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In the *Bhagavadgītā*, whenever Lord Krishna uses the first person singular, he is referring to himself as Īśvara. In other words, Vyāsa presents Krishna as Bhagavān. Thus, the meaning of the compound *manmanābhava* would be *īśvara-manā bhava*, may you become one whose mind is with me, Īśvara. Either the mind objectifies Īśvara or dwells upon Īśvara.

Keeping the Mind in Bhagavān

There is a certain possibility of continuity of thought, *sajātīya-vṛtti-pravāha*. A *vṛtti*, a thought-form, does not have any staying power; it is always *kṣanika*, momentary. It has got to be so. *Vṛttis* are momentary, like the frames in a film. Because they are moving, you will see the same person, but with a difference, and thereby, you capture motion. The number of frames is adequate so that there is no jerk in the movement. So too, we have enough frames in our mind so that we can recognize continuous motion; otherwise, it would be seen in fits and starts. Being momentary, a thought is there, and it is gone. It does not stay. That is how the whole *jagat* is; *jāyate gacacti*, it comes into being and goes away. There is always a newness about it. A single object, which is recognized, is coming and going, but because it is the same object. You see a swami sitting, even though it is not constant. There is a flow of the same object, so you see the same thing, with small differences. *Sajātīya-pravāha* is a flow of the same type of thing, as in mental *pūjā*, worship, in which there are different steps. Every step has the stamp of *pūjā*, but the steps are different—*āsanam*, offering a seat; *pādyam*, water to wash the feet; *arghyam*, water to wash the hands; *snānam*, bath; *vastram*, clothes; *ābharanam*, ornaments; *candanam kuṃkumam*, sandal paste and vermilion powder. Each step is different, but the category, *jāti*, is the same, *pūjā-jāti*. You are not moving away from *pūjā*, but the mind has different occupations. Though it is not the same occupation, the particular name, *pūjā*, continues to be there in all the steps. That is the *jāti*. The specific item in the *pūjā* category, the step, is different. The main thing is *pūjā* and these are all auxiliaries for the *pūjā*. This is an ingenious way of keeping the mind in the same occupation. You give the mind enough scope to move around, but at the same time, the occupation is the same. This is possible in *pūjā*, etc., which is a pursuit which has me, Īśvara, as the topic.

In the *Gītā*, from the second chapter onwards, so much is covered about *ātmā*, the truth of everything. From the seventh chapter onwards, there is more Īśvara

¹ Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, 2007

presented. The nature of Īśvara, essentially, and what makes Īśvara, Īśvara are elaborately discussed. At the end of it *Bhagavān* says, *manmanābhava*, may your mind be with me always. Does that mean you cannot do anything else? Because the mind has one occupation, it will have no accommodation for another occupation, since it can only entertain one thing at a time. If Īśvara is always there, then you cannot do anything else. This is what one who has no exposure to the teaching, thinks. Then he complains, "Swamiji, the mind does not stay with me. It goes to various unfinished jobs and gives up *Bhagavān*." By the same logic through which it went away, it comes back also. It is a loop. From anything, you can go and come back to the same thing, without thinking. What is the logic for going away? Nothing.

The mind keeps coming and going. If that is the truth, then there is nothing much to talk about. Krishna becomes another object, through some association, and is one more person in the world. He cannot say that he is all-pervasive², or "I am the one who is in the heart of everyone, I am the one who sustains the entire *jagat*, and I pervade the entire *jagat*. From me, is memory; your faculty to know; from me, is this power to suspend what you know, what you remember," BG 15.15.³ That all this can be suspended is a great blessing. The capacity to suspend makes your mind fresh so that it can see something new. Even old notions can get negated in the wake of knowledge. You can get rid of ignorance and ignorance-born wrong notions because the mind is capable of being open, having suspended all notions for the time being. That is the grace of Īśvara; it is given to you. He says, "From me, is your faculty to remember and recollect, to know and the power to suspend. I am the one to be known in all four Vedas and I am the one who revealed the Vedas. I am the revealer and I am the revealed," BG 15.15. Like this *Bhagavān* uses the first person singular in all these sentences.

