

॥ Shri Hari ॥

1. Essence of All Spiritual Disciplines

Tvameva Maata Cha Pita Tvameva
Tvameva Bandhusha Sakhaa Tvameva
Tvameva Vidyaa Dravinam Tvameva
Tvameva Sarvam Mama Deva Deva

Swami Ramsukhdas

1. Essence of All Spiritual Disciplines

The very "Self Identity" (swaroop) of all beings is only "Divinity and Existence." That very Existence is in the form of "Truth" (Sat), Consciousness (Chit) and Bliss (Anand). That very "Divinity and Existence" (Sattaa) ever remains (i.e. eternally-constantly) "AS-IS", without modification and free of all attachments. When a man forgets his very Self, (swaroop), then pride of body-consciousness arises, i.e. he begins to consider himself to be the body.

This assumed relationship of the body is of three kinds -

1. I am this Body
2. This Body is Mine
3. This Body is for Me.

We perceive only two things -

1. Perishable (inert) and
2. Imperishable (conscious, sentient being)

The two are completely different and separate. In the Gita these have been called -

1. Body and Indweller in the body
2. Perishable (Kshar) and Imperishable (Akshar)
3. Field (Kshetra, Body) and the Knower of the Field (Kshetrajna, Soul).

Saints have called these "Not" (Nahin) and "Is" (Hai). The "Self" i.e. Self Identity (swaroop) is "Indweller of the Body" (shariri). It is "Consciousness" (chetan), Indestructible (avinaashi), Imperishable (akshar), knower of the field (Kshetragya) and "IS" (Exists, Hai). That which is "Not" i.e. that which is 'Not Self' i.e. Not our swaroop, is in the form of this body, and it is inert (jad), destructible, perishable, and

is "Not" (Nahin). That which is in the form of "IS" (Hai roop) is ever attained and that which is in the form of "NOT", is acquired and lost.

There is one vital point that by perceiving "IS", the real and pure "IS" is not perceived, but by perceiving the "Not" in the form of "Not" , the real "Is" is perceived. The reason is that when we hold that "I am pure, enlightened, liberated soul", we apply our mind-intellect, we apply our tendencies and thus along with "IS", the "Not" (mind-intellect, I-ness, tendencies) will also blend in. However, when we hold that "I am not the Body, the Body is Not Mine and this Body is not for Me, in this manner by perceiving "Not" in the form of "Not" then all including the tendencies will go with "not" and the Real and Pure self as "IS" (Divinity) remains.

Let us take an example - After sweeping the floor with a broom to remove the dirt, one puts aside (sacrifice) the broom as well, and thereafter what remains is a clean house. It means that when "I am the Soul" is thought by the mind and determined by the intellect, our relationship continues to remain with that disposition "I". But when we hold that "This body is not me", we sever relationship with both the body and the disposition "I" and what remains naturally and on it's own is the pure Self as Divinity. Therefore in Self Realization the spiritual discipline of negation is most important. For this discipline arising from negation, it is essential for a spiritual aspirant to accept three things - I am not this body, this body is not mine and this body is not for me. As long as the sentiments remains within an aspirant that I am this body, this body is mine and it is for me, till then however much he may study or listen to discourses, or even preach the gospels to others, he will neither attain peace, nor salvation. Therefore at the beginning in the Gita, the Lord has laid special emphasis on this point for a sadhak, on the fact that you are not the body that undergoes changes such as birth and death.

I am not this Body

First and the foremost a sadhak must understand this point very well that I am that Divinity and Existence, I am not in body form. We say that what I was in childhood, that alone I am today. If we look at the body, then from childhood to now it has changed so much that we cannot even recognize it, then to we are that alone - this is our experience. In childhood it was playing and jumping around, later it was studying, now it is doing a job - business. Everything has changed, but I am the same one. Because the body does not remain the same even for a single moment, it is constantly changing. The point is that which is changing is not our "Self Identity" (swaroop). That which is unchanging is our true identity (swaroop).

Till now we have taken on countless bodies, but all bodies left, we have remained the same. At time of death too, this body will leave us, but we will go in many wombs, in heaven and hell, in various "lokas", salvation will be ours, we will go to God's abode. The point is that our existence "IS-ness" is not dependent on this body. With the growth or decrease in size of this body, in weakness - strength, on being a child-aged, whether the body is there or not, there is no difference in our existence. Just as when we stay in a certain house, then we do not become that house. the house is separate and we are separate. The house remains right there, whereas we leave the house and go. Similarly the body remains right here, and we leave it and go away. The body becomes soil (earth), but we do not become soil/earth.

