

BHAGAVAN SRI KRISHNA AS MAHAYOGESHWARA

by

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Bhagavan Sri Krishna is called Mahayogeshwara. The great Lord of Yoga is supposed to be associated with the master of dextrous action, Arjuna. *Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārho dhanur-dharaḥ tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama* (Gita 18.78). “There shall be peace and happiness and prosperity of every kind where there is the Lord of Yoga, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, and the master of action, the wielder of the instrument of work, Arjuna. When these two powers unite, perfection ensues.” With these words, the Bhagavadgita concludes.

We all aspire for perfection. We would like to have perfect health and a perfected form of education, a perfection in our fulfilment of needs and the acquirement of our appurtenances of life. We resent imperfection of any kind. We do not like a lacuna to be seen anywhere. Everything should be clean, tip-top, and elegant. The word that indicates all these ideas in our mind is ‘perfection’.

It is the dictum of the Gita that perfection is certain to be attained where these two essential factors are blended together. What are these two factors that have to go together, hand in hand, for the purpose of the achievement of perfection in life? Yoga is one of the factors, whose embodiment here in this context is the master Bhagavan Sri

Krishna, and perfection in dealing with things, which is embodied in the dexterity of his friend and disciple, Arjuna. As a Yoga Shastra, it is the declaration of an art of living. It is an answer to the question how we can be happy and how we can be free from the pains caused by imperfections of any kind. We have a detailed enunciation of this pithy statement throughout the Bhagavadgita gospel—how an inner communion of spirit which is yoga has to be always in consonance with the impulse to work, to do anything, to perform the duties of life.

The necessity to do anything at all in one's life arises on account of the very law that operates behind the existence of human individuality. The physical body, the individual person, cannot even survive without an action that is incumbent upon its very existence. The necessity for the individual to act perpetually in some way or the other arises on account of the finitude of every type of individuality and the need felt by this finitude to compensate its imperfection, consequent upon its finitude by association with the outer atmosphere of similar finitudes.

The external finitude is represented by human society and the physical universe, with which each person has to deal. Our function in life is the handling of these two phenomena before us every day—human society and the vast physical nature, *prakriti*. The rules of *prakriti*, or nature, bind the individual to such subjection that any violation of its dictates would be detrimental not only to the peaceful existence of the individual, but the very existence of the individual itself. We have to harmoniously place ourselves in the context of physical nature, and also in the context of human society, of which we are ingredients.

It is impossible not to engage oneself in an action of some kind, due to the very fact of there being this twofold phenomenon of human society and physical nature. These do not just stand outside us as things to be dealt with at our discretion, but are there as forces that have a clutch over our very individual constitution, so that it may be safely said that

society and nature not only control human individuality but, in a way, constitute the very fibre of human individuality. Briefly, these are the reasons why it is necessary for an individual to work, and it is impossible not to work. This is emphatically mentioned.

But how would we work? It was told that action is a must. Work has to be done. Day in and day out, from moment to moment, we have to be conscious of our involvement in human society and physical nature. They impinge upon us continuously. Any lethargic ignorance in respect of the existence and operation of these two forces would tell upon us and weigh heavily upon us. Here is the principle of the Arjuna in human individuals, the perfected specimen of relation with external nature and external society.

When we deal with things, we are not supposed to merely fumble and create a mess. Every action is supposed to be a decent artistic performance. Our behaviour has a beauty in itself. It is as beautiful as anything in the world that can be beautiful. The beauty of our performance, our work, our deeds and duties enhances in proportion to the intensity of, or the extent of, the harmony that is ingrained in our relationship with human society and nature. Such a person is a beautiful gentleman, a beautiful individual. The beauty of the human personality is automatically implied in the beauty that is inherent in the harmony existing between the human individual and the phenomena mentioned. Thus, Arjuna becomes a specimen of perfect individuality: a mould of humanity into which everyone may have to be cast. But we are cautioned at the same time that all effort that one may put forth in the direction of this execution of perfection in the art of maintaining harmony with society and nature—with all this given and granted—there would be something required over and above all these enthusiasms and honesties of intention; and that is the yoga spoken of.

