

3. Thyaga and Bhoga

MAN should not behave like animals which pursue a mirage in the hope of quenching their thirst. Man's primary duty is to realise his divinity. The delusion that he is the body is the cause of his bondage. *Atmajnana* (Self-realisation) destroys that delusion.

As a seed finds fulfilment by growing from a sapling into a tree blossoming with flowers and fruits, man should find fulfilment by achieving fullness and ripeness as a human being. God is the seed for creation. The cosmos is the tree. Humanity represents the fruits in that tree. In each of these human fruits, there is a seed. That seed is the Atma. That Atma is the Primal Cause. It is Divine. In each individual the divine seed of Atma is shining with effulgence. This profound truth is not being realised by every person.

Man is an amalgam of body, mind and *Atma*. Without the existence of all three man cannot accomplish anything. Both the body and mind are associated with the Atma, without which neither of them can function.

Reconcile sacrifice with desire for comforts

To comprehend the unity of body, mind and *Atma* is to realise a fundamental truth. The body is gross. The Atma is subtle. It is the mind that links the two. If the *Atma* is ignored, man is reduced to the level of the animal. When the body and the *Atma* are ignored and the mind alone is active, the humanness comes to the fore. When the body and the mind are kept out and the Atma alone is experienced, Divinity is attained.

How is this to be achieved? An essential requisite is *Thyaga*, the spirit of sacrifice. How is sacrifice to be reconciled with man's incessant activity and his desire for comforts and conveniences? The gulf between *Thyaga* (sacrifice) on the one side and *Bhoga* (enjoyment of material comforts) on the other, seems to be unbridgeable. The Vedanta has resolved the conflict between the two by pointing out that material objects can be enjoyed with a sense of detachment and a spirit of renunciation.

If the ego is eliminated in the performance of actions and attachment is renounced in the use of material objects, there will be no difference between *Thyaga* (renunciation) and *Bhoga* (enjoyment). Pleasures which are experienced with a sense of detachment cease to be *bhogas* and become a form of *Yoga*. After enjoying all the pleasures and comforts we seek, what is it that remains? The body decomposes into five elements. What is basic is the *Atma* principle that sustains the body and **all** the senses. When the Atma leaves the body, neither the sense organs nor the mind can function. The *Atma* is eternal and omni-present. It is self-existent. The spiritual quest is to understand and realise the nature of the *Atma*. This is *Brahmajnana* (knowledge of the *Brahman*). Every individual should regard the enquiry into nature of the *Atma* as the primary purpose of life. Putty of thought, word and deed is essential for this enquiry.

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Rejoice that it is given to you to recognise God in all and welcome all chances to sing His glory, to hear His chronicle, to share His presence with others. God has His hand in all handiworks; His feet on all attitudes; His eyes beyond all horizons and His face before every face.

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