

Brief summary for Tuesday 27th August (10.9 summary session - Part 2)

We must thank all our teachers for their contribution to what has been written below. These are things we have learned and heard from other gracious souls whose teachings are expressed along with our own words/understanding.

If you missed part 156, [check out the notes here](#).

You can find [all the previous notes here](#).

Krishna says ma citta, their citta is fully absorbed in me. Citta is a yogic term and one worth exploring to dive deeper into what Krishna is saying here. The citta is that internal aspect of mind in yoga psychology, that my self, the atma, communicates with matter through. It is a subtle form of matter and in a basic sense we call this subtle form of matter mind, but in yoga psychology we see it has different components. That inner mind can take the shape of the things it is focused on. When the mind takes the shape of a certain thing, then a picture of that thing comes and we identify with the picture.

The term Vedanta gives to this subtle form of matter or the inner apparatus of thought and feeling is the antah-karana. Antah means inside or internally and karana means doing or cause, a means or instrument for accomplishing an act. So the inner organ or inner instrument. This internal subtle body has four constituents: manas, buddhi, citta, and ahankara. Mind, intelligence, consciousness and false ego.

Ahankara or ego gives each of us a sense of false individuality and makes us think of our material experiences as our own. It identifies the Atma (self) with the body as "I". The attachment or identification of the ego, also known as the "I-maker."

Manas or mind is the cognitive faculty that receives information from our various senses, combines these impressions into a sense of the object as whole, and makes a preliminary judgment of whether we like or dislike the object.

Buddhi or intelligence categorizes the object and determines how to respond to it. This process may involve such functions as reason, judgment, and comprehension. The decision making part of the mind. The part that is able to discern truth from falsehood and thereby to make wisdom possible.

Citta is the storehouse of all the mental impressions from this life as well as from previous lives, so sometimes it is referred to as memory. The consciousness where impressions, memories and experiences are stored. The part that deals with remembering and forgetting as well as awareness.

The internal aspect of the mind called citta is like a camera. It is like a mirror. If you take the mirror and reflect it on a particular object or person then you have a perception of that; an identification with that. Through this inner medium of the citta, we are communicating with and influencing matter. We don't ever really touch matter, but through the instrument of the subtle matter, citta, there is a material experience.

We may refer to the four aspects of the internal body as the subtle body, subtle matter or psychic matter. It means in a simple way: awareness, understanding, desire and identification.

You hear a sound: "bong". You are aware of it due to the citta, then you understand the sound due to buddhi. You understand, it is a bell. Then the manas or mind decides whether you like the bell or you don't like the bell. Whether you find it desirable or undesirable. Determination is made by the manas. I like it. I like bell. Then an identity forms based on liking or not liking. This is ahankara. In a simple way, this is how the subtle body works.

Citta is the internal organ of awareness from a yogic perspective. Consciousness is like a light in that it is luminous and it illuminates other

things. The illuminating capacity of the light we call awareness. Our awareness of the physical world, that we have a capacity to have being a unit of luminosity ourselves (as an atma), is facilitated in this world by the citta. It is not spiritual, it is material.

The citta is that internal organ that affords us awareness of our physical and psychic dimensions of the world and so forth. The constant flow of information from our senses to manas (mind) and buddhi (intellect) is compared to waves or ripples (vrttis) that empty into the sea of the citta and thereby disturb its tranquility. The Citta is full of vrttis. Waves on an ocean. Streams of consciousness. Thoughts, pictures, images, ideas, and the tendencies that go with it. All these citta vrttis, they are just going up and down and we are tossing and turning on that ocean.

As vrttis continue to flow into the citta, our intelligence perceives patterns in our experiences and forms impressions about the world. These thought patterns or psychological impressions are the material samskaras stored in the citta. Once these samskaras form, we filter new information through them.

To summarise the process of how we form our material identity, the flow of sense experiences and our thoughts in relation to them are termed vrttis. The patterns we see in similar vrttis and our judgments about them are imprinted in our citta as psychological impressions or samskaras. Psychological imprints. These samskaras in turn form into vasanas or psychological dispositions.

In one sense the words samskara and vasana are synonyms for one another, but vasanas refer more precisely to latent samskaras stored from previous lives, whereas samskaras are those impressions that are actively forming in this life. As such, vasanas operate in the subconscious and serve to mold one's disposition and personality. A behavioural tendency or karmic imprint which influences the present behaviour of a person.

The citta is full of vrttis or streams of images and thoughts. The idea of yoga is to make this citta calm and peaceful like a lake without any ripples, undisturbed by the vrttis. Vrttis come from desires. Thoughts that arise in the citta from desires and attachments, etc. In bhakti, the idea is not just to make it placid. Make it placid and then make a splash at the same time. If you come to a peaceful lake, throw a stone, it creates beautiful ripples. Throw ten stones and it becomes a problem. However, if you throw 108 stones in the exact same place, the concentric ripples are beautiful and grow.

