



Chinmaya Mission San Jose

e-Newsletter

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Touched by the Master

Be a Ram Inside



The year was 1958. When I was given Brahmopadesam [initiation into the Gayatri Mantra], our Pujya Gurudev blessed me and gave me golden advice:

“Rajaram! Be a Ram inside and a *raja* [king] outside.”

The advice is self-explanatory. One should be serene and divine inside, but outside as we face the world we have to “fight” like a king and be courageous. Being a sadhu [person dedicated to a search for God] doesn’t mean one should shun fighting the evils or odds in life.

When I was only a shy boy, Swamiji explained it to me thus. It was He who made me a “man” today!

This is an excerpt from the book “At Every Breath, A Teaching,” by *Rudite Emir*

Colorful Celebrations

Colors predominated the month of March at the mission in San Jose! It was a multi-hued day on the 19th of March when we had a riotous celebration of Holi; and it was with different shades of blue that we celebrated Rama Navami on the 27th.





The basketball court at Lincoln High looked like a scene viewed through a kaleidoscope on Holi. Children and adults sprayed colors on each other with abandon. In no time at all, the big buckets holding little trays of color were empty, but the resourceful children resorted to scraping the color off the court to prolong their play!



Blue, representing infinitude, was the color of the day when we celebrated the birth of Lord Rama on the 27th at the ashram. The beautifully decorated altar had a blue canopy while the floor of the altar had a blue base on which were strewn sprays of colorful flowers and shiny pebbles. A huge framed picture of the blue skinned Lord Rama was mounted on the side just below the main altar. After the Swaranjali choir rendered a series of songs in praise of Lord Rama who lived his life as a definition of the word “ideal”, Pandit Ravichandran performed a short but soulful puja for the Lord. One of the memorable aspects of the evening was that many devotees were inspired to sing the Lord’s praises after the puja. This went on for much longer than usual, and the scene resembled the pattabishekam – the coronation of Lord Rama after fourteen years of exile. The evening ended as always with the devotees partaking of the prasad.



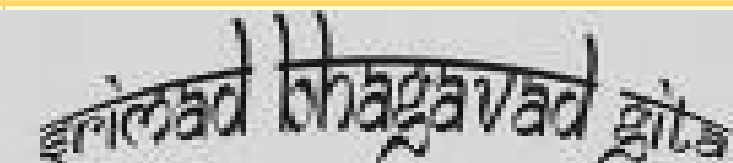
Verse 11

The significance of this verse is that for the first time the Lord speaks and thus begins his teaching. After having silently listened to Arjuna's laments with a smile on his face, the Lord now begins his treatment of Arjuna's condition. Verses 11 through 25 deals with the spiritual standpoint where the Supreme nature of the Atma or Self-knowledge is revealed.

The conflict in Arjuna's mind had arisen due to his attachments and his identification with the body, mind and intellect-ego. This extreme grief led him to become helpless and incapable of fighting the war. Indicating the eternal reality to Arjuna, Bhagwan states that men of wisdom-*Pundits*, grieve neither for the living nor the dead. They understand the finite and perishable nature of these beings and objects. Therefore grieving over Drona, Bhishma and the others is unintelligent because in essence, they are all eternal.

(Pundits by definition are individuals whose actions-*karma* is burned away by the Knowledge of the Self. These individuals also have sameness in vision-*samadarshi*. They see oneness in all, the wise and unwise, plants, animals, birds, insects, animate and inanimate alike).

Krishna is advising Arjuna to renounce his physical, emotional and intellectual perception of his teacher and his grandsire, and to re-examine the situation of the battlefield from the spiritual standpoint.



Verse 12

In this verse Bhagwan describes the immortal nature of the Self-*Atma*. The Lord says, "There has never been a time when I was not there. There has never been a time when you were not there nor was there ever a time that these people were not there. There will never be a time that we will cease to exist."

Atma being eternal-*nithya*, does not have birth (we understand birth as that which was not there before has come into being) and it does not have death (we understand death as that which was present has ceased to exist). Birth and death is only at the level of this physical body. *Atma* is changeless-*avikari*. *Atma* is a witness to all the changes and therefore it exists at all times. It is continuous, homogenous, and eternal. Unconditioned by anything the *Atma* is always present. This is the true nature of everyone.

Verse 13

Continuing with his description of the eternal nature of *Atma*, Bhagwan explains that the embodied soul goes through physical changes-*vikaras* such as childhood, youth, old age and finally death, which are all part of nature-*prakruti*. After death the soul takes up another body according to its desires-*vasanas*. These changes come and go but *Atma*, which is changeless, continues to exist. Just as we move from childhood to youth, then adulthood and old age in life, we also transition from one body to another. This is part of life. Just as we do not grieve with the passing of each stage in life, with the same approach we should accept the passing from one body to another. Men of wisdom-*dheerba purusha* know the difference between the changing and the changeless. Without being perturbed, these wise men leave the old body and accept a new one. So the Lord asks Arjuna not to grieve as Drona, Bhishma and the others are all eternal.



Verse 14

Addressing Arjuna as Bharata, the descendent of the illustrious Bharata dynasty and one who revels in knowledge, the Lord describes the finite and impermanent nature of this world of senses and objects. The Lord says that we measure (*matraha*) this world with our five sense organs. The outcome of the contact of the sense organs with different objects of the world is either joy or sorrow. The object itself does not determine whether it causes joy or sorrow; it is our state of mind or condition that determines whether something causes us joy or sorrow. Since these finite experiences have a beginning and an end, it is foolish to get carried away by them. The Lord asks Arjuna to develop forbearance or *titiksha* and endure them with grace.

In the previous three verses, the Lord spoke about the eternal-*nithya* nature of the Self-*Atma*. In this verse Bhagwan is showing Arjuna the perishable nature of the sense organs, organs of perception and the experiences obtained from their interaction. The mental reactions, thoughts and emotions that arise out of their contacts are impermanent and perishable-*anithya* by nature. Bhagwan asks Arjuna not to identify himself with these experiences by developing forbearance with the understanding that this is the nature of the world.