Arjuna is a perfect man, doing perfect deeds—a specimen of human individuality, no doubt—but Krishna has to be there with him. Not only has Krishna to be there with Arjuna,

he has to be within Arjuna himself as a guiding intelligence. This charioteer of the Mahabharata context, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, driving, moving forward the vehicle of Arjuna is not only an external guide in the purely military and political fashion, but also an inner director, an intelligence that helps the very understanding of the person engaged in the action.

The association of Krishna with Arjuna is the association of yoga with work. The Mahayogeshwara Sri Krishna is so-called because of his supreme attainment of *atmatva*—unifiedness in terms of selfhood, which is the highest yoga we can conceive of. “Through *atmayoga* I have demonstrated this great vision before you,” says Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. All yoga is finally *atmayoga*. It is the unitedness of the self with the spirit of all things. This is not necessarily implied in learning how to work perfectly.

A good management expert—a director of a company—may be an expert in his line, but that would not suffice in the end when one faces what they call the brass tacks of nature. The world contains many more secrets, unknown and inaccessible to the human mind, so that no one can be so entirely confident that nature has been mastered, or another person’s mind has been understood. Neither of these is possible, finally, if yoga is absent or is not blended with this honesty and enthusiasm behind perfect work. Arjuna, the great perfected individual, cannot stand for a moment if Krishna is not there.

The word ‘yoga’ is difficult to explain, especially here when we speak of yoga as the power of God or the strength of the superman Bhagavan Sri Krishna. We all have some idea of what yoga is. What is the yoga of which Bhagavan Sri Krishna was a master? We do yoga every day—exercises of different kinds. Exercises are definitely yoga; but exercises, only, need not be yoga. As every work can be yoga, and yet no work need be yoga without a condition attached to it, our *sadhanas* and spiritual practices well known in daily life may be regarded as yoga practice under given conditions; but they need not be yoga if these conditions are not fulfilled.

Even the littlest of work is a divine dedication and can be called yoga; but even the largest achievement in the world need not be yoga, for certain reasons.

The yoga aspect of the work comes in when we have an insight into what yoga is in our daily conduct. It is a cognisance of our being in tune with the vital forces at all times—more than what we conceive ourselves to be. There are powers in the world more than human powers. And even the employing of human resources that are apparently successful before our eyes has a secret backing of certain forces which are not always human. Mere human endeavour cannot lead to final success. Knowingly or unknowingly, we are receiving the benefit and the grace of powers that range beyond the powers of human potentiality; and if we have succeeded anywhere, it is because of some sort of rapprochement that appeared to be there between our active powers of work and the beneficent powers that are superhuman.

This superhuman-associated factor is designated here as the *yoga-shakti* of the superman Bhagavan Sri Krishna; and as the Gita is a *yoga shastra*, a scripture of the daily performance of spiritual *sadhana*, it amounts to saying that not only the so-called spiritual outlook of seekers of truth, but even what we wrongly call the secular side of work—both these have to be actively cognizant of the operation of forces beyond themselves.

There is the tendency in everything to transcend itself. The dissatisfaction which everyone and everything feels in himself, herself or itself is the urge for a self-transcendence ingrained in all individuality throughout nature. We cannot stagnate in a given condition of our existence. There is growth and change and transmutation seen everywhere, within as well as without. This impulse to self-transcend is the secret working of a power which is not visible to ordinary eyes but which incessantly works everywhere. Winkless is the act of God. Sleepless is nature. Man may sleep, but nature does not sleep. We may take rest, but

creation does not take rest. It is incessantly active towards the achievement of a great purpose that it has placed before itself—namely, the gathering of all its forces into a singleness of consciousness and action, meditation and work, which both blend into a single being in that perfect absoluteness which is called God Almighty.

In a very interesting manner, there has been a union between Bhagavan Sri Krishna and Arjuna throughout this epic performance. They are companions, friends. Bhagavan Sri Krishna was a friend, a companion, a guide and a philosopher to Arjuna; but he was also a Guru. A Guru is a master who has a say over the very soul of the disciple; and the Guru does not impart mere external instruction as we have in schools, but motivates the growth and impulsion of the soul of the student. God Himself may be said to be a friend of all. God is the friend of all creatures. But he is not merely a friend; He is the soul of all beings, the Lord over all things.

