

Shifting Our Base

In the beginning, while the spiritual life may require great effort, it appears to be relatively simple. We have to choose the good over the pleasant and we have to seek to experience God—both within our consciousness and outwardly. For many seekers, this is sufficient.

However, frequently there comes a point of dissatisfaction. The seeker feels that they are no closer to God than they were many years ago, sometimes further away. There is another difficulty. We are told that *samsāra* is caused by *rāga-dveṣa*, likes and dislikes, and they find themselves still full of likes and dislikes. In the Judaic-Christian tradition, the fall of man was caused by judging good and evil, and they find that they are continuously judging and don't know how to avoid it.

They are also told that for a saint a piece of gold or a clump of earth are all the same. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to be *gunātīta*, to rise above the three *guṇa*-s, and finally, after telling him how to live by *dharma*, He tells him to abandon all *dharma*-s. Thus seekers, who have been choosing the good over the pleasant and have been seeking an inner experience of the Divine, find themselves challenged with concepts and facts that they simply have not explored. Ultimately it needs to be understood that we are not actually meant to give up choosing the good over the pleasant. That remains in even the greatest of saints. What we are meant to do is have a shift of our understanding of what the truth of our life is. We consider ourselves to be separate. That is the normal human perception, whereas the fact is that all is one. It is our basic understanding of ourselves that has to shift. We are meant to function in this world—that is the purpose of our life—only we are meant to function from a knowledge that all is One instead of seeing everything as separate.

The declaration of the saints is that there are no differences here. Thus we do not give up *dharma* as such. We give up our dependence on *dharma*, which is based upon seeming differences, and rest on God, take refuge in God, which means that the base we come from is the oneness of all things instead of separateness.

From that base we are meant to live a divine life in this world—eating, drinking, sleeping, working, our normal life, but seeing it from a different angle of vision. Thus things change, but don't change. However,

we are not meant to continue the way we did, but rather to shift the base from which we function, from an ordinary divided life to a sublime divine life.