Bhagavān is Not an Object

Bhagavān cannot be an object enclosed by a given thought. An apple is enclosed by a thought, excluding every other thought. This is how we learn to recognize objects discretely. A discrete object is the object of a thought form excluding everything else. When you thread a needle, everything else in the world is excluded. Even the needle is excluded. Only the eye of the needle is the object in focus. That alone exists. When you see a tree, and then see the trunk of the tree, the focus, the intended perception, *tātparya*, is the trunk, even though the tree is there. And if you see the leaf, then only the leaf is there, and so on. You can go on reducing the focus down to the molecules that make the chlorophyll.

² *mayātataṁ sarvaṁ jagadavyaktamūrtinā*, BG 9.4

³ *sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdisanniviṣṭo mattassmṛtirjñānamapohanaṁ ca*, BG 15.15.

In the same way, you can have a collective object-*vṛtti* called forest. There, the entire *tātparya* is different. This is how the mind works. When you think of one thing, other things are necessarily excluded.

When you think of Bhagavān everything else is excluded. The question is: Is there Bhagavān and everything else? What is other than Bhagavān? The Upanisads tell us that whatever you see here is Īśvara;⁴ what you know and do not know. Nothing is outside Īśvara including the given ignorance an individual may have. If the whole thing is Īśvara, then when can your mind be away from Īśvara? Practice this a little bit—instead of sending the mind to Īśvara, try to send it away from Īśvara. For this, you must necessarily have knowledge of what Īśvara is.

Another way of looking at this is, “Wherever my mind goes and lands, that is your lotus feet.”⁵ Whether it thinks of time, it is you; a place, it is you; an object, it is you. The sun, moon, constellations, mountains, oceans, continents, laws, forces are all you. Let the mind go; where will it go? Outside Bhagavān, how will it go? If the mind stays, if it is attracted towards something glorious, that is you. If someone is very strong, that strength is you.⁶ The burning power that fire has, that is you. Any glory anywhere, which attracts, is you. In fact the word ‘krishna’ means the one who attracts everything⁷. Whichever quality, feature, attribute attracts, that is Bhagavān. Lord Krishna says, “The brilliance in the brilliant person is me⁸.” The faculty to think is given, and objects to think about are given. Ignorance is given and the capacity to dispel it is given, for which there must be truth. The whole thing is given. How can anyone say, “This is my brilliance”? The ‘my’ is gone. My brilliance or someone else’s brilliance is Īśvara’s brilliance. That is the law.

Understanding Bhagavān

To understand Bhagavān it takes a certain way of looking at what ‘is’. It is not your usual way of looking at something, as a product made by someone. You see the *jagat* and wonder by whom it was made. By Bhagavān. The eyes go up immediately. Unless this orientation goes, there is no Bhagavān. The question of where Bhagavān is should not even arise. “What ‘is’ Bhagavān?” alone should be the question. “What ‘is’?” will yield everything. You are not going to search elsewhere, because searching for something else presupposes understanding of

⁴ *idaṃ sarvaṃ īśvara-buddhayā ācādanīyam, yad idaṃ sarvaṃ īśvaraḥ*, based on *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* 1.1

⁵ *yatra yatra mano yāti tatra tatra tava pāda pañkajam*

⁶ *balam balavatām cāham*, BG 7.11

⁷ *ākāṣṭi sarvasmīn sarvān*

⁸ *tejasvinām aham*, BG 7.10

what is in front of you. But what is in front is not understood, because that has the solution. It is the product, it is the cause, and it is everything. You do not search for Īśvara outside of what you see. That orientation does not work. Therefore, question “What is it that I see here?” In what you know, Īśvara reveals himself. You require only one object, because you are the subject, the enquirer. The object can be the universe or one system or the sun or the earth or a rock. The object should reveal the truth of the object.

