

Beyond Feelings

It is almost a truism among philosophers that fundamentally the human being is seeking to be happy and to avoid suffering. We see it everywhere: The urge to make money, the urge to accumulate things, the urge to accomplish, are all means to try to make ourselves happy and to avoid suffering.

Even in the spiritual life we find a concentration on the same thing. Seekers will often speak about their spiritual experiences. When singing God's name devotees are often not thinking about God as much as they are thinking about their own feelings. Even if they are living a life of *dharma*, they want the satisfaction of feeling good about themselves. Thus it seems to be true that almost universally the human being is concerned with his or her feelings. They want to feel good, feel happy and avoid suffering.

However, Lord Kṛṣṇa seems to point to something different. He says that for a sage a clump of dirt, a stone, or gold are the same. A sage is the same whether *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas* is present, and those are certainly states of feeling. Lord Kṛṣṇa does not want us to be concerned with the fruit of our actions. No matter how much effort we have put into something, no matter how much we desire to see a favorable result, we are to let it go, not be concerned with the results. And Lord Kṛṣṇa doesn't even want us to have the satisfaction, it appears, of living a life of *dharma*. He wants us to abandon all our ideas of right and wrong and take refuge in Him alone.

Here then is the key. The vast majority of human beings, including seekers, are concentrating on how they feel, what their experiences are. Lord Kṛṣṇa wants us to look at something that is beyond experience. Indeed we can't really look at it, we have to recognize that we are That which is beyond experience. Therefore we should surrender our interest in experience and recognize that we are That which knows all experience.

This seems to be Lord Kṛṣṇa's secret of all secrets. It is what He wanted Arjuna to discover. It is where he wanted Arjuna to rest. And, therefore, by implication the whole of the Gītā is a call to mankind to leave behind this fascination with feelings, this desire to be happy and to avoid suffering. Rather it is to recognize that we are That which knows all experience. It is to know the bliss of being *guṇātīta*, beyond the three *guṇa*s, beyond feelings.