The power of yoga is, therefore, an externally conditioning and restraining power in our day-to-day life. But beyond that it is a disciplining power, internally, in terms of our own consciousness—the very self of ours. Yoga cannot be known by anybody except by yoga itself. Yoga does not arise from some person; yoga arises only from yoga. Intriguing indeed is this statement! Yoga is not a commodity that comes from outside. It is not grown in a field or stocked in a market. It cannot be purchased. It has no weight or any kind of measurement characteristic of things. The practice of yoga, therefore, is not just a physical performance, because everything that is physical is measurable; but yoga is immeasurable. It is also not a work of some kind that we do, because every work is finite and also measurable, and yoga is immeasurable. It is not a good deed and a praiseworthy action, merely, that is commendable to human society, because even that is perishable in its end; and yoga is imperishable.

An imperishable attitude is maintained even when we perform a so-called perishable action. This is the friendship of Bhagavan Sri Krishna with Arjuna. Sri Krishna represents an immeasurable spirituality, and Arjuna represents the pinnacle of measurable performance. Phenomenon reaching its zenith is Arjuna, and what is above phenomena is that inscrutable Bhagavan Sri Krishna, whose thoughts and actions no one could understand. How God acts, man is not supposed to know, because the circumference of human conduct is just the circumference of the psychophysical individuality. And considering the fact that even so-called voluntary actions performed by the individual with utmost intelligence can ultimately lead to success only by an unseen participation of super-human forces, we can well imagine what yoga it is that the Gita refers to when Bhagavan Sri Krishna is regarded as Mahayogeshwara.

It is necessary for every one of us to accept from the bottom of our hearts that in everything that we do, behind every thought that may emanate from our minds—anything whatsoever connected with us—there is an unseen factor before which we have to bend our heads in submission. Ultimately, we cannot give a solution to anything in this world. The ultimacy is not here in this world, because nothing in the world is ultimate. We may reach a penultimate point with the best of our capacities, but there the matter ends; there is still something beyond. This beyondness is the vital factor intelligently and resistlessly operating in the cosmos; and yoga here, at least, would mean the extent of our being aware of this association of supernatural forces in our day-to-day life—the extent to which God is with us in our daily life.

That extent to which we are aware of God's presence with us and in us, that extent is also the yoga that we perform. There is nothing else required of us than just being an instrument. Things shall take care of themselves, but they will take care of themselves only if we are submissive and project not the fierceness of our egoism—and permanently, perennially, always accept the necessity to receive succour

from this supernatural power. The world needs something which is not in this world. The world survives because of a call that it is receiving, eternally, as it were—in answer to which call, nature evolves and runs in a great speed. With all bag and baggage, all things in nature hurry forward, as in the epic context we have the unconscious or the superconscious rushing of the spirits of the Gopis of Vrindavana to the centre that pulled them with the music of the cosmos.

In reply to this great call, the universe gets characterised by restlessness. The more we love God, the more we feel restless within ourselves. It is a divine uneasiness which has to be there if the flame of that response to God's call has to be properly kindled and kept up forever. Why is everything active in this world? Why are we active every moment, every day, day in and day out? Why is there coming and going of things? Why is there evolution and involution? These are the busy movements of creation as a whole in response to the master's call—God calling.

Everybody is busy when there is a great performance coming on. For days together, sleeplessly, we find people running about doing this and that, all for seeing that things are set in order for the attainment or the achievement to come: the great function. This great function is yet to take place. It is the celebration of the unity of the world with God. For that great marriage ceremony, we may say, of earth and heaven, man and God, this preparation is going on in the form of the activities of creation all the business of life.

As St. John of the Cross said, it is an adornment for the spiritual marriage. We are adorning ourselves every day, keeping ourselves spick and span in our performances. Everything must be tidy and perfect, we say. This so-called perfectness that we are keeping before our minds is nothing but the requirement we are conscious of for placing ourselves in a proper position before that great incoming occasion—the ceremony of communion.