

Camp at AVG by Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati
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Value of Values - Part 09

Value 15: *nityam ca sama-cittatvam*

Sameness of the mind towards *iṣṭha-aniṣṭha-upapattiṣu*, desirable, undesirable things when they present themselves before us. Every moment the world presents before us. We constantly come across, the situation that we classify as desirable and un-desirable. When they present themselves, my attitude should be *nityam ca sama-cittatvam*, -sameness of a mind. This is more an attitude than a value.

Desirable – undesirable, how is it possible to have same attitude? The first step is, what is desirable or undesirable. Say, Ice cream, BMW are desirable. Or a snake, scorpion. They are undesirable. Can there be universal brand for something desirable? Understand that desirable, undesirable is my subjective viewpoint and it is not universal. Can desirable or undesirable be said as nature of something? There is no such thing as desirable, or undesirable, as such. It is we, who superimposes these values on them - it's a subjective view point. Whether the things made me happy or unhappy or is my perception about them makes me happy or unhappy? A given thing can become undesirable in one situation and undesirable at different situation, like milk, when I have diarrhea, is undesirable.

First thing that my mind does is, to categorize things in desirable, undesirable and accordingly automatically our response changes. Two persons get married. To starts with, "I love you " and sooner or later " I allow you, I allow you". What I call desirable, it creates in me response of happiness and unhappiness. What happens in my mind is not determined by me but by the world. I am dancing to the tune of the world. We need to look at the habit of mind of branding things. Not knowing the true nature of things, I call it desirable, undesirable. If I knew that *pūrnatvam* is my nature, then nothing is desirable. It is something that adds something in me, and undesirable is that which takes away something from me. This happens when I am subject to growth and decay. Look at the ocean ! *āpūryamanam acalapradiṣṭham*. Whether rives bring waters or not it doesn't affect their fullness.

What is the nature of *ātmā*? It is infinite, limitless. Nothing can bring about growth or decay or for that matter any bit of change to *ātmā*. That is called fullness. That is my nature.

When can something add value to me? Only when I am limited. Basic problem is, I look upon myself as limited being. Therefore there is a need to become free from limitedness. Ignorance causes identification with limited body, and hence my feeling is that I am limited being. It is not a right feeling. But life goes on like this feeling and based on that I judge 'this is desirable and this is undesirable'. Thus I lose the *sama-cittatvam*. superimpose limitedness on myself and happiness on things and categorize them desirable or undesirable. All of this is based on ignorance and ignorance based superimpositions. *nit-yam ca sama-cittatvam*, is the fundamental way of approach. Accepting everything as gift/ *prasāda* from *īśvara*.

Desirable or undesirable - only way this can be looked at equal if we develop *prasāda-buddhi*, take it as *karma-phala* - result of my own action, given by *īśvara*. The moment it is called *prasāda*, the attitude changes. Laddu from shop is offered, you say no, I am diabetic. But when it is from Tirupati and came as *prasāda*, it changes my attitude. We become happy cheerful when *prasāda* comes to us. Situations doesn't change, but my response changes and that decides the state of mind. One is by recognising the fundamental oneness that is there and second level looking at it as *prasāda*, which will help to maintain the sameness or equanimity. This is the type of mind required for pursuit of knowledge. That kind of mind is created by these values.

People, situation, objects, present them before us and we are constantly confronted with. That situation can be classified as *iṣṭha* and *aniṣṭha*, success or failure, desirable or undesirable. This is how life is made of pairs of opposites are. We are required to constantly confront with these pairs of opposite which invokes different response from us. To desirable I respond with joy to undesirable it invokes a different response, I become sad. So my mind goes like a seesaw- elation, depression-elation, depression. So the *samatvam* is necessary to enjoy sameness of the mind. *Ātmā* is the same and if we meditate upon it the mind needs to have the same status as that of *ātmā*. *samaṁ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantam paramaśvaraḥ*. Lord prevails equally among every being. That is where we want to abide and mind needs to be in tune with that. Only that mind will be able to understand. *paṇḍitāḥ samadarśināḥ*. Those who see the *samatvam* are the wise people. So Lord Krishna prescribes sameness of the mind, the mind which is conducive. For that the attitude called *prasāda-buddhi* is required.

