

FROM 'DNYANESHWARI- BHAVARTHDEEPIKA':

Dnyaneshwari is a commentary on Gita, written 700 years ago by Saint Dnyaneshwar (Jnanesvara or Gnanadeva) (1274-1297). It brings Vedanta and other spiritual philosophies to common man. It explains the various paths a person can take for spiritual progress and ultimate liberation.

It is written in verse form as used to be custom of those days, An excellent spiritual seekers guide, it discusses in detail four different paths viz. The path of Knowledge, the path of action, the path of yoga and the path of devotion to choose from depending upon the psychological make up of the seeker.

It presents the cream of Vedanta philosophy, Sankhya philosophy, Kundalini yoga and the practice of devotion. While Gita is difficult to understand to a common man, Saint Dnyaneshwar has written Dnyaneshwari (Original name Bhavarthadeepika) specifically for common man and therefore the text is easy to understand.

Saint Dnyaneshwar wrote this critique at the age of sixteen on the instructions of his Guru and elder (only by two years) brother Nivruttinath. Nivruttinath was a disciple of Gahininath, one of the nine gems or Navnaths of the Nath sect. Dnyaneshwari written seven hundred years ago is still vibrantly alive and is regularly read in many homes in Maharashtra.

YAJNA OF KNOWLEDGE

This Yajna of knowledge is as follows. The original thought that I am one but I desire to be many is the pole for tying the sacrificial animal and dualism is that animal. The five elements are the pandal (temporary enclosed shelter), the special attributes of the five elements namely the five organs and the five types of vital breaths (Pranas) are the material to be used in the yajna and ignorance is the ghee (clarified butter used in Indian households for cooking and for lamps) to be burnt in it. In this Yajna, the mind and the intellect are the two pits in which the fire of knowledge is ignited. The feeling of equanimity towards pleasure and pain is the altar. The dexterity of the intellect to discriminate is the Mantras in the yajna. Peace is the pair of vessels sruk and sruva used in the yajna. The

seeker is the host who performs the yajna. Using the vessels of experience, the mantra of discrimination and rituals of Knowledge, he sacrifices the dualism and destroys the ignorance and then what remains is only the host and the rituals. And when the seeker gets the purifying bath by the water of Self-realisation then he does not find the elements, organs and their objects to be separate from each but considers all of them to be one. When he experiences Brahman in the entire universe the talk of his being an individual living being ends and he believes that from Brahmadeo downwards the Supreme Soul has pervaded everything. Thus some people worship Me by attaining Brahman through the yajna of Knowledge.

ARJUNA TO KRISHNA: Please tell me who out of the two, the sage (man of knowledge) or the devotee really attains knowledge? (12:29-33).

DEVOTEE IS A SUPERIOR YOGI

Shri Krishna replied, "The devotees whose faith, pushed by the strength of the past achievement, steadily increases with devotion like a river rising during the rainy season, in whose heart love upsurges, who concentrate their attention on me day and night and offer themselves completely to me are the ones I consider as superior yogis.

Such person filled with the feeling of "I am Brahman" goes beyond dualism. But for the sake of the bliss he gets from devotion, he splits himself into two, calling one the devotee and the other as God and thus sets an example of the right path of devotion to non-devotees. I am obsessed with only such devotees who becomes the object for me to meditate upon. I feel happy when I meet him. I take birth as Avatar for him and come in this world. I like him so much that I sacrifice my life for him.

Kalaa-Nada-Bindu verses (6:286-290). :Literally the verse 6:288 translates as : "Then it is called Power but really it is the Prana which is not aware now of Nada i.e. sound, Bindu i.e. bright light spot in between the eyebrows seen during meditation, or of Kalaa and the flame alternately the flame of Kalaa." The meanings of terms Nada, Bindu and Kalaa in Tantra system to which Kundalini yoga belongs are very much different from the conventional meanings mentioned above. A brief explanation of

the terms Nada-Bindu and Kalaa is given below. (For details refer to Kundalini Yoga by M. P. Pandit, Published by Ganesh and Co, Chennai 1968.)

The ultimate Supreme Reality is in the nature of Consciousness, Chit or the Spirit. The Pure Consciousness is Shiva. Inseparable from Him is Shakti, His

Power. Shakti is the active or kinetic aspect while Shiva is the static aspect of the Consciousness Shiva-Shakti. It is Shakti who causes duality by instilling the thought that "I am different from the Self or the Shiva principle." It is this Shakti through which Shiva causes creation using the 36 principles or Tattvas which include the five elements, the five senses, the five sense organs, the five action organs, the mind, the intellect etc. From Shakti issues the Nada the initial movement which culminates into Shabda-Brahman or Brahman as Sound. From Nada proceeds the Bindu or point (actually Para Bindu or supreme Bindu) which is the state of Shakti in which

Self is identified with other objects. When such identification is not made an object appears as extended in space but with identification the object is experienced as an unextended point or Bindu. Both Nada and Para Bindu are the states of Shakti in a mood to manifest Herself. The Para Bindu divides itself into three subsidiary Bindus bringing forth the threefold aspects: Karyabindu which is of the nature of Shiva, Bija which of the nature of Shakti and Nada which is Shiva-Shakti which is the mutual relation between Shiva and Shakti. These three bindus form the triangle called Kamakalaa, the Divine desire for Manifestation. Thus Nada, Bindu and Kalaa are the states of Shakti to manifest Herself. Hence Nada-Bindu-Kalaa should mean manifestation of Shakti as the material world.

