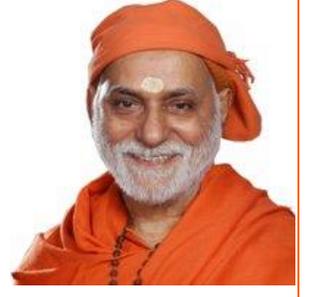


What is *niṣṭhā* ?

prabhāta-raśmiḥ

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Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

Today I thought, as Ma suggested, I will tell you something about *niṣṭhā*. In Bhagavad Geeta, the word *niṣṭhā* appears in the third chapter.

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ।

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ (भगवद्गीता ३-३)

loke'smin dvoividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha |

jñānayogena sāmkhyanām karmayogena yoginām | | (Bhagavad Geeta 3-3)

In this world, Arjuna, altogether there is only one *niṣṭhā* - that *niṣṭhā* has got two facets or phases. Initially it is *karmaniṣṭhā*, thereupon it is *jñānaniṣṭhā*. So he uses the word *dvoividhā niṣṭhā*, the same *niṣṭhā*, but in two stages or two phases. That is the only *niṣṭhā* so far as spiritual wisdom and pursuit are concerned in this world. Initially, the seeker will have to be associated with some karma or the other. When dispassion, discrimination, etc. become sufficiently settled and strong in him, then he can drop the karmic involvement and take to the *jñānaniṣṭhā* hundred percent.

In Bhagavad Gita, in the 18th chapter, Sri Krishna refers to this *jñānaniṣṭhā* as:

niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā (Bhagavad Geeta 18-50)

“I shall tell you the Supreme *jñānaniṣṭhā* in a very brief manner”, he says. And in three verses, he explains it.

What is this *niṣṭhā*? *niṣṭhā* is a crucible, or either one value or a set of values, which you adopt to govern all your activities and pursuits in life. If you are a *niṣṭhāvāna* or a *niṣṭhah*, then you will always find, the mind, the intelligence, the will, everything in you, will always be wanting to ensure that whatever you do, think, and speak is governed by the *niṣṭhā* values. Suppose you say, “I am a *bhaktiniṣṭhah*, then everything will have to be subjected to and governed by the devotional principle. What is the devotional principle? Everything including the world, mind, body, etc. belongs to God. The world is completely Godly and whatever is done by anyone, anywhere, is part of this Godliness.

The mind will not accept it. The intelligence will argue against it. But ultimately you have to arrive at a position that everything is Godly belonging to God.

Suppose you have an adverse plight, you'll have to think that also has been brought about by God. Suppose you want redemption from it, the redemption also will have to be provided for by God. So the complete resignation to the thought and process of devotion, that is called *bhaktiniṣṭhā*.

What is *jñānaniṣṭhā*? *jñānaniṣṭhā* is one where the place occupied by devotion will be occupied by wisdom, *jñāna*. What is that *jñāna*? That "I am the Soul and the Soul is above and it transcends body, mind, intelligence and ego. It is different from the body and transcends mind, intelligence and ego. And this Soul is totally unlike the body. So if the body is born, the Soul is unborn. If the body is growing, the Soul does not grow. If the body will die, the Soul will not die. So I am the Soul, immortal. And as such I am independent, I am free, I am not conditioned by any physical state, mental state, or intellectual state, or ego state." You may have to constantly about this Truth...

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित्।

naiva kiñcitkaromīti yukto manyeta tattvavit |

(Bhagavadgeeta 5-8)

A man who knows the Truth, will never think "I am doing something." At the same time, you will find

पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वासन् ॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्निमिषन्निमिषन्नपि।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥

(भगवद्गीता ५-८, ५-९)

paśyañśṛṇvānspr̥ṣāñjighranṇaśnangacchānsvapāñśvāsan ||

pralapanvīsṛjanṅr̥hṇannimīṣannimīṣannapi |

indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan ||

(Bhagavadgeeta 5-8, 5-9)

This kind of a feeling and realization is not when you bodily keep quiet. No. The body and the senses will be active as regularly as possible. That is why Geeta puts a number of words like *gacchan* - going, sitting, opening the eyes, closing, eating, hearing, seeing. Whatever you do, the senses are interacting with the objects. While this interaction is going on, at that time, while they are on, the knower of Truth will still feel *naiva kiñcitkaromīti*. "I am the Soul and the Soul is non-active; it is all pervading; it is still; there is no vibration or movement in it at any time." So this kind of a notion will always be guiding you. Whenever he slips from it, he will have to bring it back and be fixed on it.

bhaktiniṣṭhā, *jñānaniṣṭhā*. Similarly Geeta uses a word called *yuktaḥ*. What is meant by *yuktaḥ*? Sufficiently controlled, moderated and integrated. What is this integration? The senses, mind, intelligence, ego and the Soul - all of them will have to be integrated. The sensory activities will have to be properly governed and guided by the mind. The mind has to be directed by the intelligence.

