

THE VEDIC VIEW OF GOD

Guru Purnima Talks 2017

By Swami Paramarthananda

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Published by :



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In the **bhagavad gītā**, in one particular **ślokā**, the Lord talks about **four types of devotees** -

caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino' rjuna |
ārto jijñāsurarthārthī jñāni ca bharatarṣabha || 7-16

There are four types of devotees, and they are :: **ārta bhaktaḥ**, **arthārthī bhaktaḥ**, **jijñāsu bhaktaḥ** and **jñānī bhaktaḥ**. **ārta bhaktaḥ** is one who is *a devotee in distress* facing varieties of problems. And he wants to worship GOD for freedom from his problems. **He is a distressed bhaktā wanting to get freedom from his stress and distress.** Whereas, **arthārthī bhaktaḥ** is one who does not have any particular problem now; but, he is **engaged in various ventures, and in all of them he desperately wants success.** May be an admission in a American university! [That is the season now!] So, varieties of things a person desires. Whatever he desires is called **arthaḥ**. **arthaḥ** means, wealth also. Or, *anything I desire* is called **arthaḥ**. So, **arthārthī is one who wants success in his seeking.** Both **ārta & arthārthī bhaktās** want to worship GOD **either to get things or get rid of things.** *In fact throughout our life, we are only busy either getting things or getting rid of things.*

And this **bhaktā** is so obsessed **with his personal needs** of getting and getting rid of things, *he will worship GOD in any manner, suggested by anyone, at any place!* If one person introduces a temple somewhere in a unique corner, he will go there and he will go to any temple any church any mosque or any place and offer any form of worship. His aim is **எத்தைத் தின்னா பித்தம் தெளியும்! I want to somehow get what I want. I don't mind any type of pūjā.** Thus, we find **ārta bhaktā** and **arthārthī bhaktā** are obsessed with GOD worship. They don't want to know '**who this blessed GOD**

is'. They worship GOD alright. In any form. But, they are not interested in knowing who this GOD is. How many GODs are there, whether GOD is a male or female or formless, all those details they are not interested. *They go by pure faith.* Some GOD **must be there perhaps**. Because, they are all doing **pūjā**, I also want to do **pūjā**, hoping that my problem will be solved.

Thus, we have got many worshipers of GOD who are not interested in the knowledge of GOD or enquiry in to the nature of GOD. And Lord **kṛṣṇā** says, 'among these **ārta** and **arthārthī bhaktās**, some of them - *in due course*, [some of them, not all of them] may get sufficient **pun̄yam** so that from **ārta bhakti** and **arthārthī bhakti** they become the third variety, a rare variety, called **jijñāsu bhaktā**. First, they want to know, 'is there a GOD at all?' Right from that, there is a problem; because, modern science - which is most powerful now - is rejecting the very existence of GOD. I should know **what is GOD**. I should know **what is the nature of GOD**. This desire comes. '**ataho brahma jijñāsa?**' [brahma sūtra 1]. It is that word **jijñāsa?** that **kṛṣṇā** borrows. **jijñāsu bhaktaḥ bhavati**.

And initially, it is a casual desire. It is not very serious. But, after some time, this desire becomes more and more; and it becomes a burning desire. And all forms of books which talk about GOD realisation in English or in any language - other than Sanskrit; because, we don't know Sanskrit! - in all the languages, all books that are available on GOD realisation, he reads. He finds that all those books are full of *mystic experiences* and *mystic visions* of GOD appearing, giving **darśanam** and disappearing; and miraculous events happening! All these ideas are given in the books of GOD realisation. Full of mysticism, full of miracles, full of extra-ordinary experiences. But, all of them have got one common statement. They all say, 'you require a **guru** for guidance'. Therefore, this person gets the idea that - '*I want the vision of GOD*'. Because, by now, the **jijñāsa** has become **tīvra jijñāsa**. So, 'I also want GOD vision. And so, now I require a **guru**'. And he begins **guru shopping**.