Look at success, failure, honour, dishonor as *prasāda*. Easier said than done though. Suc-

cess, honour, praise we can take as *prasāda*, but failure pain, dishonour, taking them as *prasāda* is a tall order. We often hear this expression- 'Why me?', when something painful happens. Why did this happen to me that question always arises in our mind. Swami, god is not fair. He doesn't deserve our prayers. There is no way to determine what happens, why it happens to us. Generally we can say it is the result of action. Who knows which action of which life -- that area is locked and god has kept the key. How do I know the past birth? Thank god we don't remember it. If I see the same people again with whom I had trouble in past birth, better we keep away from them. When something good happens we never ask 'why me?' We feel that I deserved it. Whereas pain, loss, failure are very difficult to accept. That is where our test, our commitment to *prasāda*-buddhi, accepting that as a *prasāda*, that is where we are challenged. It only required total faith in *īśvara*. that *īśvara* is fair, not unfair. *īśvara* does not have *raga-dveṣā*, no favoritism. *samoham sarveṣu bhūteṣu*, no partiality, no cruelty to anyone. It is a matter of faith until we discover it ourselves.

There is no reason for *īśvara* to have any *raga-dveṣā* - attachment and aversion, to be partial, cruel to somebody. Such things always emerges from an incomplete being. Someone who is lacking, a needy person. When fulfilling my needs becomes an objective of my life, it is the need in me that creates these likes, dislikes, partiality. *īśvara* is not needy, and wholeness, completeness is the nature of *īśvara*. *Satyam jñānam anantam brahma*. All inclusive there is no lack of anything in *īśvara*. There cannot be any demand from *īśvara*. It arises always from lacking incomplete being, not from *īśvara*. *īśvara* has no agenda to fulfil. Ultimate truth of life is where there is no agenda. *Raga-dveṣā* can not go along with *brahman* and *īśvara*, when we ask this question why me, because we feel that *īśvara* is unfair, he seems to be cruel. When you are punished by parents do you complain? Look upon it as a punishment, it is also my interpretation. In the scheme of things, how do we know that a given event is right or wrong? We don't know what is happening today will have what impact after five years. With the extremely limited knowledge we have, there is no ways to know the future. *īśvara* is impartial, benevolent. From fullness only benevolence can come no partiality can come. When we look at the creation it is evident that *īśvara* is benevolent. There is care for every creature that *īśvara* has created. Whatever creature need any time is provide for. When we look at the creation we see there is care concern and benevolence, there is harmony everywhere. Spirit of *yajñā* - offering everywhere. There is a law of offering called *yajñā*, it can come only from full-

ness, benevolence. *Suhṛtam sarvabhūtanām*, one who helps without being asked. When this is the understating of *īśvara* then *prasāda-buddhi* is possible. Accepting painful as *prasāda* is possible only when we have this infinite trust. Even in what apparently looks like punishment, some well-being of mind is involved. It is this trust or *śraddhā* in *īśvara*.

īśvara pervade the entire universe as blessing. If this understanding of *īśvara* is there, we keep that in mind and live our life accordingly. Then only it is possible to maintain some degree of poise even in unfavourable or painful situation. Before you fight this battle may you maintain state of equanimity says *bhagavān* to Arjuna. We are not fighting for happiness, gain or victory. We are fighting for a cause, *dharma*. For, the *dharma* is our duty. Cause should be there in life and dedicate life to the cause, *dharma*, then these things become unimportant. A very keen understanding of *īśvara* is required. We say this is coming from *īśvara*, who is dispensing the our own *karma-phala*. More we understand, it will be easier for us to maintain equanimity.

Lord Krishna prescribed this value because the sameness is the nature of *ātmā* and to know that *ātmā*, mind needs to develop that state. Pujya Swamiji used to say you cannot attain love through the path of hatred. Mind should be ready, when I am sad and teacher says you are *ānanda*, you become more sad. Maintaining that poise of the mind, cheerfulness of the mind may be a tall order, but at least we don't become devastated in the process, incapable of doing anything. Some impact are so much that we cannot recover from them.

Values 16: *bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī*

Devotion to me -- what is the meaning of it here? As given in chapter 11, it is meant for cosmic form of *īśvara*, others would say Arjuna was scared of cosmic form and request for a form with four hands and further reduce himself to human form two hand. So, there are three forms. When third chapter talks about mediation *vedāntī* will say cosmic form, *viṣṭa-advaitī* will say meditate on Naryana, *dvaitī* would say meditate on Krishna etc. Focus is on *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti*, unswerving devotion to me, *īśvara*. In chapter 7 Krishna says *mattaḥ parataram nānyat* (7:7). There is nothing other than me, all there is myself. What was the need for Krishna to say this? For anything two factors are required one maker and another is material. For creating the universe also we would imagine that there is a maker and there is material. Maker is conscious and material is *jaḍam*. Other than Vedanta all the traditions are based on taking maker as different form the

materials. Creator and creation different. Krishna says there is no material other than me, I am the material cause and the efficient cause. That is how the *advaitā* is established.

