

THE HINDU

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Thought & consciousness

Krishna describes those devoted to Him thus: “With minds fixed on Me and their entire lives resting on Me, they are always engaged in discussions on Me. They thus continue to praise Me at all times and spend their time in total contentment.”

It is clear that Bhakti alone can confer such a self-sufficient feeling to one who is otherwise restless when seeking worldly goals, pointed out Swamini Satyavratana in a discourse. The company of the devout is a fertile ground to foster Bhakti. Devotion sprouts from knowledge of God’s supremacy. It is easy to think of someone whom we know and love. We easily love our parents to whom we owe our existence. When we realise the extent of God’s presence in our lives and of our great fortune in being thus associated with Him in a special way, our devotion for Him is always on the rise. At the initial stage, one needs a form of God to worship and express one’s devotion. Devotion gradually matures and one is able to experience the Lord in His abstract universality.

That the Lord is indispensable for the upkeep of the universe which indicates a mere fraction of His Shakti and glory instils faith, devotion, awe and bhakti in the knower. The Rasakrida episode evokes the picture of Krishna with each and every individual Gopi. The Gopis yearning for nothing else but total association with Krishna is symbolic of the individual thoughts of the devout getting merged in the universal consciousness principle. In his consciousness, God and the entire universe remain inseparable and this leads to a feeling of exhilaration and contentment. He no longer gets attached to worldly concerns that are after all ephemeral and fleeting. He rises above feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction that accompany the pursuit of worldly goals. He would rather opt for the greater good that is in sight and can be attained than chase lesser attractions.

Joy and sorrow are seen as contrasting experiences but they are always together and govern the fabric of life and existence. Learning to accept both with the same frame of mind is the key to work out a way of living that will lead us to salvation. This is what the Bhagavad Gita teaches us.