

Satsanga with Sri Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Bhaja Govindam – Verse 22

This is a description of a *yogi*, a wise man. Here, as also earlier in verse 18, we have a beautiful description of a wise man, a renunciate.

रथ्या चर्पट विरचित कन्थः पुण्यापुण्य विवर्जित पन्थः ।

योगी योगनियोजित चित्तो रमते बालोन्मत्तवदेव ॥

rathyā carpaṭa viracita kanthaḥ puṇyāpuṇya vivarjita panthaḥ,
yogī yoganiyojita citto ramate bālonmattavadeva.

The *yogi* who wears but a quilt made of rags, who walks the path that is beyond merit and demerit, whose mind is joined in perfect *yoga* with its goal, revels in God consciousness, and lives thereafter as a child or as a madman.

A wise person does not make any demands

Kantha means quilt. This person has covered his body with a quilt to protect it from the heat or the cold. *Viracita*, what is the quilt made of? *Rathyā carpaṭa*. *Rathyā* means street and *carpaṭa* means rags. *Rathyā carpaṭa viracita kanthaḥ*, the quilt is made of rags that are picked up off the streets. Some *mahātmas* do this even today in Rishikesh. They don't have clothes that are rags, but then they have a quilt or some kind of a multi-colored quilt or a shawl made of the rags that are picked up from the streets. That the wise man covers his body this way is a figurative way of saying that he has no possessions and thus does not make any demands. An important aspect of the wise man is that by wisdom, as he discovers fulfilment from within himself, he becomes a non-demanding person. He then makes no demands whatsoever. He does not demand food, nor does he demand clothes or anything. He is happy with whatever comes his way. *Yadṛcchālābhasantuṣṭaḥ*, he is happy with whatever is the *lābha* or gain that comes by *prārabdha* or destiny [Bhagavadgītā 4-22].

A wise person is free from the sense of doership

He is walking along a path, *panthaḥ*. What kind of path is it? A path that is devoid of, *vivarjita*, merit and demerit or virtue and vice, *puṇya apuṇya*. In his wisdom, a *yogī* walks along a path that is beyond both virtue and vice.

A wise man thus walks along a path that is beyond all *pāpa* and *puṇya*. He does not perform any *puṇya* or *pāpa*. His actions can neither be classified as *puṇya* nor as *pāpa*. Why? *Puṇya* and *pāpa* are there only when there is an ego or a sense of doership behind an action. When I have the notion that I am performing the action, when the ego or the sense of doership is there, the action can be classified as virtue or vice. This is because there is an order in the universe, there is *dharma* or *adharma*. An action performed in keeping with that order is called *dharma* or *puṇya*, and an action that is performed in violation of that order is called *adharma* or *pāpa*. However, this *puṇya* and *pāpa* are there only for those who have a sense of doership. A wise man is one who has become free from the sense of doership. No more is the ego saying, I am the performer of the action. Action just gets performed without any ego or the sense of doership. So it is said that he is beyond *puṇya* and *pāpa*. It also means that he is not obliged to follow the rules and regulations. You and I are obliged to follow the code of conduct that we must perform the actions in keeping with a code of conduct, but the wise man here, does not have any code of conduct at all. His actions are not bound by any code of conduct as enjoined by the scriptures because he no more has any sense of ego or a sense of doership. Therefore it says, he is walking on a path which is beyond *puṇya* and *pāpa*.

A wise person's mind is always united with the Truth

He is a *yoganiyojita cittah*, one whose *cittah* or mind is *niyojita*, focused upon *yoga*, one whose mind is focused upon the Lord, and one who abides in the knowledge of the Self.

Who is a *yogi*? He is one whose *citta* or mind is wedded to the Truth or whose mind is focused upon the Self. *Ramate*, he always sports. Earlier, his state of mind was said to be *nandati nandati nandateva*, and here it described as being *ramate*. He is always happy.

A wise person lives in the present

Ramate bālonmattavadeva. *Ramate*, he sports or he revels like a child, *bāla*. *Unmatta* means like a mad man. *Bālonmattavadeva*, like a child, or like a madman or one who is intoxicated. This wise man is not childish, but childlike. He is not mad, but like a mad man. He is not intoxicated, but like one who is. Intoxicated with what? Intoxicated with the happiness in his own heart. The joy is constantly springing like a fountain from his heart and therefore, he is intoxicated with that joy. Like a child, he is free from all worries and anxieties.

In a child's mind, there is neither a carryover of the past, nor any worry about the future. Children are innocent and always live in the present. So also is this wise man not worried about the past or carrying any burden from the past. The past is left where it is, because he has no concern about it. He is also not worried about or interested in the future. Whatever the future brings is fine. He lives in the present like a child, innocent and free from all likes and dislikes.

Just as you cannot say that a mad man is doing either right or wrong because he does not conform to the same code of conduct that we do, so also, the actions of a wise man cannot be classified as either right or wrong. He is spontaneously good because all his actions are in keeping with the order. It is not that a wise man has a license to do whatever he likes, but we do not judge his actions because he functions from a perception of life to which ordinary people do not have an entry¹.

¹ Transcribed and edited by Krishnakumar (KK) S. Davey and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.