

Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

e-Series
No 49

Total Surrender

न धर्मनिष्ठोऽस्मि न चात्मवेदी
न भक्तिमांस्त्वच्चरणारविन्दे ।
अकिञ्चनोऽनन्यगतिः शरण्य
त्वत्पादमूलं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

na dharma-niṣṭho'smi na cātma-vedī
na bhaktimāṁstvaccaraṇāravinde ।
akiñcano'nanyagatiḥ śaraṇya
tvat-pāda-mūlaṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye ॥

- Stotraratna of Yamunacharya 22

*I am neither wholesomely dedicated to dharma (morality),
nor am I a knower of the Self. I have no devotion to your
lotus feet either. O Śaraṇya (one who affords protection),
having nothing in my possession, having no other shelter, I
surrender at your lotus feet.*



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Points for Introspection

In life we have to face misery and adversities often. There are times when we are faced with sorrow, helplessness, indecision and fear. We feel absolutely insecure. In such moments where do we turn to? Who can console us and lift the great burden that we carry in our minds? Will parents, siblings, relatives and friends be able to assuage our helplessness and fear? No; they themselves become afflicted seeing us sorrowful. They neither can protect us nor can they remove our fear. Then who can?

In all our troubles, our mind thus turns to God, the supreme Lord. He alone is the most certain and the only refuge. He alone has the power to protect us; He alone can embrace us firmly providing hope and confidence. He is everywhere and He is within us as our Indweller. He is always there with His hands stretched out to make us feel secure by His embrace.

We, unfortunately, do not seek Him. Thinking foolishly that we can gain happiness from worldly possessions, we allow our minds to roam about in the pleasures and gains of the outside world. When the mind is fearful and distressed, understanding that there is no one and nowhere to turn to, our mind turns to God. In the heart of hearts, we know that we belong to God and God alone. Even if we have countless defects and imperfections, He, our Creator will never abandon us and will always be there to lift us up in our suffering. He will place His comforting and reassuring hands on our heads and give us a secure place in His bosom where there is no fear.

This śloka describes the sincere cry of a devotee from the

depth of his heart calling out to the supreme Lord, surrendering himself completely to the divine reassuring hands. To surrender to God no qualification is necessary. One must be like a child who knows the mother and mother alone. When the child feels helpless or fearful he runs to the mother's lap, knowing that that lap is the supreme shelter. Similar should be a devotee. He should take complete refuge at the Lord's feet.

A devotee should call God in all openness and earnestness. He should place before God all his shortcomings, his inabilities, his doubts and apprehensions, but laden with the sincere feelings that he has nobody else except God for his refuge.

In this śloka the devotee is seeking out to God: "I know I have no qualification to please you. Neither I am a follower of dharma, nor have I attained the knowledge of the Self. I also do not have any devotion to your holy lotus feet. Do I deserve to be called yours, and be protected by you, O Lord? But still I, who has no possession to call my own, who has no source of support anywhere else, simply take shelter at your feet, O Lord. I do not know what is good or bad for me. I know that you alone are my only refuge. In spite of whatever shortcomings I have, O Lord, I know you will surely give me place in your lap and remove my helplessness and fear."

This śloka when chanted again and again, contemplating on each and every word, melts the heart with the feeling of belonging to God completely and to none else. It gives the feeling of total surrender at the Lord's feet in spite of all the shortcomings one has. One feels a sense of relief having placed all burdens at the Lord's feet.

Word Meaning

न (na) = not; धर्मनिष्ठः (dharma-niṣṭhaḥ) = wholesomely dedicated to dharma (morality); अस्मि (asmi) = I am; न च (na ca) = not also; आत्मवेदी (ātma-vedī) = Knower of the Self; न (na) = not; भक्तिमान् (bhaktimān) = one with devotion; त्वत्-चरणारविन्दे (tvat-caraṇāravinde) = at your lotus feet; अकिञ्चन (akiñcanaḥ) = one without any possession; अनन्यगतिः (ananya-gatiḥ) = having no other shelter; शरण्य (śaraṇya) = O Śaraṇya (one who affords protection); त्वत्-पादमूलं (tvat-pāda-mūlaṁ) = your feet; शरणं प्रपद्ये (śaraṇaṁ prapadye) = I surrender, I seek refuge.

अन्वयः - (Prose order)

धर्मनिष्ठः (अहं) न अस्मि, आत्मवेदी न च (अस्मि)। त्वत्-चरणारविन्दे न भक्तिमान् (अस्मि)। (अहं) अकिञ्चनः अनन्यगतिः (अस्मि)। (हे) शरण्य ! त्वत्-पादमूलं शरणं (अहं) प्रपद्ये।

dharma-niṣṭhaḥ (ahaṁ) na asmi, ātma-vedī na ca (asmi).
tvat-caraṇāravinde na bhaktimān (asmi). (ahaṁ) akiñcanaḥ
ananya-gatiḥ (asmi). (O) śaraṇya, tvat-pāda-mūlaṁ śaraṇaṁ
(ahaṁ) prapadye.