Dayānanda Swāmījī calls it '**guru shopping**'. Going from mall to mall, he looks for **guru**. And he has got his own concept of **guru**; and ultimately, he may identify someone or the other as the **guru**. According to his parameters,

he fits in. Preferably, *a person whose looks are extraordinary!* Because, if a person is dealing with a **mysterious** GOD and **mysterious** visions, the person also should *preferably look mysterious and extra-ordinary*. The more extra-ordinary he looks, the more he passes as ideal **guru!** Thus, this person fixes a **guru**. And suppose, because of his extra-ordinary **pun̄yam**, he gets a **guru** - looking ordinary or extra-ordinary - whatever the look may be, **suppose** he gets a **guru** who belongs to the **vedic** tradition. **vaidika paramparāgata guruḥ**, which **guru paramparā** we are worshiping on **vyāsa pūjā** day -

**nārāyaṇam padmabhuvam vasiṣṭham śaktim ca tat putra parāśaram
ca vyāsam śukam gauḍapādādam mahāntam govinda yogīndra
mathāsya śiṣyam I śri śankarācārya mathāsya padmapādādam ca
hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam tam totākam vārtika kāram anyān asmad
gurūn santatam ānato'smi II**

So, if he finds traditional **guru**, coming in **vaidika paramparā**, he is very, very fortunate. Imagine this disciple approaches such a **guru**. And his expectations are *based on* all the GOD realisation books he had read. Therefore he thinks, the **guru** will teach him *varieties of meditations*, through which he can have *mysterious experiences; mysterious visions he can get*. Thus, *he goes with an expectation of learning varieties of meditations*. **ΠΑΡΩΛ!** If the **guru** is a traditional **guru**, he *never, never talks about meditation*. **śiṣyā** is waiting; *waiting with expectation*. The **guru's** first statement is, '**GOD is the topic of this scriptures**'. '**GOD is the topic of this scriptures; therefore, if you have to know GOD, first you should expose yourself to the teaching of the scriptures**'. Thus, a traditional **guru** always introduces **scriptural teaching**; *never meditation*.

All the scriptures are full of **guru-śiṣyā** dialogue; and in all of them, **śiṣyā** approaches the **guru** and surrenders. And the **guru** says, '*let us start learning*'. **arjunā** in the **bhagavad gītā** surrenders to **kr̥ṣṇā** and says - "**śiṣyaste'haṃ śādhi mām tvām prapannam**" - 'please teach me'. **kaivalya upaniṣad** that we are studying begins - "**adhīhi bhagavan**

brahmavidyāṃ variṣṭhāṃ sadā sadbhiḥ sevyamānāṃ nigūḍhāṃ" - 'may you teach'. "**vedāntavijñānasuniścitārthāḥ**". Thus, traditional **guru** talks *only about exposing oneself to the scriptural knowledge* :: "**śrotavyaḥ mantavyaḥ nididhyāsitavyaḥ**" [brhadāraṇyakopaniṣat] - 'may you expose yourself to the teaching' and try to assimilate the Lord, *as revealed by the scriptures*.

**tasmai sa vidvān upasannāya samyak praśānta cittāya śamānvitāya
yenākṣaram puruṣaṃ veda satyaṃ provāca tāṃ tattvato
brahmavidyāṃ II** muṇḍakopaniṣat

Thus, *all the scriptural words* are those that the **guru systematically taught the disciple**. So, the fundamental difference between a *traditional guru*, belonging to **vedic paramparā**, and any other **guru**, who does not belong to the **paramparā** is :: **tradition starts with teaching; others start with meditation**. This is one of the fundamental differences.