There is a variety and harmony, like in music. Not just one note but many notes together. Unity and diversity in transcendence. Variety doesn't compromise the unity but unifies and decorates the unity. It makes for beautiful possibilities, potentials, and so on. In bhakti we want to make the citta free of vrttis by way of bringing the bhakti vrtti on the consciousness. Bring Bhagavan onto the citta. Not things, but that consciousness who is our source.

This is speaking about bhava in raga bhakti. This shakti that is bhakti is composed of samvit, sandhini and hladini. The knowing and loving element of bhakti make ingress into the jiva and takes over their citta. This is what is being talked about with the term ma cittah, bhava bhakti. In bhava bhakti, the stage of bhakti we reach when we graduate from sadhana or practice, the citta is absorbed like this. This is why smaranam or remembrance is important and becomes more so in later stages of practice. It is about the citta. It is internal. We can chant with the tongue and listen with the ears and so on (and we should), we can use our limbs to engage in arcana (deity worship), but the antakarana is made up of the citta, buddhi, manas and ahankara. This is where the deeper work takes place. Upon attaining bhava bhakti the sadhaka's subtle body is spiritualised. As that bhava is churned into prema, the gross physical body is fully spiritualised as well.

Krishna says ma cittah. Their mind, their heart, their awareness is absorbed in Me. The citta of these devotees becomes ME Krishna says. Their citta becomes bhava. Bhakti takes over their citta. Now our citta is

taken over by something else. So many impressions combined that we call samskaras. Impressions from this life and previous lives due to our interaction with matter. All these impressions are driving us; they are the driving force. Mahaprabhu says start with the citta. We've got to clean that out.

Mahaprabhu, the inaugurator of the kind of chanting we do, He said ceto darpanam marjanam in his Siksastakam. Ceto means the citta. Darpanam means mirror. Marjanam means to cleanse. Sri Caitanya compares the citta to a dirty mirror because the stored impressions (samskaras) in our citta reflect back to us a biased perception of reality. He said this chanting, in the beginning, what it does is cleanses the mirror of the citta. It cleanses all these other images you have on there. We can clean the mirror of the citta and thus remove material samskaras by spiritual practice.

It does it in the context of turning the mirror on Krishna. Instead of the citta being empty and doing away with the vrttis, it is filling it with Krishna. Although the antah-karana is constituted of material influences gathered by the functions of manas, buddhi, and citta, bhakti sadhana (the practice of bhakti) is able to reverse the identity-making process by awakening one's spiritually informed ego, spiritualising one's intellect, and cleansing the mirror of the citta.

Spiritual practice involves imprinting bhakti-samskaras on the citta so that as it is cleansed it also begins forming a spiritual ego by reflecting the image of the atma and its spiritual prospect in the meditative world of Krishna lila. The cleansing takes some time though. It must remove innumerable material samskaras arising from one's thoughts and sense experiences that have been stored in the citta for countless material lifetimes.

We should note that stored samskaras are destroyed only by spiritual practice. The joy of building and ornamenting a temple within our hearts first involves clearing the heart of a jungle of material samskaras. It is a huge task but bhakti is well equipped to take the task up.

We clean the metaphorical mirror of the heart and turn it towards Krishna. This is what we are doing. We want to cleanse the citta of impressions and in the context of putting impressions of bhakti on our citta. If you understand this properly, you will understand that what we are talking about is not a rational process. Don't try to understand all this and arrest it with your intellect. Understand that something is happening that transcends intellectual exercise.

The citta is influenced when we contact bhakti, when we are initiated, when we chant, when we associate with advanced devotees. The citta is getting impressions of bhakti. That is what is happening. That is why it is good to be in advanced association even if we don't know it. It is very practical. We know from material experience that what we associate with, we get impressions from and that determines what we will be like. Without thinking about it, without understanding it, beyond an intellectual exercise, the citta is influenced and cleansed through bhakti. We get rid of material impressions and we get bhakti samskaras. Bhakti samskara will determine our ideal and our ability to pursue the ideal. As the citta becomes cleansed, the impressions that are on it become clear and the ideal starts to manifest.

The practice of bhakti starts with faith. Sraddha. Sraddha means faith, but faith doesn't mean belief. Faith means some experience. Later in the Gita we will see Krishna say that a person is his or her faith. While belief is a mental affair, faith is what moves us and faith comes from experience. So when we have experience through sadhu sanga (devotee association), we get sraddha or faith.

What happens is we start to get Krishna vrtti or bhakti vrtti, impressions of bhakti. When it has matured or reaches a certain pitch, this translates out and is called sraddha or faith. It enables one to tread the path. It works like this. It affects you in such a way that you think and you feel, I have no interest in anything else. This is what I really want to do. This Krishna bhakti, this is what I want to do. Or you think, I do have interest in other things, but that is unfortunate, because this is what I really want to do. You

think, there is nothing I could do that would be better for me. Nothing other than this that is in my best interest. Then one is ready to tread the path.

This is called sraddha. It is this sensibility. On the one hand, there is nothing else that, when I sit down, I think that this is what I really want to do. I may be busy with other things, but if I was to be asked, this is what I really want to do if I am honest with myself. And I have confidence that by doing that, with good guidance, my life will become perfect. Such a person is ready to be plucked from the tree. The way this comes about is through sadhu sanga. Unknowingly you get in touch with this.