ATTITUDES FOR STARTING YOGA PRACTICE:

Arjuna, you may feel that this yoga is difficult, but in a way it is very easy. First one should get rid of desire and anger which arise out of thoughts in the mind. (6:375) Once the sense pleasures are eliminated and organs are controlled, the mind becomes calm. Thus, once dispassion sets in then desires do not enter the mind and the intellect is sheltered by courage. The intellect, once it is helped by the courage, turns the mind towards Selfrealisation.

(6:375-378)

Even if this does not happen there is another easy way towards Selfrealisation.

First one should make a rule that a resolution once it is made will not be changed. (6:379-380). If this makes the mind become steady then well and good. But if it does not then let the mind wander freely. Then bring it back from wherever it has wandered. It will then be steady by itself. Once the mind is able to remain steady for some considerable time it will by itself come towards the Self and when it sees the Self it will become one with it. The duality will then merge into unification with the Self and the bright light of the union will illuminate the three worlds. (6:381-384). Everything becomes full of divine energy once the mind dissolves.

Selection of location: First of all a suitable place should be selected for the practice. One should get a feeling of happiness on sitting there and a feeling that he should not leave the place. One's sense of dispassion should increase while sitting there. Saints should have occupied that place earlier the effects of which are still felt by getting a feeling of satisfaction, courage

and zeal. The practice of yoga should occur naturally by sitting there and the beauty of the surroundings should give one the experience of the bliss of the Self. Even an atheist should feel like doing tapas there. (6:163-167) That place should be beautiful and pure. It should be inhabited only by seekers and be away from the crowds of ordinary people. Plenty of roots and fruit-laden trees should be available throughout the year and water, especially from natural fountains, should be available even in dry season. It should enjoy mild sun and cool breeze. It should be so thickly wooded that not only wild animals but even bees and parrots cannot enter. But there may be a few water birds around and perhaps a cuckoo and occasional peacock may also be there. Arjuna, one should carefully search for such a place looking for a secret cave or a temple of Lord Shiva. (6:171-179).

Preparation of the seat After selecting one of the two places (cave or temple), one should sit there alone for a long time and check whether or not the mind becomes calm. If it becomes calm then one should prepare a seat there. The seat should be made of Darbha grass over which one should

put a deerskin and cover it further by a clean washed cloth. The seat should

be level and not too high or too low from the ground. If the seat is too high it will make the body unstable and if too low then the body will touch the

ground. In short the seat should be steady and comfortable.

Stabilising the mind :Then one should sit there concentrating the mind while remembering one's Guru. The Guru must be remembered until the mind is filled with Sattvic (pure) feelings so that one's ego gets blunted, mind is rid of thoughts of sense-objects and the organs do not stir. One should remain in this state until one experiences that the mind has merged with the heart. In this state one experiences that body automatically becomes steady and airs in the body are coming together. After remaining in this state the mind stabilises, interest in worldly affairs gets inhibited and he attains the state of deep trance (samadhi) effortlessly as soon as he sits on the seat. (6: 186-191).

LOCATIONS OF Chakras :(6:214-220). There are six Chakras or centres and a seventh centre which is the ultimate point where the Kundalini force has to reach. Muladhar Chakra is the lowermost Chakra or centre located near the base of one's spine near about the sexual organs and at which the dormant Kundalini is located. There are five more Chakras above the Muladhar. These are, the Swadhishtan Chakra located a little above the Muladhar Chakra and below the navel. The third is the Manipur chakra near the navel, the fourth is called Anahat Chakra and is near the heart. The fifth is the Vishuddha chakra at the throat. The sixth is the Adnya chakra in between the eyebrows. The last centre is the Sahasrara chakra or Chakra of thousand lotus petals on the vertex crown. Starting from the Muladhar the successive chakras get activated each giving unique experiences.

Activation

of the Chakras accelerates the spiritual progress. In time and with regular practice, the seeker whose Kundalini is activated gets liberated from the influence of mundane subjects and finally gets the experience of the Divine.