Once the teaching starts, *all the scriptures reveal GOD in a particular form*, which is unique to the **prasthānatrayam**. Whether it is the **upaniṣad** or it is the **bhagavad gītā** or it is **brahma sūtram** - which are the fundamental scriptures - a **jijñāsu bhaktā**, [remember the name of the **bhaktā**, a **jijñāsu bhaktā**] should expose to the contents of this teaching. One of the **upaniṣad** [they named as the 'first' **upaniṣad**; it is not the first one; but, generally enumerated as the *first upaniṣad*] is **īśāvāsya upaniṣad**, which reveals **īśvarā** as - [the very word **īśa** indicates, **īśa** means, Lord] [we are not talking about *some other īśā*; we are talking about the **upaniṣad īśa**] - it gives the first **mantrā** as ::

**īśāvāsyam idaṃ sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat I
tena tyaktena bhuñjithā mā ḡrdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam II**

The 'vision of GOD' requires the conversion of our attitude towards **this universe**. The 'vision of GOD', **very important sentence**. **THE VISION OF GOD INVOLVES CONVERSION OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE VERY WORLD WE ARE EXPERIENCING**. Or, in short, *everything that we are experiencing*. What is the **conversion of the attitude**? The **upaniṣad** says, before the scriptural study, we are looking at **everything as world or universe**. You have got

jagat bhāvanā or **prapañca bhāvanā**. [**bhāvanā** means what? **Attitude**]. What should you do? You have to replace the **prapañca bhāvanā**, displace the **prapañca bhāvanā** with **īśvara bhāvanā**. That *means* what? **Everything that I am experiencing is none other than īśvarā and īśvarā only!**

puruṣa eveda sarvam I yadbhūtaṃ yacca bhavyam I utāmṛtatvasyeśānaḥ I [puruṣa sūktam]

sarvam viṣṇumayam jagat. In the **viṣṇu sahasranāma**, the first word of **bhagavān** is, **viśvam**. **viśvam** means, what? *The whole universe*. Therefore, in the vision of the **veda**, *that we are looking at the world as a world is a mistake*; but, we have to learn to **look at the very universe as īśvaraḥ**.

Therefore, **īśvara darśanam** is not *seeing a 'separate' īśvarā, who is other than the individual and world*. **ārta** and **arthārthī bhaktās** think :: **īśvarā** is a third entity other than **jīva** and **jagat**. There is an *extra-cosmic īśvarā*, which extra-cosmic **īśvarā** I have to see, through mysterious experience. This is the approach of **ārta arthārthī bhaktā**.

But, the **vedic** approach is, **ĪŚVARA DARŚANAM IS SEEING THE WORLD AS ĪŚVARĀ**. It is not a *separate īśvara darśanam*; but, *learning to see the world itself as īśvarā*. Therefore, when I systematically study the scriptures for a length of time, my idea of 'world' is **replaced** - *whatever I experience is īśvarā*. So, **jīva - jagat - īśvarā** this is the *triangle* that I **imagine**. But, **veda** says, 'there is no **jīva - jagat - īśvarā** *triangle*. *Triangular format is wrong format*. And **veda** *presents a new format*, which is the **preliminary binary format** - [it is not the **original binary format** that I tell in the class. I am **introducing** an *intermediary binary format*], which is, **dropping the idea of jīva jagat īśvarā**. **Individual, world and GOD is a wrong approach**. Then what? [Are you able to get my point?] **Individual, world and GOD is wrong approach. It is individual and GOD alone**. That is the *preliminary* or *intermediary* **binary format**.

So, **vedic īśvara darśanam** is, **changing my perspective and trying to look at the whole universe with reverence**. That is why in **viṣṇu**

sahasranāma, even though we do **pūjā** to the deity, one of the **dhyāna ślokās** - *which is the most popular one* - is,

**bhūḥ pādau yasya nābhirviyadasuranilaścandra sūryau ca netre
karṇāvāsāḥ śīro dyaurmukhamapi dahano yasya vāsteyamabdhiḥ I**

bhūḥ pādau - *the earth is the feet of the Lord*, **candra sūryau ca netre** - *candra and sūrya are the eyes of the Lord*. **yasya nābhiḥ viyat** - *the entire ākāśa is the nābhi of the Lord*, **karṇau aśāḥ** - *all the 10 directions are the ears of the Lord*. So, you can never talk a secret; everywhere GOD's ears are there! Thus, description of **īśvarā** is, as **viśvarūpa īśvarā**. **ĪŚVARĀ IS WORLD**. **WORLD IS ĪŚVARĀ!** So, drop you obsession with a separate **īśvarā**, other than the world. Once you think of a *separate* **īśvarā** - other than the world, *you will get in to mysticism, you will get in to miracles*. **veda** does not want us to get obsessed with mysticism and miracles and extraordinary visions. They are not to be obsessed with. What is the pursuit of GOD? Gradually **learning to respect everything that I experience**. Every man, every animal, every women, every insect, **everything is none other than GOD**. In **dakṣiṇāmūrti stotram** we read -

