

# The trajectory of Self-evolution

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Imagine a situation where all that we know is that there is a huge treasure buried somewhere in the deep forest. Unless we go deep into the forest for several kilometers we may not be able to access the treasure. Assume that we find a small path leading us into the forest. What happens when we embark in this journey? It is quite likely that after treading through such narrow paths for several days we may find ourselves more or less very close to where we started. This may happen simply because we neither have an idea of the terrain of the forest area nor have any route map to go inside. Also there are no milestones on our way to let us know that we are approaching the treasure in the right direction.

This sounds like the way the game of treasure hunt is set up. The only difference between the treasure hunt and this game is that in our game there is absolutely no clue about which way to head in search of the treasure. If we set on this journey, there will be no guarantee that we will hit upon the treasure (but for a remote and a random chance of this happening). Also it may not be possible to relate the efforts that we put to the progress we have made in approaching the treasure. If we setup a game like this, most of us may want to quit the game as there is no relationship between the efforts that we put and the propensity to discover the treasure. At best what may happen is that after some time we may feel that it is futile to put any more efforts and we will be ready to abandon our efforts.

## **Trajectory for embarking on difficult tasks**

The above situation raises a basic question. How many of us are willing to put serious efforts and hard work into something without knowing where are we heading towards? When we embark on a tough task, we will find the going easier if only two things are in place. The first is the guarantee that we will eventually reach the destination no matter how much effort we put at a time. This would mean notwithstanding the quantum of efforts that we put at any given time it does not go waste. This will motivate us to continue to put efforts even if there are some intermediary and temporary setbacks in our journey. Unless such an unconditional guarantee is made it will be difficult for most of us to embark on the task in the first place. Otherwise, after some initial efforts, the difficulty of the task on hand will heavily weigh our mental make-up and will contribute substantially to discouraging our efforts.

The second aspect is an indication of the likely milestones of the progress we make. The milestones tell us unambiguously that we are making steady progress towards the destination, notwithstanding the pace of our progress. Once we have these milestones, we will feel assured and continue to put more efforts.

For most of us, simple sensory pleasure driven day-to-day living appears much easier, comfortable and under control. It is all about eating tasty food, enjoying some music or TV programmes, chatting with friends for some time and taking care of some of the bodily

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comforts. On the other hand, investing serious efforts for self-evolution and inner development are too demanding, however well-meaning these prescriptions are. The apparently simple day-to-day comforts are too tempting for us to abandon serious efforts towards inner development and self-evolution. As we face even the slightest difficulty or hindrance in this journey our mind will turn towards easy low hanging fruits of simple sensory enjoyments and push the main agenda under the carpet. Therefore in our journey of self-evolution also we need a similar framework.

### **The future trajectory for a person engaged in yoga with faith**

Arjuna (in chapter 6 of *Bhagavad Gītā*) wanted to know why someone will put serious efforts towards the journey of self-evolution and inner development. This is particularly of significance if such a person dies without seeing the fruits of his/her efforts in this *janma* itself. Shri Krishna discussed this issue in some detail in the closing sections of chapter 6. We shall see two *ślokas* from this in some detail.

Shri Krishna pointed to two trajectories in which those who invested in efforts towards self-evolution. Such people would have accumulated a lot of good *karma* in this *janma*. Armed with this credit balance, they will reach heavenly good places (*prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokām*) and stay there for a long time (*uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*) to enjoy the fruits arising out of good *karma*. Once they exhaust the balance that accrued out of good *karma*, they come back to this world again. However, they obtain their birth in a family (*gehe*) endowed with purity of thought and action (*śucīnām*) and peace and prosperity (*śrīmatām*) and continue their efforts in self-evolution and inner development through appropriate yogic practices (*yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate*).

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकां उषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।  
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ 6.41

*prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokām uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*  
*śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate*

The other possibility (*athavā*) that Shri Krishna points to is that the person may be born (*bhavati*) in a family of highly evolved yogic practices (*yogināmeva kule*) and realized personalities (*dhīmatām*). However He said that it is indeed a rare possibility (*etaddhi durlabhataram*) in this world (*loke*) for a person to be born in such a family (*janma yadīdṛśam*).

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।  
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ 6.42

*athavā yogināmeva kule bhavati dhīmatām*  
*etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadīdṛśam*

What is however, common to both the possibilities is the fact that all past efforts will bear fruit and there will be continuity in the efforts. This is the guarantee that Shri Krishna is indicating through these *ślokas*. Although not mentioned explicitly it appears that a person with a considerable progress in this journey the second possibility is the most appropriate condition to continue his/her efforts without any setback.

### **Towards an accelerated journey in our trajectory of self-evolution**

Many of us suffer from the thought that we must see the results of our efforts at the end of the day. This is the major source of mental stress that we experience. In matters pertaining to self-evolution and inner development the problem is even more acute as we do not know the results that we need to look for. This induces impatience and needless speed in doing things, all the time looking for results and looking for signals from all around.

What are we to learn from these assurances of Shri Krishna? If we bring an element of faith (*śraddha*) into this matter, it will relieve us of great pressure that we may face in terms of what if I don't succeed before I die? We will totally stop wasting our time looking around for positive signals, even when some of them may indeed be there. We will also reduce our efforts in running from one God man to another to find out if the inner development is indeed happening to us and what more needs to be done to accelerate the process. There will be no desire to compare and contrast ourselves with others who we think are making progress in self-evolution. We will feel no need for benchmarking ourselves against someone else.

With thoughts taken away from many such distracting issues in our life, the possibility of progressing will only improve even more. The charm of the message of Shri Krishna in these two *ślokas* lies precisely here.