

THE NATURAL EFFULGENCE OF SOUL

To understand *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, one requires an expert teacher who has traversed the path that which reveals the Divine message. Although the verses seem simple and clear to those with some knowledge of Sanskrit, they actually contain profound meanings which can be revealed only by the *A:cha:ryas*. In Sanskrit, the same word can be used to convey a variety of meanings, i.e., the same word may convey different meanings. For example, the seemingly simple word '*A:thma*', can mean body, attitude, mind, soul or the Supreme Soul, in different contexts. If the speaker uses a word in one context and the listener understands it in a different one, it implies that the listener didn't understand the actual fact.

Since the Lord, who is also called as 'The unrivalled expert in the art of speaking', is the author of the *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. Any amount of scholarship in Sanskrit and keen scrutiny will not allow us to understand Him or His message on our own. Instead what is the required for the above-said purpose, is the compassion of the *A:cha:ryas*. *HH Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji's Gi:tha Jyo:thi* lecture series has proven invaluable in learning the essence of the *Gi:tha*. I would like to share what I have learnt about a verse, as an example of how proper learning under an *A:cha:rya* can lead us to the wealth of understanding. The following verse (*slo:kam* of 37th week) is widely misconstrued:

*na thad bha:sayathe: su:ryo:
nasasa:nko: na pa:vakaha
yadgathva: na nivarthanthe:
thad dha:ma paramam mama*
B *Gi:tha* 15-6

This verse has been one of the very difficult verses to comprehend because its

meaning is not quite what we think it is. Its right meaning was wonderfully made crystal clear by *HH Sri Swamiji* during *Gi:tha Jyo:thi* discourses.

The knowledgeable ones who comprehend that they have come to the Earth for a special purpose and through an *Acharya*, try to understand the Supreme Soul, are called the '*Uththama Purushaha*'. Amongst them, the ones who constantly work towards attaining a superior state are called the '*Uthpurushas*'. They too live in this world in the form of humans. The knowledge which they possess is superior in nature. Their state is explained by Lord in this *slo:kam*.

As explained by *HH Sri Swamiji*, '*thath*', in this *slo:kam*, refers to the 'un-entangled, pure state of the soul'. Some refer to it as '*Vaikunttam* or some physical place somewhere in the cosmos', but '*thath*' points to this very soul. *Paramam Dha:ma* means 'matchless effulgence'. Thus, '*thath + paramam dha:ma*' = 'effulgence of the pure state of soul'. Lord *Krishna* says that it is '*mama*', 'that soul too with its unparalleled effulgence verily belongs to Me, O *Arjuna*!' In other words, we, in our pure state, with our attributes like self-effulgence, knowledge etc, are verily the property of Lord *Krishna*.

There are some spots in this world which seem to glow endlessly, like the Sun and stars in the sky. These need not be lit. They glitter always. Sunrise as well as the arrival of moon, both spring an unknown kind of happiness within us. Sunrise makes the world sunlit. The arrival of moon confers a different type of luminosity. In the absence of both, fire gives us the required light. Within all these too, there resides a soul. Due to the presence of a soul, their glow is

externally visible. Soul forms the basis for the radiance residing in them. Actually, that soul residing within, is exceedingly brighter than all these. The ball of fire, Sun, too has a body. As a result of its past *Karmas*, it gained that body. Our body hides the matchless glow of our soul unlike the Sun and the Moon which are allowing the soul's radiance to be emitted out. Even the brightness of Sun is milder when compared to the actual radiance of the soul. The *Karmas* obscure the total brightness and allow only a part of it to be radiated out. Once the soul within that Sun is freed from the bondages, its glow would be unimaginably brilliant. Our real nature is the knowledge. We too are powerful enough to fade the gleam of Sun, Moon, Stars and even Fire. All these are under His control.

'na thad bha:sayathe: su:ryaha' – Sun's function is limited to removing the darkness of the physical world. *'na sasa:nkaha'* - Moon too does the same in a different manner. Moon transmits the rays of coolness. Even the Moon is incapable of illuminating the soul. Instead, the soul is the reason behind its glow. And, *'na pa:vakaha'* - Same is the case with the fire. If we recognize that form of soul as the one controlled by the Lord, then, *'na nivarthanthe:.'*, we would never get entangled into the bondage of *Karma*. The true self will be realized. One would be able to fully comprehend the whole-part (*Bhagavad se:shathwam*) relationship of subservience to the Lord. The soul resides within, as a subordinate of the Lord.

"thad dha:ma paramam mama – O Arjuna! The soul, is called *Paramdha:ma*, and is qualified to illuminate even the stars like Sun by residing in them. That soul too is *'mama'*, a controlling abode of Mine," preached the Lord. The inherent natural effulgence of the pure soul, which is just an infinitesimal speck of Lord, is not illuminated by sun, moon or fire, as it is subtler than and is itself the source of energy for sun, moon and fire.



In that case, are the Lord and the soul, one and the same? No, soul is an inseparable part of the Lord but is different from Him. The clothes which we wear are a part of our body. Similarly, the hand is a part of the body. The clothes can be removed but the hand cannot be. Manifestation of the hand has an inseparable relationship with the body but then the hand has a different name and shape. Its characteristics and duties vary from that of the body. Thus, we cannot consider those parts as independent entities. We, who possess these parts, have different characteristics, shapes and qualities. Similarly, all the souls are in Him as His inseparable parts. Being within them, the Lord controls all the souls. Knowing this is of prime importance for us. To free ourselves from the hardships, we need to know more about ourselves. The knowledge which tells us that we all are His subserving parts and are totally dependent on Him, is the greatest. And *'Yath'*, i.e., 'by understanding this' (the above), the soul never returns to this mundane plane or gets entrapped in these layers of 24 material elements.

One who attains this realization that the soul inside this material body is subservient to Lord, can clearly grasp the right purport of the seemingly intricate concepts. Such knowledge enables us to transform all our deeds into His service. This verse, in its essence, proves that we eternally belong to and are His property, meant to lovingly serve Lord *Sri:manna:ra:yana*. This is our most natural position. It tells us to "Worship our own and respect all". Let us accept this as the primary aim of our lives and move ahead together. With this understanding firmly fixed in our minds, let us lead our life in such a way that whatever we do becomes a form of loving service to the Lord!

Jai Srimannarayana !