**bhūrambhāṃsyano'nilo'mbaram aharnātho himāṃsuḥ pumān
ityābhāti carācarātmakam idaṃ yasyaiva mūrtyaṣṭakam na
anyatkiñcana vidyate vimṛśatāṃ yasmātparasmādvibhoḥ ...**

The **pañca bhūtā**s are the five limbs of the Lord; the Sun and all the stars are limbs of the Lord; all planets are limbs of the Lord. Every living being is the limb of the Lord. **yasya eva mūrtya ṣṭakam** - the Lord is called **aṣṭa mūrtyi īśvarā**. Thus, *developing a reverential attitude towards the universe* is **īśvara darśanam**. The eyes are the same; but, **the attitude behind the mind will have to be transformed**. Even in the daily **pūjā**, *which many people do mechanically*, the same idea is conveyed. During every **upacāra**, the **mantrā** chanted is very important, *to be observed carefully* -

**laṃ pṛthivyātmane gandhaṅ dhāḥpayāmi I haṃ ākāśātmane puṣpāiḥ
pūjayāmi I yaṃ vāyvātmane dhūpaṃ āghrāpayāmi I raṃ
agnyātmane dīpaṃ darśayāmi I vaṃ amṛtātmane amṛtaṃ
mahānaivedyaṃ nivedayāmi I saṃ sarvātmane sarvopacārapūjāṃ
samarpayāmi**

laṃ pṛthivyātmāne gandhaḥ dhaṛayāmi - even though he applies **candanam** on the idol or photo, he says, **pṛthivyātmāne** - 'oh Lord, you are in the form of **pṛthivī**. *You are the earth.* **haṃ ākāśātmāne puṣpāih, pūjayāmi** - thus **ākāśa** is also you; **vāyu** is also you. Thus, **īśvara darśanam** according to **veda** is *attitudinal transformation*. Miracles we need not go in to; we need not debate. Miracles are there, okay. Not there, okay. But, we are *not interested in miracles*. Spiritual progress requires changing our attitude towards the universe. There is no other **īśvara darśanam** that **veda** prescribes, **other than attitudinal transformation**.

This **īśvara darśanam** should lead to internal **sanyāsa**. I will call it, **sanyāsa binary format**. What is the **sanyāsa**? **īśāvāsya upaniṣad** says - "**tena tyaktena bhujñīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam**". So, may you renounce the notion that you are seeing the world. May you replace it with the attitude that you are experiencing GOD. When? *All the time*. Not with eyes closed. With all the sense organs open, declare, '**I am experiencing īśvarā all the time**'. The entire human life is the **rarest opportunity** to appreciate the **viśvarūpa īśvarā**, *all the time*. **sandhyāvandana mantrās** declare, "**aḥ satyena rajasaḥ vartamaṇo niveśayann amṛtam martyam ca**" - 'the sun GOD is coming, let me worship'. Every **paurṇamī** is sacred for me; because, moon GOD is available as **pūrṇa candraḥ**. **pūrṇa īśvaraḥ** is *always available*.

And once I appreciate '*everything belongs to īśvarā and īśvarā means the totality*', I have to renounce two important things. One is **mamakāra**, *the idea that I am the owner of certain things*. Since everything is **īśvarā**, everything belongs to **īśvarā**. **kasya svid dhanam? īśāvāsya** asks the question, '*who is the owner of the wealth?*' It is not a question. It is **ākṣepārthe kim**. 'Who is the owner?' means, **nobody is the owner of anything**. **Nobody is the controller of anything**. So, I have to renounce the idea of ownership and controllership. I should remember, **I use everything given by GOD for a few decades. I am only the user. I am never the owner**. **bhagavān** is the owner. He has given only for lease. Lease rent we pay is **puṇyam**; because, **manuṣya janma** is due to **puṇyam**. That is why,