If the object that you see is a table, what is its truth? ‘What is?’, is the question. You think it is created by a carpenter who is not here, because when you see the table, you do not see the carpenter. What did he make? A table. Can you see the table without seeing another object, the meaning of which is not the same as table? We have an object table, which means that we have a word ‘table’ and that word has an object. Then there is a word, ‘wood’. It also has an object, wood. When you see the table, do you see wood at the same time? There are two words, ‘table’, and ‘wood’. Both must be synonyms if they are referring to the same object. ‘Table’ refers to an object and ‘wood’ refers to the same object, therefore, wood and table are synonyms. What does it mean if two words are synonyms? It means that wherever there is a table there is wood, and wherever there is wood, there is a table. Both are wrong. Wherever I see a table, I do not see wood, and wherever I see wood, I do not see a table. Here, wood and table have assembled together. A certain logician⁹ said, “They are two different objects connected by a principle called *samavāya*.” He says so because he has a commitment to proving that they are two different objects. Let us understand ‘what is’ and not try to prove anything. ‘What is’, is this table, which I cannot even imagine without imagining a substance other than table, referred to by the word ‘wood’, ‘plastic’ ‘steel’, etc. Some other object has to be seen by me in order to see the table. Without seeing that, I cannot see the table. Not only can I not see table, I cannot even imagine it. Any one thing you look into is like this.

You cannot think of a given thing without thinking of another. That ‘another’ also, you cannot think of without thinking of another. The more you know, the more you have ‘another’. Can you think of an object without its cause? No. If there is a cause for this entire *jagat*—the maker and material being one cause—can you think of the *jagat* without it? Can you take the mind away from any one object to Īśvara? How can you think of an object outside Īśvara? You can think of Īśvara perhaps without the *jagat*, but can you think of a *jagat* which is outside Īśvara? Which object will take you away from Īśvara? No object. When you understand ‘what is’, with the answer to that question, “What is?” you have all the answers. All questions become redundant. In all the chapters of the Gītā, Bhagavān has made such questions redundant. Therefore, *manmanābhava*— we

⁹ This is the Vaiśeṣika who considers *samavāya* as one of the seven categories of substance in the *jagat*.

have to see that whatever we see is Īśvara, because the product is *nāmarūpa*, just name-form, which is not separate from Īśvara; it is Īśvara. You do not need to rub your eyes and see something more. Inside one has to be totally free from not recognizing 'what is'. If you see only the table and fail to recognize the wood, you will search for wood.

The World is Only Words

We have only words and their meanings. We think there are tangible objects for which there are words, but there are just words and their meanings. The word 'shirt', for instance, has its meaning. Whether it is in English or any language, it is the same. The word 'shirt' is a word because it has a meaning which we both understand, and therefore, I can communicate that to you, and we can deal with it; that is *vyavahāra*. This is a shirt and it can be used only as a shirt, not as pants. 'Pant' is a different word and has a different use. For every word we have a meaning, and when we see the meaning, we use the word. We see the meaning in the mind, and also, outside, which we call an object. We have the word and the meaning in our head, and when we see something outside that corresponds to the meaning of that word, we recognize it as an object, like a shirt.

Sometimes, the word and its meaning are only in my head. I imagine it, but cannot see it with my eyes. I imagine a song, but I do not hear it through my ears. I can imagine a particular fragrance, but I do not find a source outside from which I can pick up the fragrance. Then we say this is imagination, subjective. When you are able to see the shirt with your eyes, it is not an imagined shirt. It is not "I think, therefore it is," but rather, "It is, therefore, I am able to recognize it," the word and its meaning. You get a concept of reality out of this. What is imagined is subjective, not available for public perception, but seen only in your mind. It is purely a subjective perception. We do not say that it is not valid, but when we are talking of realities, we are talking about what is objectively real. What we make out of it is subjective. Sometimes you fantasize, visualize and then produce. That has its own use, but it is all subjective.

