**"Each soul is potentially divine. And the goal is to manifest the divinity within!"**

This is an attempt to understand and manifest the divine qualities like we look in the mirror, see our reflection and correct our self. However, correcting our self once or twice will not bring the change within. The change comes with constant practice *(Abhyasam)* and that results in manifesting of the divinity within. So with determination one should persevere to practice in day to day life. - *"Samkalpo wai jayate karmamulam." (Determination is at the root of all actions!!)*

There are 26 divine properties as stated in Srimad Bhagvad Gita in chapter 16.1 - 16.3. The divine qualities are actually the qualities of what we call goodness - appreciable, noteworthy, and polished gentlemanly qualities.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SN | Divine Quality | SN | Divine Quality |
| 1 | अभयम् (Fearlessness) | 14 | शान्तिः (Peacefulness) |
| 2 | सतवसंशुदधि (Purity of Mind) | 15 | अपैशुनम् (Absence of vilification) |
| 3 | ज्ञानयोगवयवसथिति (Steadfastness in the Yoga of Knowledge) | 16 | दयाभूतेषु (Compassion) |
| 4 | दानम् (Charity) | 17 | अलोलुप्त्वम् (Non Covetousness) |
| 5 | दमः (Restraint of senses) | 18 | मार्दवम् (Gentleness) |
| 6 | यज्ञः (Performance of Yagnas) | 19 | हरि (Modesty) |
| 7 | स्वाध्यायः (Scriptural Studies) | 20 | अचापलम् (Freedom from restlessness) |
| 8 | तपः (Austerity) | 21 | तेजः (Grandeur) |
| 9 | आरजवम् (Rectitude) | 22 | क्षमा (Forgiveness) |
| 10 | अहिंसा (Non-injury) | 23 | धृति (Fortitude) |
| 11 | सत्यम् (Truthfulness) | 24 | शौचम् (Cleanliness) |
| 12 | अकरोध (Absence of Anger) | 25 | अदोह (Absence of Malice) |
| 13 | त्यागः (Renunciation) | 26 | नातिमानिता (Absence of Pride) |

**Abhayam ( अभयम् ):**

The first divine quality for a Spiritual Seeker is **Fearlessness (Abhayam)**. Its living life without any Fear (Bhay)? But what is Fear? Fear is the attitude of the mind which makes it dislike a recurrence of contact with any person, incident or circumstance. (Ref Shl2.56). Then the question arises why there is a fear? So in Shl 10.4, Lord has said that both Fear (Bhay) and Fearlessness (Abhayam) are the natural feeling of beings that arise from the Lord himself.

Fear is generated both from Outer world and from Inside (inner world). The outer world fears are related to dacoits, animals, bad company, bad education, job loss, etc. But such fears are only a manifestation and actually don't really matter. The other fear is generated from within which is like fear of doing a sin, fear of doing crime, fear of inappropriate behavior, fear of loss of prestige etc. These fears are the ones that one should work on to eliminate them gradually.

Thereafter the question arises as to why fears do gets generated and what are its causes? Fear has primarily 3 main causes;

1. **Ignorance (darkness or absence of connection with Lord):** Fear is clouded by ignorance or delusion. Delusion generates a feeling of Maya. It creates a feeling of Otherness (Mine & Yours). It’s a fear of losing my property, losing my pride, losing my wealth to others. Its nothing but Ignorance which is the expression of Avidya. And where there is knowledge there is Fearlessness. By placing this quality of Fearlessness at the head of the list of divine qualities, the divine Lord is indicating that a spiritual seeker's progress is directly proportional to the ethical perfection of oneself.
2. **Cause of fear generated from body identification:** In Kathopnishad there is a shloka *"Svarge loke na bhayam kinca-nasti, na tatra tvam na jaraya bibheti; ubhe tirtva-sanaya pipasae, sokatigo modate svarga loke."* (Reference Valli1, Part1.12) which translated in english is *"In heaven, there is no fear whatsoever. You are not there (O! Death) nor do they (inhabitants of heaven i.e. Devas) fear old age there. Having crossed both hunger and thirst, one rejoices in Heaven, being above grief."* Here Nachiketa is asking to get the knowledge that will take him to heaven. And heave in described as getting freedom from fear by quoting the absence of 5 aspects. It’s indicative that on earth, one has the fear of (a) Old age (Jara) and Death (Mrityu); (b) hunger(asanaya) and thirst(pipase) and (c )Grief (Shoka).
3. **Cause of fear due to Insecurity:** It’s a fear arising from loss of control. And in order to control, one starts anticipating about the future and generating anxiety and worries related to it. It’s correlating the past with the present and then projecting it in the future which leads to building of insecurity. For example - The mother thinks "what will happen if my son goes to study in other city/country then who will take care of him? Who will cook and give him food? Will he eat it properly or not? ". This keeps continuing because when son completes education and gets married then the projection still continues. "What will happen if his wife does not get along with us? What happens if she does not cook for him? And so on….". Another example is like when sannyasi leaves all the relationship behind then he is insecure of who will take care of me in old age.