only *you* can listen to the talk. Therefore, because of **puṇyam**, **bhagavān** has leased us the human body, in which, **I get an opportunity for enjoying viśvarūpa īśvarā all the time**. In the evening many people go to the beach; but, there also, *they eat popcorn and miss the wonderful ocean, the sky, the stars!* **The whole creation is wonderful**. Our own body is an extra-ordinary body. Instead of appreciating the **viśvarūpa īśvarā**, *I get obsessed with a few things* and develop **mamakāra**, ownership. And *thinking that I can control everything*, I worry about the future.

But, I should remember, 'I can contribute little to the future as a puny little individual; what is going to happen in the future **is decided by īśvarā alone**'. Thus, once I *renounce the idea of ownership and controllership and do whatever I can do in life*, then *future worry* is also not there. Because, **everything is īśvarā**. Future events are also **īśvarā**.

**nāsthā dharme na vasunicaye naiva kāmopabhoge
yad bhāvyaṃ tad bhavatu bhagavan pūrvakarmānurūpam I
etatprārthyaṃ mama bahumataṃ janmajanmāntare'pi
tvatpādāmbhoruhayugagatā niścalā bhaktirastu II** [mukundamālā
stotram]

'Oh Lord, whatever should happen in the creation according to the **law of karma**, let it all happen. I am ready; because, *all events are nothing but the movements of the Lord alone*'. That is why it is called **naṭarāja nr̥tyam**, the cosmic dance. The whole movement of the universe, the rhythmic movement of the atom, rhythmic movement of the solar system, they are all looked upon as the dance of **īśvarā**. Therefore, I don't have to *close my eyes* for **īśvara darśanam**. I don't require *miracles* for **īśvara darśanam**. I only should change my **bhāvanā**, based on the scriptural teaching. Then, **ownership** is *replaced by usership*; **controllership** is *replaced by contributorship*. Life becomes an enjoyment. Then, the concept of **mokṣa** also will be different.

Now, we don't look upon this creation as GOD. We look upon this as world. Therefore, we have a negative attitude. Hence, our concept of **mokṣa** is, **running away from the world**. '*Somehow I should die; never to come back here again*'. That means, *we hate the world*; which is, **totally against the**

vedic vision. We think, '*we have a world to be hated and we have a GOD somewhere to be loved*'. We have to **hate the world and run away** from the world; and, we have to **love the GOD who is somewhere else!** In **vaikuṅṭha** or **kailāsa**, **veda never accepts that**. There is no hateable world and lovable GOD, as an opposite entity. The world you hate is none other than GOD. So, **stop hating the world; start revering the world**. **mokṣa** is *freedom from this ignorance*. What ignorance? *The world is to be renounced and I have to run to GOD!* Run **away from** the World and **run towards** GOD - this concept of escapist mokṣa *should go away*. **Dropping this ignorance and learning to appreciate the universe in its totality and variety, is binary format, jijñāsu bhaktā's attitude number one.** What is binary format? Don't say, *individual, world and GOD*. Forget it. Replace it by *individual and GOD* alone. **There is no such thing called world. "tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā"** - renounce the idea that, '*what I have is a hateable world*'. **EVERYTHING IS LOVABLE ĪŚVARĀ ONLY! adveṣṭā sarvabhūtanāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca** [gītā 12-13]

Then, if the **jijñāsu bhaktā** survives, ... because, those who are *obsessed with mysticism and miracles* they will not like this. They *want to experience* some other GOD, *other than this terrible world*. They want to *mysteriously experience* some GOD, who will be **āyā rām** and **gayā rām**. They want **āyā rām - gayā rām** GOD. They will renounce the **vedic** teaching and go in search of **mystic guru**.

