

Be Gunātīta

The spiritual life has been described as a shift from a ego-centered life to a God-centered life. At present we function through what is called an ego, an identification with an individual body and mind. We are meant to function not from the perspective of one individual, but from the perspective of the Universal that is functioning through all individuals.

How do we bring about this shift? In the final analysis it is to accept the guidance of the Lord, to follow the Lord, to take refuge in the Lord. In the Gītā, part of following the Lord is following His instruction to be *guṇātīta*, to rise above the three *guṇa*-s. Our identification with the body and mind and the seeming reality of the world is an identification largely brought about by, and including, the three *guṇa*-s and the pairs of opposites. Therefore if we are going to shift from an ego-centered life to a God-centered life, Lord Kṛṣṇa's instruction to be *guṇātīta* is key.

In some ways we could say that Gurudev's Universal Prayer is nothing except a formula on how to be *guṇātīta*. It is very difficult to lift ourselves up by our own bootstraps. Therefore, the first part of the process is to lift our mind up to God, to recognize that He is a Lord of mercy and love, that He is all-powerful, knows everything, and that He is not only is the whole universe, present everywhere, but He indwells all beings.

Therefore, with that in our consciousness, we are to develop an understanding heart. That is Gurudev's way of saying, be *guṇātīta*. Because he follows understanding heart with equal vision—between the pairs of the opposites—and a balanced mind—in the presence of the change of the three *guṇa*-s. It is that that brings about true faith, devotion, and wisdom; it gives us the strength and the ability to free ourselves from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger, and jealousy and to fill our heart with divine virtues. It is only then that we can behold the Lord in all these names and forms and serve Him in all these names and forms.

Thus the formula for our spiritual life, which is a shift in our consciousness from being ego-centered to God-centered is to be brought about by becoming *guṇātīta*, and Gurudev's Universal Prayer tells us first to offer our worship to God, to raise our consciousness up to being God-focused, and then to be *guṇātīta*, to live our lives from a divine perspective.