

# Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

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No 60



## Mind alone is the Cause of Joy and Misery

नायं जनो मे सुखदुःखहेतुर्न देवतात्मा ग्रहकर्मकालाः ।  
मनः परं कारणमामनन्ति संसारचक्रं परिवर्तयेद्यत् ॥

nāyaṃ jano me sukha-duḥkha-hetur-na  
devatātmā graha-karma-kālāḥ ।  
manaḥ paraṃ kāraṇam-āmananti  
saṃsāra-cakraṃ parivartayed-yat ॥

- Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.23.43

*These people are not the cause of my happiness or distress; neither any god, nor the jeeva, nor even the planets, my (past) deeds or time. They (the Wise and the scriptures) consider that the mind that sets in motion the wheel of worldliness is verily the prime cause.*

## Points for Introspection

In his last message to Uddhava, which is known as 'Uddhava Gita', Sri Krishna tells Uddhava that a



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

man aspiring for the highest spiritual goal in life, should never get affected by any situation around. Illustrating through a story, he explains that even if the seeker is variously tormented physically or mentally by Providence or by wicked people, he should remain calm, taking steadfastly to his sole anchor in the Self. (11.23.57,58)

Sri Krishna narrated the story of a Brahmana who was an agriculturist and also a merchant in the town of Avanti. He was given to extreme anger, greed and miserliness. As a result of his oppression, the wife, children, relatives and servants abandoned him. With passage of time he also lost all his wealth. As time passed, by the grace of the supreme Lord, discrimination and dispassion dawned in him. The rest of his life he pursued austerities and contemplation on the Lord who bestows the ultimate good. Resolving like this, the Brahmana abandoned all desires from his heart. He became quiet and wandered about as a mendicant, controlling his mind, senses and life forces.

However, whenever he entered towns or villages for alms, wicked people, who knew his past miserliness, persecuted and insulted him in many ways. But, by the strength of his discrimination, he bore all the torture and suffering without getting affected. However much the evil men tried to shake him off his calm, he remained firmly anchored to his resolve, accepting everything as a gift of Providence. That was the time he sang a song, famous as Bhikshu Gita (song of the mendicant).

**We** are discussing the first śloka of Bhikshu Gita in this article in which the mendicant sings that no external object or situation is the cause of one's happiness or misery; it is one's own mind alone that creates happiness and misery. The mind alone turns the wheel of worldliness causing joy and suffering alternately.

The Self is always a witness. Man (Jeeva) identifies himself with the mind, which superimposes the active world on the Self. Through this mistaken identification, man undergoes happiness and misery as being displayed in the mind. Under any circumstance, the Ātmā is never affected by the pairs of opposites like happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and pain. The illumined man who knows this Truth, does not have any fear or anxiety whatsoever from the material world.

In our lives, we continuously experience either happiness or unhappiness. We relate the cause to some external object – person, place or event. In happiness, we feel fortunate and grateful that our wishes have been fulfilled. In misery, we blame others – the people or the external situations. In fact, we blame everything, including God, planets, time or our own past deeds.

**Whenever** we are overwhelmed with happiness or unhappiness, elation or depression, we should remember the message of this śloka. Whatever be the external situation, the joy and sorrow are creations of the mind itself, and our mind has enough

potential not to get overpowered by the external circumstances, to remain unaffected under any circumstance.

**H**ow does one remain unaffected while facing various sufferings, mental as well as physical, in the world? Remembering the lesson learnt from the “Song of the Mendicant”, one should apply his discriminative intelligence, and do ‘vichara’ as the mendicant did. By practising right ‘vichara’, mind can become free of both pleasure and pain.

**H**ow do we proceed with ‘vichara’ when we are afflicted? Suppose, one is sorrowful because of lack of wealth. One may think: “If I become rich, then alone I shall be happy”. But, are the wealthy ones really happy? A contented mind alone is always happy. Instead of blaming lack of wealth as the cause of sorrow, it is for the mind to generate contentment with whatever one has. Even a millionaire will not be happy if he craves for more riches, or if he is anxious about losing his wealth.

**A**nother may think: “I am not happy because nobody loves me.” He blames his family or fate. But, he can easily become happy by loving others. It is for the mind to generate love for others. We don’t need any external support for loving others. Contentment, joy, love, etc. are qualities of our own mind. Some may happily enjoy simple food sitting in a thatched cottage, while some others may cry and lament even while having kingly dinner.

**T**he mind alone is the cause of joy and misery. The

mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberation. One should know how to remain unaffected in any situation by treating the mind with right vichara.

Chanting this śloka helps, especially when the mind is depressed or hurt by others' behaviour or words. It empowers our mind to remain unaffected and hence not to blame anybody.

## Word Meaning

न (na) = not; अयं (ayaṃ) = this; जनः (janaḥ) = people; मे (me) = my; सुखदुःखहेतुः (sukha-duḥkha-hetuḥ) = cause of happiness and distress; न (na) = not; देवता (devatā) = god; आत्मा (ātmā) = jeeva (the embodied self) ग्रहकर्मकालाः (graha-karma-kālāḥ) = planets, deeds and time; मनः (manaḥ) = mind; परं (paraṃ) = primary; कारणं (kāraṇam) = cause; आमनन्ति (āmananti) = they (the Wise and the Scriptures) consider; संसारचक्रम् (saṃsāra-cakram) = the wheel of saṃsāra (worldliness); परिवर्तयेद् (parivartayed) = (cause) to go around; यत् (yat) = which;

## अन्वयः - (Prose order)

अयं जनः न मे सुखदुःखहेतुः, न देवता, (न) आत्मा, (न) ग्रहकर्मकालाः। मनः, यत् संसारचक्रं परिवर्तयेद्, परं कारणं (इति) आमनन्ति ।।

ayaṃ janaḥ na me sukha-duḥkha-hetuḥ; na devatā, (na) ātmā, (na) graha-karma-kālāḥ. manaḥ, yat saṃsāra-cakram parivartayed, paraṃ kāraṇam (iti) āmananti.

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