeating the earth I support all beings by (My) energy; and, having become the watery moon, I nourish all herbs.

*Aham vaishwaanaro bhootwaa praaninaam dehamaashritah;
Praanaapaana samaayuktah pachaamyannam chaturvidham.*

14. Having become the fire Vaisvanara, I abide in the body of living beings and, associated with the Prana and Apana, digest the fourfold food.

*Sarvasya chaaham hridi sannivishto
Mattah smritir jnaanam apohanam cha;
Vedaischa sarvairahameva vedyo
Vedaantakrid vedavid eva chaaham.*

15. And, I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge, as well as their absence. I am verily that which has to be known by all the *Vedas*; I am indeed the author of the Vedanta, and the knower of the *Vedas* am I.

*Dwaavimau purushau loke ksharashchaakshara eva cha;
Ksharah sarvaani bhootaani kootastho'kshara uchyate.*

16. Two Purushas there are in this world, the perishable and the imperishable. All beings are the perishable, and the Kutastha is called the imperishable.

*Uttamah purushastwanyah paramaatmetyudaahritah;
Yo lokatrayamaavishya bibhartavyaya ishwarah.*

17. But distinct is the Supreme Purusha called the highest Self, the indestructible Lord who, pervading the three worlds, sustains them.

*Yasmaat ksharam ateeto'hamaksharaadapi chottamah;
Ato'smi loke vede cha prathitah purushottamah.*

18. As I transcend the perishable and am even higher than the imperishable, I am declared as the highest Purusha in the world and in the *Vedas*.

*Yo maamevam asammoodho jaanaati purushottamam;
Sa sarvavidbhajati maam sarvabhaavena bhaarata.*

19. He who, undeluded, knows Me thus as the highest Purusha, he, knowing all, worships Me with his whole being (heart), O Arjuna!

*Iti guhyatamam shaastram idamuktam mayaa'nagha;
Etadbuddhwaa buddhimaan syaat kritakrityashcha bhaarata.*

20. Thus, this most secret science has been taught by Me, O sinless one! On knowing this, a man becomes wise, and all his duties are accomplished, O Arjuna!

*Hari Om Tat Sat
Iti Srimad Bhagavadgeetaasooapanishatsu Brahmavidyaayaam
Yogashaastre Sri Krishnaarjunasamvaade
Purushottamayogo Naama Panchadasho'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 fifteenth discourse entitled:

“The Yoga of the Supreme Spirit”