Gita has said our true self identity is -

"Nainam chindanti shastraani naivam dahati paavakah |
Na chainam kledayantyaapo ne shoshayati maarutah ||
Acchodyohyomdaahyoyankledhyoshoshyaeva cha |
Nityah sarvagatah sthaanurchaloyam sanaatanah || (Gita 2/23-24)

“No weapons can cut it, no fire can burn it, no water can wet it, no wind can dry it. The indweller of the body can neither be cut, burned, wetted, nor dried, as it is eternal and all pervading, steady by nature, and eternal. “

The point is the department of the body is entirely separate and the unchanging indweller in the body (Self) its department is entirely separate. Our Self is not attached to any body. , therefore in the Gita God has called it “**sarvavyaapi**” “all pervasive” - “**Yena sarvamidam tatam**” (2/17) , “**sarvagatah**” (2/24) pervades equally everywhere. The point is that **the Self is not restricted to one body, rather it is all pervading.**

The body is formed on the earth (in the womb of the mother), walks about on the earth and merges in the earth after death. After death it assumes three forms – if it is burnt, it runs into ashes; if it is buried, it turns into earth and if it is eaten by animals, it turns into excrement. Therefore the body is not important but the self is important.

Though the self rather than the body exists yet a striver commits a mistake that first he perceives the body and then perceives the self in the body; first he perceives the appearance and then perceives the reality. How long will this applied polish last? An aspirant should think over whether the soul (self) or the body first existed. If we think over it, it is proved that the self exists first and the body is formed later. Therefore our sight should first be turned to the self, not to the body.

As a dining room is the place where meals are eaten, so is this body a place where pleasure and pain is experienced. He, who experiences pleasure and pain, is not the body, but the self which identifies itself with the body. The place of experience is different from the experience. The body is like the garment which is different from us. As by changing numerous clothes, we don't become

numerous, we remain the same. As by discarding old clothes we don't die and by wearing new clothes we are not born, similarly by casting off old bodies we don't die and by acquiring new bodies we are no born.* It means that the body is born and it dies but we are not born nor do we die. If we (the self) died, who will bear the fruit of sinful and virtuous actions? Who will go to different wombs and to heaven and hell? Who will be bound? Who will be liberated? Our life does not depend on this body. Our life is very long – beginning-less and end-less. We are not born at the time of new creation nor do we die at the time of final dissolution, but we remain the same – “sargeapi nopjaayante pralaye na vyathanti cha” (Gita 14/2)

Our nature and the nature of the body are totally different from each other. Neither have we union with the body, nor does the body have union with us. As the body lives in the world, likewise we don't live in the body. There was never our union with the body, nor is, nor will be, nor can be. In fact we don't need the body. Even without the body, we don't lose anything. Till now we have acquired and cast off numberless bodies but has it made any difference in our existence? What loss have we sustained? We have remained the same – “Bhootgraamh sa evaayam, bhootvaa bhootvaa praleeyate” (Gita 8/19)

All people realize the absence of body, senses, mind, intellect and ego but no one ever realizes the absence of the self. For example in sound sleep, I died. The reason is that even in the absence of the body, we existed. So when we are awake, we say that I slept so soundly, that I knew nothing. It means that we existed the same in sound sleep. It proves that our existence does not depend on the body, senses , mind, intellect and ego. All – gross, subtle and causal bodies cease to exist but the self never ceases to exist.

Our self is naturally deattached – “Asango hyaayam purushah” (Brhandaaranyaka 4/3/15), “dehesminpurushah param”

Gita 13/22). Therefore we in spite of having assumed our affinity and attachment for the body, in fact remain untainted and unattached. Therefore the Lord declares – "sharirasthopi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate" (Gita 13/31) i.e. the Self, in spite of dwelling in the body, neither acts nor is tainted. IT means that the self, when it assumes itself to be bound, is, infact liberated. The bondage is assumed while liberation is axiomatic. As darkness and light can't meet together, similarly the body (insentient, perishable) and the Self (sentient, imperishable) can't meet together. The reason is that the body is a part of the world, while we are part of God.

Our vice or virtue reveals itself in different forms according to the situation. To attach more importance to the body than the self i.e. to assume the body as the self is the root vice (evil) which gives birth to all evils. To attach more importance to the self (Divinity) is the root virtue which gives birth to all virtues.

Arjuna at the beginning of the Gita asked the Lord to instruct him how to attain salvation "yacchreyah syaanniskrichitan broohi tanme" (Gita 2/7). In response to this question the Lord first of all described the body and the self. It proves that the man who wants to attain salvation, for him it is necessary to realize "I am not the body". So long as an aspirant holds that "I am the body", he may listen to so many discourses or even teach these to others and may practice spiritual discipline, he will not attain salvation.