Because we see objects outside, we think that each one is different from everything else, which is true. Having accepted that, we consider that these objects are the meanings of words, which we necessarily perceive. We accept that kind of objectivity, but that does not give the shirt any status of tangibility. This is because shirt has no being. The 'isness', the being, of the shirt belongs to the fabric. The fabric 'is'; the 'is', resolves into the fabric. I see the existence of a shirt, but I touch the fabric, not the shirt. When I say it is a cotton shirt, I transcend the fabric, the yarn, and then go to the cause, the cotton. The capacity

to transcend and see without doing anything is Vedanta. A shirt continues to be a shirt; fabric continues to be fabric; yarn continues to be yarn; but I transcend all of them and say that it is cotton. If you are quantum physicist, you will go further—up to quantum objects, particles. A shirt is nothing but particles. All the way the shirt is an effect.

The material cause is where the effect is. The material cause for the shirt is fabric, and is referred to by another word. The shirt is referred to by the word 'shirt' with its own meaning, but what is referred to by the word 'shirt' is not separate from what is referred to by the word 'fabric', the cause of the shirt. This is the method, *prakriyā*, of revealing the truth through cause-effect. The effect is the cause, and therefore, there is no cause-effect, so we call it a *prakriyā*. The shirt is produced and is a value addition. Fabric is the cause, but is also an effect from the standpoint of its cause, yarn. Where the shirt is, the fabric is; where the fabric is, the yarn is. Both causes are there, so I can even say that the shirt is but yarn; and further, yarn is but cotton; cotton is but fibers with their own molecular structure, and the molecule is atoms, so the shirt is atoms. I am wearing a bunch of particles. The body is a bunch of particles. One bunch of particles is wearing another bunch of particles. The glory is that particles can wear particles. Therefore, in non-difference there is no joy; the joy is in difference because difference does not make a difference. If it makes a difference then it is a problem. Let the differences be. Is there any cause, more fundamental, even for the particles? If there is a cause, then the particle is the cause, and therefore, the shirt is that cause.

You are asking, "Where is god?" The shirt is the effect; the effect is the cause. If there is a fundamental cause, it is in the form of effect, which, in terms of its reality, is called *mithyā*. You can neither dismiss the shirt as non-existent, nor say it exists by itself. If I use the word 'reality' for what is self-existent, then I cannot use the word 'reality' for the shirt; I cannot use the word 'non-existent', for the shirt because I wear the shirt. The very object that you confront is non-separate from its cause. And one more thing—things are intelligently put together.

The Cause; All Knowledge

We, with our knowledge based upon our experiences, know that we cannot create a thing without really understanding, visualizing, what it is, and for what purpose it is going to be created. The extent of knowledge required to create a given thing is the extent of knowledge the author must have to create that thing. In creating an object, like a shirt, the tailor knows why he is buying the fabric, why he cuts it the way he does, why he stitches it in this way. And the shirt is created. Because there is adequate knowledge, after the creation process, the

meaning of the word 'shirt', is there. Previously, it was in his head; it was subjective. Now it has become objective. This 'objective' is amazing. Even the word 'objective', has its limitations. Really, there is no object, but when you look at it, you can recognize it as a shirt. When it is in your head, I cannot look at it, but after creation it is available for public perception. This is what we say *sr̥ṣṭi*. Here it is knowledge that there is such a possibility that accounts for the creation of a shirt. Whatever name you give an object, it is there because it is a possibility in this world.

If a shirt presupposes shirt-knowledge, then the body also presupposes body-knowledge. When the body is born, it presupposes knowledge of it and the programming required for it to grow. The knowledge that the existence of this body pre-supposes must be somewhere. The father does not have this knowledge, nor does the mother. Where is that knowledgeable person? Never ask, "Where?", because there are people who will say that it is not locally available. What is non-local? This whole *jagat* is in the form of knowledge, word and its meaning. Possibilities are all words and meanings. *Buddhi*, intellect, is a word and its meaning; *manah*, mind, a word and its meaning; *cittam*, memory, a word and its meaning. That is knowledge. 'Body' is one word, and when you look into that, there are words, words, words, and their meanings, *nāmnī nāmānī*. The meanings of many words are the meaning of one single word, 'body', and not only this body, but the bodies of all living beings. Limitless knowledge, resting in a conscious being, is the cause, is the effect. The question of "Where?" does not arise here, because the effect is the cause. We swallow the material cause and the efficient cause. The effect is the meaning of the word 'knowledge', and the cause is all-knowledge, Īśvara.