So overall it can be summarized as 7 fears that arise due to identification with Body - fear of (i) old age and (ii) death; identification with Prana (life force) - fear of (iii) hunger and (iv) thirst; and identification with the Mind - fear of (v)Grief (Shok), (vi)delusion (Moh) and (vii)Insecurity. He who is liberated from these 7 fears then he is as if living in heaven. He is the one who becomes 'Abhayam' (Fearlessness).

'Abhayam' is an inward feeling born of inner contentment. *Abhay yaani, bhay rahit hona!* 'Abhayam' is quality of knowing that Lord will take care of me. Coming out of delusion - Otherness feeling and looking at everything as One - as Lord's world and we are part of Him. Hence, shifting our viewpoint to everything is abundantly available to us, as per our needs and we need not fear anything, then it develops the quality of 'Abhayam'. In fact, the entire Gita is about becoming fearless by surrendering to Lord and coming in his protection.

The question arises, why is there so much emphasis on 'Abhayam'? This is stated by Lord in Shloka 4.10, that ‘Abhayam’ is one of the essential requisites for God realization. ‘Abhayam’ is the one, who sees the manifestation of the Lord in all persons, incidents, and circumstances. His benign influence is felt everywhere and the very scope of any apprehension are obviated. Thus convinced, one becomes free from fear.

So then question arises as to how can one conquer these fears? How can one lead a life of Fearlessness existence? It can be done by;

1. **The first step is to** **attain understanding as the existence as working through body and not living as the body.** When we live as the body then we have fear of old age and death. So one needs to attain the wisdom that our existence is through the body. For example - In deep sleep, we do not identify with our body. Nor man nor woman, nor old or young, literate or illiterate but we continue to exist. In the sleep, things and beings belonging to gross world is of zero value to us, all possessiveness, security, fear all disappears as we are not identifying through the body. We are in meditative state. Meditation is conscious experience that we are living through the body and not as the body. So the objective of meditation is freedom from body identification and then 'I' does not take precedence. So first step is to bring in the awareness that "we are living through the body" and strengthen this awareness by constant Meditation.
2. **The second step is to bring another realization of “Who am I?"** There are 3 types of 'I's -

(a) Real 'I' , (b) Illusory 'I' and (c )Relative 'I'. Above, we discussed the Illusory 'I' i.e. accepting self as body. Now lets take a look at relative 'I'. This is accepting self as titles and/or labels like 'I' am a father, mother, doctor, son, brother, millionaire, minister etc.. Disturbance is caused due to role in Relative 'I's and here is where one gets caught up 'samsara'. The happiness and misery is caused in the 'Relative' I and leads to 'Mamata'. In first 2 chapters, Lord has described 'Mamata' in 3 forms - the first one as Tamasic Mamata of Dhritrashtra (Fear of letting go of the throne), Rajasic mamata of Duryodhana (Arrogance of the people have come to sacrifice life for him), Sattvic Mamata of Arjuna (how can I kill my near and dear and be happy). If we live in relative 'I' or illusory 'I' then there can be no fearless existence. So the second step is to get away from the Relative 'I' and live in Real 'I'. Look at everybody with eye of equanimity. Do this by daily chanting (affirmation) the shloka 2.13 *"Dehino sminyatha dehe kaumaram yauvnam jara, tatha dehantarapraptirdhirastatra na muhyati."*

1. **The third step is to realize that this world is a big stage** **and we all are actors**. Our scriptures say that the world is Ram leela. So one has to remain in this world as an actor and perform without entanglement. It’s to realize that we are here to do only actions and the results are in hands of Lord. Whatever we receive are due to our past Karmas – Prarabddha. Such a mindset will lead to building confidence in self and manifesting the quality of Abhayam. So affirmations like “I’m not afraid of life; I’m not afraid of what’s in my heart and I choose to live an authentic spiritual life, no matter what others think or say” are good practices.

In summary, when we live through the body, we start living in utter presence. Elimination of body identification will lead to 'Abhayam'. Unless the first error is corrected of body identification, we may do anything, we may try to develop any divine quality; all is going to be wasteful. Living fearlessly requires certain changes in way we think and act. 'Abhayam' is possible only when one abides in experience of being infinite without any sense of otherness or insecurity.

A person who is living in fear cannot enjoy in this world. A person who is living fearlessly can alone enjoy in this world. This is illustrated by a short story of a Guest who visits the King's palace. The King greets the guest and requests him to have a meal. He tells the guest that the place where the guest will be seated for the meal has a sword which is hanging from the ceiling by horse hair. When guest comes back after the meal, the King asks the guest that "did you enjoy the meal?" Guest replies back "What meal? My mind was always on the hanging sword". Similarly, there are multiple swords that we have attached, which are hanging on our head always. And we continue to live in fear!!

If one wants to lead a life of 'Abhayam' then one needs to cut away these attachments. Just as the bird has to find the courage to let go of the branch in order to fly, so we also must let go of our branches and experience the exhilaration of soaring to the highest potential of our "being". The branches we hold to are our inner attachments - my beliefs, my ideas and my memories. And then there are the outer attachments - my people/possessions/positions and privileges. As long as we hold on to them, we will live in fear of loss and we will never be free. In order to fly and climb spiritual heights, one needs to manifest the divine quality of ‘Abhayam'.

भय ही पतन और पाप का निश्चित कारण है | ~ स्वामी विवेकानंद

Hari Om!!