In human body there is predominance of discrimination. Therefore only a human being can possess this discrimination "I am not the body". Identification of the self with the body is not humanity but it is beastliness. Therefore Shri Sukhdevaji Maharaj tells Parakshit -

Tvam Tu Rajanam Marishyeti pashubuddhimimaam jahi

na jaatah praagbhootohdhya dehavattam nenakshyasi. (Srimadbha.
12/5/2)

"O King ! Now give up this beastliness that you will die. The body had no existence in the past, it was born later and then it will die but it is not a fact that you (the self) were non-existent in the past, you were born later and then you will die."

The body never remains uniform while the self never changes, it always remains uniform. The body did not exist before birth, will not exist after death and at present also it is dying every moment. In fact when the body comes to the womb, the process of dying (death) begins. At the death of boyhood, youth ensues. At the death of youth, old age ensues. At the death of old age, the soul acquires another body -

"Dehinosminyathaa dehe kaumaaram yauvanam jaraa
tathaa dehaanter praaptirdheerastra ne muhyati." (Gita 2/13)

Boyhood, youth, and old age - these three states (stages) are of the gross (physical) body while attaining another body after death is the stage of the subtle and causal bodies. At the death of the body, the gross body is left but the subtle and causal bodies accompany the soul. Unless a man is liberated, his affinity for the subtle and causal bodies persists. It means that the self transcends the gross, subtle and causal bodies and their states. The body and its states change but the self remains the same. Birth and death are related with the body, not with the self. The age of the self is beginning-less and endless, within which numerous detachment are axiomatic. It is because of detachment (untaintedness) that in spite of acquiring numerous bodies we remain the same, but it is because of the assumed affinity and attachment to the body that we acquire numerous bodies. The assumed attachment does not stay but we grab hold of new attachments. **If we do not catch hold of new attachments, salvation is axiomatic.**

At the death of Bali, Lord Sri Ram tells Tara -

"tara bikal dekhi raghuraayaa; dinh gyaan hari leenhee maayaa
chiti jal paavak gagana sameeraa; panch rachit ati adham sariraa
pragat say tanu tav aage sovaa; jeeva nitya kehi laagi tumhe rovaa
upajaa gyaan charan tab laagi; leenhesi param bhagati bar maagi
(Manasa, Kiskindhaa. 11/2-3)

"When Lord Ram saw Tara perturbed, lamenting the death of her husband, He having removed her ignorance, imparted her knowledge of the perishable nature of the body and the eternal nature of the soul. He told her, "this body consisting of the five subtle elements - earth, water, fire, ether and air, is lying before you, while the soul is eternal, so why do you lament?" When she came to know the real nature of the body and the soul, she bowed to the Lord's feet and she prayed to Him to grant her the boon of having supreme devotion to Him."

Space, time , objects, persons, states, circumstances and incidents etc. all change but we don't change. We constantly remains the same. The three states of wakefulness, sleep and sound sleep change but we remain the same in the three states. Therefore we know the three states and their change (beginning and end). From the gross viewpoint there is an illustration. We came from Haridwar to Rayawala to Rishikesh. Had we lived only either in Haridwar or Rayawala or Rishikesh, how could we have come from Haridwar to Rishikesh. Therefore we are not the permanent residents of either Haridwar, or Rayawala or Rishikesh. We are different from them. Haridwar, Rayawala, Rishikesh are different, but we the knower of the three are one and the same. Similarly we remain the same in all states. Therefore we should perceive the uniform self, instead of perceiving the changing body (world).

Rahataa roop sahi ker raakho, bahtaa sang ne bahije."

As the three gross, subtle and causal bodies are not ours, so also the actions performed by the gross body, thinking and reflection performed with the subtle body and the steadiness and trance experienced with the causal body are not ours. The reason is every action begins and ends. Every thought appears and disappears. After steadiness there is unsteadiness (volatility) and there is deviation (relapse) from trance. Action, thinking (reflection), steadiness and trance - no state persists continuously. They appear and disappear but we (the self) never appear and disappear, we exist continuously.

Think over, when no body in 8.4 million life forms remains with us, how will this body remain with us? When 8.4 million bodies did not remain "I" and "Mine", how will this body remain "I" and "Mine"?

The Body is Not Mine

In infinite universes there are infinite things but out of them even a single straw is not ours, then how can this body be ours? This is a rule that the things which are acquired and lost are not ours. The body has been acquire and will be lost, therefore it is not ours. Only that thing can be ours which ever remains with us and with which we ever remain. Had the body been ours, it would have stayed with us for ever and we would have stayed with it forever. But the body does not stay with us even for a moment and we don't stay with it.