Yogic posture and Chakras : Now listen carefully to the details about the yogic posture. First sit with the calves of the legs pressed against the thighs and keeping the left leg on the other leg at a slight angle, press the right sole steadily on the anus, keeping the sole of the left foot naturally pressed on the right foot. Pressing the heel tightly at the centre of the space between the anus and the base of the generating organ, one should balance

the body on it. Keeping the two ankles straight he should lift the base of the spinal column. This will make the whole body to be supported and balanced

on the heel. This is the characteristic of the Mula Bandha posture (the knot at the root or base) also known as Vajrasana. Once this posture is successful then the downward path of the Apana part of the vital breath (or life force) gets blocked and it starts receding inside. (6:192-200). (See the note regarding Prana at the end of the chapter)

Then let both palms held in cupped shape rest on the left leg which will make the shoulders rise. The head automatically gets in between them.

The

eyes then remain in half-closed state and the sight turns inwards. Even if it turns outwards it can look only up to the tip of the nose. The desire to look around vanishes. Then the neck gets contracted and the chin presses against the chest hiding the throat. This posture of the neck and chest is called the Jalandhar Bandha or knot. (6:201-208).

Then the belly becomes flat and the navel gets raised. The posture of the part of the body between the navel and the anus is called Odhiyana Bandha or knot. (6:209-210).

Thus the Yoga practice starts with the external parts of the body while the thoughts, desires and other affairs of the mind vanish. He is not aware anymore of hunger and sleep.

Awakening of Kundalini :The Apana breath then hits the Muladhara Chakra

situated at between the anus and the generating organ and removes all the impurities accumulated there since childhood. (See the note on the Chakras

at the end of chapter). Then the Apana breath rises to the Manipura Chakra situated just below the navel and starts hitting against it. Thus the confined breath stirs the body from inside and removes the impurities accumulated since childhood. Then the powerful breath enters the abdomen and eliminates the phlegm and bile. Then it reaches the centres of the seven essential elements (viz. flesh, blood, muscles, bones, marrow, chyle and semen), gets rid of the fat, and drives the marrow out from the bones. It cleans the blood vessels and relaxes the organs which may frighten the seeker but he should not get frightened. By creating these ailments it throws the diseases out from the body. Then the Apana breath brings the solid flesh and bones and the liquid blood together. (6:214-220).

While this goes on the Kundalini force awakens by virtue of the heat created

by the yogic posture. It was sleeping like a baby cobra coiled in three and half coils near the navel with its mouth facing down, (6:221-223) but now gets awakened due to the constriction by the Mula Bandha. (6:225).

Kundalini reaches other Chakras and purifies the body When it wakes up it opens its mouth and swallows the Apana which has occupied the space

in the region of the heart. It then swallows the fat and excess flesh from the region of the heart and wherever else it can find flesh. (6:229-231).

Then it searches for the palms and soles, tears open the upper parts and searches every joint and organ. It extracts the vitality from the nails, purifies the skin and makes it touch the bones. Then it cleans the insides of the bones and scrapes the interior of the blood vessels with the result that the roots of the hair are burnt. It then drinks off the seven essential elements and makes the body hot and dry. (6:232-235).

It then draws back the Prana coming out of the nose and the Apana which is inside and when they meet only the curtains of the six Chakras separate them. They would have met except that Kundalini asks them, "What business have you here? Get aside!" The principle is that the Kundalini eats

off the Earth principle (solid part) and also completely licks off the Water principle (liquid part) from the body and feeling satiated becomes mild and rests at the Sushumna (central) nerve in the spine. (6:236-240). In this satisfied mood it vomits the saliva which becomes the nectar which guards the body. At this stage the heat leaves the body which now becomes cool from inside as well as from outside because of which the lost strength returns. The flow in the Sushumna nerve stops and the functions of the remaining nine Pranas also stop. Because of this the body is without action and becomes still. The Ida and Pingala nerves in the spine meet and the three knots get loosened and the curtains of the six Chakras open. Then the

vital airs passing through the right and left nostrils (which are designated Sun and Moon respectively) fade to the extent that even a flame will not flicker by them. (6:241-245). At this time, the intellect gets stilled and the remaining fragrance in the Prana enters the Sushumna nerve along with the

Kundalini. Then the spiritual nectar (Ambrosia or Amrit) situated at the crown of the head spills into the mouth of the Kundalini and then gets absorbed throughout the body including the ten Pranas.