Ideally worshipping *īśvara ananyayogena* - worshipping with the attitude of non-duality. Worship always involves duality, but *ananyayogena*, where worshiper is no separate from the worshipped. This is the *bhakti* that Lord Krishna prescribes, what is *bhaktā's* dedicated effort? Here the effort is to know the *īśvara* as non-dual that is *bhakti*. The same *bhakti* can then manifest as worship, *pūja*, offering all of these. Ultimately *bhakti* is worshipping *īśvara* as my own self. That happens only when myself doesn't remain and what remains is *īśvara*. What creates division with *īśvara* is my *ahamkara*, sense of individuality that creates apparent distance between me and *īśvara*.

That's how the *karma-yoga* started, accepting what comes as grace of *īśvara* as *bhakti*. Performing action to *īśvara* is also *bhakti* - worship to the lord. That culminates in to the arrangement given in all the 18th chapters. It is the three section of six chapters each, first six focusing on *karma*, second six on *upāsanā* meditation and last six on *jñānam* and it is all *bhakti*. You can say Gita is the text of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is erasing distance between the worshipper and the worshipped. First step to that is *karma-yoga*, Lord Krishna says perform your actions like a *yajñā*. *Yajñā* means worship, offering. And also about the way to accept result as *prasāda*. Attitude of *karma* and *karma-phala* is first level of *bhakti*. Then we graduate to next level, *upāsanā* or meditation on the *īśvara*.

They talk about what is the nature of *bhagavān*, what is the nature of *bhakti*. *Ārtaḥ* – on distress they come to me, find them at the time of examination, *arthārti* – he wants to fulfil some materials desire. *Jijñāsu* – for knowledge, *jñānī* – wise person knows the oneness- *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*. That is the vision of *īśvara* that Bhagvad Gita presents. Worshipping *īśvara* here is worshipping of the nature that is presented in Gita. That includes me also. I am Hari, I am also same *īśvara* that is the ultimate thing. One need to abide that in. One need to be part of that commitment that is *avyabhicāriṇī bhakti*, unswerving devotion to me, the *īśvara*.

Understand that we are devotees by nature, every moment we are worshipping something. I am committed to what is the most important to me. It may be wealth, power, values, purity of mind, *mokṣā*. Whatever is most important to me I am devoted. What is most important is *īśvara*. Drop all your agenda and make me your agenda. If you come to

me to fulfil the desire, I will give you that. If everyone needs *mokṣā* why don't *īśvara* give it to them? But they need to value it or they will just throw it out. Child wants candy and cannot appreciate the gems. The convictions has to arise, that is what is most important in *mokṣā* and knowledge is the means of *mokṣā*. If *mokṣā* is not the existing fact, I have to become liberated. Then efforts required. Then *karma* becomes important. That's why people think that *upāsanā* (*upāsanā* is also *karma*) is more important. I am already *pa-ramātmā*. It is the ignorance that makes me think I am *jivātmā*, limited entity immersed in *samsāra-cakram*. Knowledge only can solve the problem, Knowledge only can liberate.

Ignorance is the only problem and knowledge is the only solution. This should be the conviction. Once this is clear to me I will become *avyabhicāriṇī bhakta*, a mature devotee. All I am devoted to, is nothing but *īśvara*. *Bhakti* here becomes a commitment, dedication which comes from *viveka* or understanding. Proper understanding created *bhakti* and *bhakti* creates knowledge, and it is based on the non-duality. *Yame eṣaḥ vṛṇute*, - one who chooses this *īśvara* / *ātmā*, attains the *ātmā*. It is like *svayamvarā*, where princesses choose their suitors. You cannot choose more than one. In life also lots of choice and *īśvara* is also one among them. Whoever we chose, should be only for *īśvara*. Sometimes it's not that easy. Nala Damyanti story. She wanted to marry Nala. Father organised *svayamvarā*. *Devatās* also wanted to marry Damayanti. Along with human princes, they assumed the form of Nala and came for *svayamvarā*. There are four Nalas. How does she choose now? *Devatās* don't blink eyes. So among other four Nalas three had non blinking eyes. She was advised by a friend to exclude other three and only choose the human Nala. In this way one need to choose the *ātmā*. For that committed devotee, *ātmā* reveals itself. When the person does not have other agenda, out of compassion, I reveal myself to him, *ananya devotion*. *Mayi ca ananyayogena bhakti avyabhicāriṇī*. To get that focus, Krishna says the goal should be very clear and the means also should be clear. *śravaṇam, kīrtanam, karmayogā, upāsanā, ātmavicāra* all these are *bhakti* but one thing is *ananyayogena bhakti avyabhicāriṇī*, the only object of worship and nothing else.

To be continued ...

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