But, if the **śiṣya** is able to survive, then the **guru** gives further teaching, *which is more profound*, which I will summarise today, being **gurupūrṇimā** day. This teaching alone we are studying in all the **upaniṣad**. So, when the teaching continues, **bhagavān** gives in the **gītā** a *very beautiful teaching* - from the 7th chapter to the 12th chapter. He says, '**I have got one higher nature and one lower nature**, called **parāprakṛti** & **aparāprakṛti**. My own [*my own* means, **bhagavān's**] *higher nature is CONSCIOUSNESS* principle. **parāprakṛti** is **caitanyam**. And, I have got a *lower nature*, which is called **aparāprakṛti**, which is **matter**'.

Thus, GOD consists of CONSCIOUSNESS PRINCIPLE and MATTER PRINCIPLE. **brahman** and **māyā**. **parāprakṛti** and **aparāprakṛti**. Everything that you experience *is matter*. Therefore, it comes under the *inferior nature* of GOD or **aparāprakṛti**. Why inferior? Because, *it is mixed with pleasure and pain*. It is a mixture of opposites. Still, it is also what? It is also **īśvarā** only. What **īśvarā**? **aparāprakṛti īśvarā**. And, *there is a higher nature* - **parāprakṛti**. That is **brahman**.

And, how to see that **parāprakṛti brahman**? Lord **kṛṣṇā** says -

bhūmirāpo'nalo vāyuḥ khaṃ mano buddhireva ca |
ahañkāra itīyaṃ me bhinnā prakṛtiraṣṭadhā || [7.4]
apareyamitastvanyāṃ prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parām |
jīvabhūtāṃ mahābāho yayedam dhāryate jagat || [7.5]

The **parāprakṛti**, *the higher nature*, the CONSCIOUSNESS - **is never an object of experience**. It is available in the form of the **very 'you'**, **the experiencer of everything**. Thus, **the ultimate teaching** is, **THE WHOLE MATERIAL UNIVERSE, INCLUDING THE BODY AND MIND, IS APARĀPRAKṚTI**, the **māyā** part of **īśvarā**; and, 'I', THE CONSCIOUSNESS PRINCIPLE, WHICH IS NOT AN OBJECT OF EXPERIENCE, THAT 'I', THE SĀKṢI CAITANYAM IS, **PARĀPRAKṚTI**. Everything is GOD. *What I experience is lower GOD*; and 'I', the *experiencer* **am the higher GOD**. **ᄀᄀᄀᄀᄀᄀ? Everything is GOD**. So, everything is to be revered. And **whatever I experience is the lower GOD**; it is material & changing. Whereas, 'I', the **experiencer, is the higher GOD**. This is the **jñānī's binary format**.

'I' am **brahman**, the **parāprakṛti**. **What I experience** in front is **māyā**, the **aparāprakṛti**. **Both the 'observer' and 'observed' put together is the 'total' īśvarā**. 'I' the experiencer am GOD. Experienced world / matter is GOD. **The experiencer 'I' is CONSCIOUSNESS GOD. Experienced is matter GOD**. So, everything requires *only one attitude*. What is the attitude? Reverence & reverence.

The whole life is a life of worship and reverence. Thus, the traditional **vedic paramparā** *does not involve mysticism. Does not involve miracles*. They may be there, they may not be there. We need not be obsessed with

them. Those who are interested let them go. But, our approach is what? **I am GOD and whatever I experience** is also GOD. **sarvam viṣṇumayam jagat. sarvam śivamayam jagat** [let me say both]. Finally, **sarvam devīmayam jagat**. [this side I should not leave!] Everything is GOD. **Dayānanda Swāmījī's** favourite quote - in Tamil He enjoys saying - "இருப்பதெல்லாம் இறைவனே. பார்ப்பவனும் பார்ப்பானும் இறைவனே. பார்ப்பவனும் பார்க்கப்படுவதும் இறைவனே". This is the wonderful **guru paramparā**. *Whoever comes to this paramparā is fortunate and it is that paramparā we worship today*. With these words I conclude my talk.

Om purnamadah purnamidam purnath purnamudachate purnasya purnamadaya purnamevasisyate.

Om Santi: santi: santi:

Note: Transcription by M/s T.śrīnivasan & P.Balasubrahmanyam. Please advice corrections to balusha74@gmail.com

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