SACRED EXPERIENCES : Divine experiences Now listen to what happens further. The Kundalini, with the help of Prana rises up to the heart through the Sushumna nerve. (6:271). This Kundalini now may be considered as the basis of this universe and of AUM which is the expression of Supreme Soul. (6:272-273). The yogi then starts hearing the divine Anahat sound. (6:274). The intellect which is near the Kundalini power becomes active and is now able to hear some of this Anahat sound. (6:275). There are ten types of Anahat sound and he hears the first type of sound called Ghosha and in this basin of Ghosha itself sound pictures are then generated which one sees through one's imagination but when the person is not himself where is the imagination? Actually it is impossible to explain where the sound is coming from. (6:276-277). I forgot to tell you one thing that is the Anahat sound reverberations near the heart persist as long as Air principle is not destroyed. The reverberations in the Sky principle (space) open the window of the Brahmrandhra (orSahasrar) easily. There is another space above the Sahasrar (lotus of thousand petals) where the Consciousness (Chaitanya) resides without support. (6:278-280). There the Kundalini flashes its energy and by giving an offering of it to the intellect it makes the duality disappear. Now the Kundalini drops its brilliance and merges with the Prana. At that time it looks like a golden robe shed by a statue of air or like a tongue of lightning. (6:281-284). Thus when it reaches up to the Sahasrar it looks like a golden chain or a stream of shining water. Then it suddenly vanishes in the space of the spiritual heart and its power dissolves into itself. We should really call it power but it is really the life-force which is no longer aware now of any material aspect of the world. (See notes at the end of Chapter.) In this state things like conquering the mind, holding the breath or meditating do not remain. Having desires or giving them up also stop. Therefore this Kundalini may be considered as the melting pot of all the five principles. (6:286-290). Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says, "Using the body itself to devour the ego about the body is the principle of the Nath Panth (sect). Shri Krishna has merely mentioned it in the Gita, but I have put the details before the audience."

When the lustre of the power vanishes, the appearance of the body

also changes and eyes of common people cannot see the real form of the yogi. Actually the gross body continues to possess the limbs and other organs but it is now made of air principle. (6:293-294). His body can become so light that he is called Khechar i.e. one who can travel through space. Once he reaches this stage his body performs miracles because now

he has gained Siddhis. (6:296). One need not go into the details about these Siddhis, main point being that the three principles Earth, Water and Fire have disappeared from within his body. Of the five principles, Water principle has destroyed the Earth principle and Air principle has destroyed the Water principle while in the spiritual heart, the Air principle has destroyed the Fire principle. What remains is the Air principle in the shape of the body. But after some time that too vanishes in the space of the spiritual heart. At this time the Kundalini changes its name to Marut i.e. wind or air. But until it merges into Brahman its form as power persists. (6:297-301).

Then it breaks the Jalandhar knot and surges through the throat to the Brahmastrandhra. With the help of recitation of the basic sound AUM, it rises to the Pashyanti stage of the sound and enters the Brahmastrandhra up to the half of Tanmatra. By steadying itself in the Brahmastrandhra, it embraces the Brahman. The curtain of the five principles is withdrawn and the power meets the Supreme Brahman and evaporates into it along with the Sky principle. (6:302-306). (See the note at the end of the chapter)

Thus the soul which was separated from the Brahman by virtue of acquiring the body enters the Brahman. At that time thoughts about whether the soul is different from me (i.e. the Brahman) does not survive in the mind. (6:307-309).

The person now experiences merging of what is described as Sky principle with the sky. This cannot be described in words but has only to be experienced. (6:310-311). Arjuna, understand that this phenomenon is not something explicit which can be understood by listening to words.

There is nothing more left for him to know. I can only say that if one is fortunate then one should experience it and be one with the Brahman. (6:316-318).

But it is meaningless to talk about it. That (the Brahman) is the root of the universe, fruit of the yoga, and the energy of the bliss. That is where the forms dissolve. It is the place of liberation and beginning and end disappear there. It is the seed of the five principles and brightness of the Great Effulgence. When the non-believers tortured my devotees, I had to assume my beautiful four-armed form out of it (the Brahman). The great bliss of this state is beyond description. Persons who have realised Self by steadily striving for it have become pure and reached my status.

YOGI IS ALWAYS AWAKE:

When all creatures are in a state of sleep regarding Brahman he is ever awake to it and he shuts his eyes at the (material) things for which everybody else struggles. Such a person should be recognised as a great sage free of attachments. (2:355-356). He is not bothered about whether or not he has achieved the Riddhi-Siddhis (Occult powers). (2:360). Satiated with Self-realisation, he remains in the state of bliss of the Self and goes about in this world in that state, bereft of ego and all desires. Recognise him truly as a person with stable insight. (2:366-367). This is what is called the extreme state of the Brahman experienced by the dispassionate people who effortlessly become one with it. Once they become one with Brahman then there is no question of their mind suffering and becoming an impediment in the way of reaching the state of the Brahman at the time of physical death.

If I were to remain engrossed in the Self after reaching perfection, how would people cope up with life? If people emulate me in that condition the entire world will stop functioning. Therefore particularly a capable person who has attained knowledge should not abandon actions. (3:166-168).

A desireless person must attend to actions with the same readiness as one with desire but without posing as somebody special. I am telling this to you repeatedly because it is essential that society be protected in every way and one should never show that he is different from the others.