One thing is really ours and one thing we have only assumed as ours, God is ours because we are His "ansh" (part of Him). "Mamaivaansho jeevaloke" (Gita 15/7). He never separates from us. But the body is not ours, we have assumed it as ours. As in a play a person plays the role of a king, another that of a queen and the third one that of a constable; they are not real king, queen and constable, but they are playing the role in the drama.

Similarly this body is ours in order to perform our duty on this world-stage, actually it is not ours. We have committed the

blunder that we have forgotten God Who is really ours and we have assumed the body as ours which is not ours. The body whether it is gross or subtle or causal, totally belongs to Prakriti (Nature). We are bound to the world only because we have assumed it as ours.

Being an “ansh” (part) of God, we are identified with God, while the body being an “ansh” (part) of Nature, is identified with Nature. To consider the Lord, Who is identified with us, separate from us and to regard the body, which is different, as identified with the self, is the root of all evils. Because we have regarded the body which is not ours as ours, so the Lord, Who is really ours is not perceived as ours.

This is the experience of all of us that we have no control over the body. We can't change the body as we desire, we can't make it young from old, healthy from ill, strong from weak, fair complexioned from dark complexioned, good looking from bad looking and we can't make it immortal by saving it from death. In spite of our best efforts, against our wish the body becomes ill, it becomes weak, it becomes old and also it dies. To regard the body, over which we have no control as ours is mere foolishness.

The Body is Not For Me

The body is perishable while the self is imperishable. For the imperishable Reality, there can be only the imperishable thing. How can the perishable be from the imperishable? How can the perishable be of any use to the imperishable? How can the last night of the dark half of a month be of any use to the sun? The worldly things such as the body etc., are of use only to the world, they are of no use at all to us. (the self). Therefore in infinite universes there is not a single thing which is ours and which is for us. Therefore the body is for me and is of benefit to me – this is merely a false notion.

The body is the means (instrument) to perform an action and an action is only for the world. For example, when a writer wants to write, he holds a pen and he leaves the pen when he stops writing. Similarly we should accept the body while we perform actions with it and should get detached from the body when the action is completed. If we do nothing with the body, what is the need of the body? If we do no action, there is no utility of the body. The body is to serve the family, the society and the world, and it is not at all for one's own self. The action done with the gross body, reflection done with the subtle body and steadiness and trance experienced with the causal body are not for us. Neither action nor reflection nor steadiness, nor trance is of any use to us. All of them belong to Nature and are of use to the world. The self is different from them.

Had the body been for us, having acquired it, we would have been satisfied, we would have not desired to acquire anything else and we would have never separated from the body, it would have always lived with us. But it is the experience of all of us that having acquired the body, we are not satisfied, our desires don't come to an end, we don't attain perfection and moreover the body does not stay with us forever, it deserts us. Therefore the body is not for us.

There may be a doubt when the body is not for us, then why has the human body been glorified in the scriptures? The clarification is that in fact this is not the glory of human body (shape) but it is the glory of discrimination which a human being possesses. The name of this form is not human beings but a human being is he who possesses this discriminative power. The brain of the human body has been formed (moulded) in a special manner in which the discrimination between the real and the unreal, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done i.e. sanction and prohibition can be specially revealed. Other bodies don't possess such a brain. The brain of other beings (animals etc.) is confined to the sustenance of the body. Therefore "I am

the body". "the body is mine" and "the body is for me" - this anti-discriminative relationship can be renounced only by a human being.

The assumption of regarding the body as "I", mine" and "for me" is the anti-discriminative relationship. By having this anti-discriminative relationship, no aspirant can attain divine perfection. By having affinity for the body, an aspirant may undergo austere penance, experience trance, wander in different world and spheres or perform virtuous deeds such as rituals and charity etc., but he can't be totally free from bondage. But as soon as he renounces affinity for the body, his bondage perishes and he realizes Divinity. Therefore without renouncing the anti-discriminative relationship an aspirant should not feel relieved. If we don't renounce our assumed relationship with the body, the body will certainly desert us. So what is the difficulty in renouncing that body, which will renounce us? An aspirant may follow any spiritual discipline, he will have to accept the truth – "I am not body, the body is not mine and the body is not for me." The reason is that assumption of our relationship with the body is the main bondage or evil which gives birth to all evils.

The body belongs to the world. To regard the worldly thing (body) as "I", "mine" and "for me" is dishonesty and the punishment for this dishonesty is the great suffering in the form of birth and death. Therefore it is the duty of an aspirant that he with honest should offer the thing of the world to the world by regarding it as of the world and offer the self, which belongs to God, to God by regarding it as God's. By doing so the human life becomes fully meaningful (successful).

नारायण ! नारायण ! नारायण !