Anything you focus your attention upon is all-knowledge Īśvara. Within that all-knowledge alone is this individual knowledge. This is 'what is'. Where is the necessity of questioning 'where' and 'how'? This is how it is. "Swamiji, I understand all this but why did god create this?" God did not create all this; this is god. This is how god is—the maker and material; male and female; god and goddess. If somebody is sitting somewhere and creating, then you can ask, "Why did he create this?" This is how Īśvara is, and it necessarily includes you.

That Īśvara who is inside and outside, who is all-knowledge, one consciousness, you are. You are that conscious being. All that is here is one knowledge, and within that, from the standpoint of your mind, which has limited knowledge, etc., this all-knowledge is the being. Small-knowledge is also the same being. Small-knowledge is not outside consciousness; all-knowledge is not outside consciousness. Therefore, all-knowledge, being, consciousness is Īśvara, and small-knowledge, being, consciousness is *jīva*, the individual. Are you away from Īśvara? Can you think of an object outside Īśvara? The greatness of a

human being is that even then he can think that he is away. Therefore, Bhagavān says, *manmanābhava*, may your mind always be in me.

Missing and Non Missing the Presence of Īśvara

When you are bringing Īśvara into your day-to-day life, there are areas where you are bound to miss the presence of Īśvara in your awareness and understanding. First, it is in your understanding. Even if someone has understood, there are certain areas where one is bound to miss the presence of Īśvara. The awareness is never out of sight, but can be missed. Even if a person is within sight, there can be remoteness if he is not recognized. Then, in one's awareness, there is alienation. Īśvara also seems to be far removed from me. That 'me' is very loud. In the noise of the *jīva*, who is so loud, Īśvara is not heard even if he says, "I am here." We are going to look into those areas where the presence of Īśvara is likely to be missed. In those areas, this sentence—*manmanābhava*—will become very valid. Given the understanding of the ninth chapter, which we have covered so far, all that is here is Īśvara. Then at the end of this chapter, Bhagavān says, *manmanābhava*, may your mind be always in me; *madbhaktobhava*, may you be devoted to me; *madyājibhava*, may you worship me; *mām namaskuru*, may you surrender to me, *mat parāyaṇo bhava*, may I be the most important to you; *māmeva yeśyasi*, you will not be separate from me.

'What is', is Īśvara—before the manifestation of this *jagat*, including my body-mind-sense complex, and after the manifestation, because only what is unmanifest can manifest. If what is manifest is Īśvara then the un-manifest is also Īśvara. The unmanifest Īśvara is the cause, and the manifest Īśvara is the manifested Īśvara, so the effect is not separate from the cause. All-knowledge Īśvara being the cause means that the *jagat* was un-manifest in the form of pure knowledge. In the beginning, there was the word, and the word was with god, and the word was god. This is our understanding; word is *nāma*. We see this in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. All this was unmanifest; then it became manifest as name and form.¹⁰ That is how Īśvara manifests. What was undifferentiated is now manifest in a differentiated form, like a plant in a seed.

In an orange seed, you do not see the orange tree. When you break the seed open, there is no indication of an orange tree there—no presence of a trunk, branches, leaves, fruit, etc. It is all undifferentiated, in other words, an unmanifest, tree. The manifest orange tree was, *āsīt*. The manifest tree was in the seed at the causal level as unmanifest. If you look at anything at the causal level, it is unmanifest; it is pure software.

¹⁰ *taddhedam tarhyavvyākṛtamāsīt tanāmarūpābhyāmeva vyākriyata*, BrU 1.4.7.

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