The intelligence has to reflect upon the Soul, and always imbibe and carry the wisdom of the Soul. And all these should be together. It is not that they are divergent - the mind in a direction, intelligence in another, ego in another, and senses in a still different direction. It is not so. So, the *niṣṭhā* is something very important. Any human being, if he is going to be worthy of himself, especially, according to moral and ethical and spiritual standards, he must have *niṣṭhā* in his life. There cannot be any waveredness. There cannot be an unnecessary divergence. There must be a convergence in him. This *niṣṭhā* is very important.

I would like to say, that which guides you in your life, governs you in whatever you do is called *niṣṭhā*. This *niṣṭhā* will have to be continued and preserved till the fall of the body. That is called *niṣṭhā*. Without having a *niṣṭhā*, I don't think your inner personality will get refined ... will become sublime ... will become beautiful ... will become orderly and harmonious. Whatever you speak, you have to be careful about. Unless you are careful, there is no point in speaking much. So when somebody asks you, "Will you do it for me?" say "yes" or "no". If you say "yes", do it; if you say "no", get away from it.

You cannot say "yes" and then go on postponing it, postponing it, and postponing it, not doing it. So, there must be some truthfulness, some integrity, by virtue of which whatever you speak is always whatever you think, and is always whatever you will do. So there must be an integration of the physical action and interaction with whatever you speak and whatever you think. This kind of a coordination and integration is not easy. This is what is meant by *yuktatā*.

yukta āsīta matparaḥ (Bhagavad Geeta 2-61), yogayuktaḥ, niṣṭhāvāna, niṣṭhaḥ

That can be *bhaktiniṣṭhā*, *jñānaniṣṭhā*, *vairāgyaniṣṭhā*, *yoganiṣṭhā*, all are *niṣṭhā*s, and the qualities of *niṣṭhā* are always relating to your mind and intelligence. Mind and Intelligence are the two important factors or constituents in your inner personality which have to be refined, integrated, and unified. So the word *niṣṭhā* is very important.

Before coming away from Calcutta, many years back, the thought of *sannyāsa*, embracing *sannyāsa*, and coming away was there. So I happened to read many of our shastras, and then one important point that always appealed to me was Gaudapaada's Kaarika. It says that

तत्त्वमाध्यात्मिकं दृष्ट्वा तत्त्वं दृष्ट्वा तु बाह्यतः ।

तत्त्वीभूतस्तदारामस्तत्त्वादप्रच्युतो भवेत् ॥

(गौडपादियकारीका प्रथममागमप्रकरणम् ३८ ॥)

tattvamādhyātmikam dr̥ṣṭvā tattvam dr̥ṣṭvā tu bāhyataḥ |
tattvībhūtastadārāmastattvādaprac̣yuto bhavet ||

(Gauḍapādiyakārikā prathamamāgamaprakaraṇam 38//)

What is actually the *niṣṭhā*? The upanishads are quite emphatic about speaking about the Soul. There is a reference to *jīvanmukti*, *videhamukti*, *ātmajñāna*, *sthitaprajñā*, *sthitadhī*, so many things are mentioned. Ultimately what is it? Gaudapada says, "Know the Adhyatmic truth." What is that? "That you are the Soul, which is imperishable, unborn, and undying. This doesn't need anything. It is always blissful. Know that!" What is that external truth? The external truth is that this imperishable Soul is apparently associated with a perishable body. The body is perishable. The entire world and its objects also are perishable. The only imperishable element is, if at all, within the body, denoted by the term "I", carrying forth the perceptions. Never foster that the body you are. No. "I am not the body. But the body is perishable. It is available to me to access the Soul."

tattvībhūtaḥ - What should be your feeling about the Soul? "I am the Soul." Become the Soul. To know God is to become God. To know the Soul is to become the Soul.

tadārāmaḥ - Rejoice, delight and exult in this realization that you are the Soul.

tattoād apracyuto bhavet - Never slip or fall from this Truth, from its realization. Always look inside and make sure that your mind and intelligence do not fall from this perception or realization, and then take to *yatīḥ yādṛcchiko bhavet*. Become an ascetic and live on chance. This is what he said.

So these words of Gaudapaada, in the Karika, on Mandyukopanishad, gave me a very good, what shall I say, assurance, or a confirmation, or maybe an exhortation even. This is how one should be a full-fledged seeker of truth.

yatīḥ yādṛcchiko bhavet

So that *yādṛcchikatā* becomes the *niṣṭhā* for a true seeker and a renunciate. Similarly for a *grhastha*, his own *niṣṭhā* is there to look after the family, ensure the welfare of the members of the family, do everything for it, sacrifice maximum, and then go ahead. When the time comes, take to renunciation, which is an obligation in order to fulfil your own life in this world.

Harī Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru.

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