It is like a plant. If you take a seed and put it in the ground, when it pops up you say, there it is. There is the cauliflower or broccoli. But the roots were also going down, germinating and so on. We couldn't see that underground. There is some underground work that is going on before we reach this point where I am above the ground so to speak. When I want to tread the path and this is what I am sure is the best thing. This is called sraddha.

That bhakti vrtti will very quickly do away with other vrttis. All those criss crossing waves of vrttis in the mind that make it as disturbed as it is, they will all go away. The example was given of it being placid, still, like a beautiful pond. Throw a stone in and the waves go out and there is movement. Concentric circles and it is also soothing. It is more soothing in a sense.

We come to that place where we become peaceful, but we also want movement. We want a movement that won't be troublesome. Movement that is troublesome is movement that involves taking. The reason it is troublesome is because there is something to pay for that: karma. Movement in the realm of karma is troublesome because we have taken and we owe.

Movement in the realm of bhakti is only giving. There is nothing owed. You have gotten everything because you are giving. Bhakti in a nutshell. The giving is the getting. How to realise this, that the giving is the getting?

Giving is the full idea of getting. It is a universally accepted principle. Play the ramifications of that out philosophically and you come to Krishna. You have to come to where you can give completely. That stomach that can take completely.

Once someone said to one of my godbrothers that in Christianity we have a better conception of God than you do. Christ is the epitome of sacrificing whereas Krishna is the epitome of womanising and enjoying. We have seen how He is depicted. My spiritual teacher responded it is true to an extent, but how should the centre act? And how should the circumference act? The circumference is dependent upon the centre. If there is no centre, there is no circumference. So the circumference should give to the centre, but the centre should be the taker.

Christ is doing the sacrificing but for who? In simple terms, for the Father. For God's will. For God's purpose. If there is a giver, a sacrificer, there has to be a taker on the other end. To depict the taker as a taker, that is to make a philosophical point. Krishna is just the enjoyer. He has no work to do. All the gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon, they all have something to do. Krishna is playing all the time. Who is only playing has all power. He has the power to play.

Krishna bhakti is so nice. There is nothing wrong with Christianity but if you want to talk about sacrificing and the sacrificing component of the Absolute, then we have that in Radha. It is such a beautiful form of love and sacrifice. God is Radha and Krishna.

From sraddha, from faith, from this bhakti vrtti, I have some sense that this is good for me. Whoever has faith becomes a carrier of that. It is contagious. You catch that and pursue that. Krishna is talking about the end of that in this verse. Ma cittah. Their citta is completely consumed by Me. There is nothing on their mind but Me. This happens later. It takes a little time. First you have to practice.

Krishna's milkmaidens (gopis) have some nice prayers in the Bhagavat. They were with Krishna and then Krishna left to do some princely activities. It was troublesome for them because they needed to get Him off their mind. Generally in yoga we are trying to get Krishna on our mind. That is difficult because we have other things on the heart and mind. The gopis were actively trying to get Krishna off their mind. They couldn't do it. What kind of yoga is that? How deeply absorbed they are. The power of bhakti is such that it unites us with the Absolute. Yoga or yuk, connecting with the Absolute. In bhakti it is to the extreme. The gopis regularly tried to get Him off their minds but they could not.

How this happens is that in time, at a certain point, the practices that we do arise out of bhava or deep emotion. Initially we do them out of intelligence, enthusiasm, and maybe even some bliss that comes from good association. This is reflected upon us: abhasa. Abhasa is like a shadow, so bhava abhasa is the term used. You associate with someone or are under the direction of someone who has bhava, who has ecstasy, who is experiencing bhakti in ecstasy (bhava bhakti).

There are three main stages, bhakti in practice (sadhana bhakti), bhakti in ecstasy (bhava bhakti) and bhakti in love (prema bhakti). Love is the churning of the ecstasy and it takes a form, solidifies, etc. Bhakti in practice comes before this. Imitation of a good thing is a good thing. We are associating with or under the guidance of someone who is experiencing ecstasy in bhakti, and there is an abhasa that may come from that. A shadow or a reflection onto us and allows us to have a deep and blissful experience. A place gets burned into your head and you get flashbacks over time. You think of that time and you get a semblance further of bhava. Eventually this bhava comes into us. Sadhana bhakti or bhakti in practice turns into bhava, bhakti in ecstasy.

We are moving in this world under the influence of maya, which is also a shakti. The deluding influence. There is an illuminating influence. That is another shakti. The external shakti is deluding and the internal shakti is illuminating. Bhakti is constituted of that illuminating shakti. We are

sac-cid-ananda. Bhakti is constituted of sandhini, samvit and hladini. They are like sat-cid-ananda on steroids.

Through the practices of bhakti, gradually, firstly, the heart is being cleansed. This mirror or citta is being cleansed. It is being cleansed in the context of cultivating another picture. That starts to come into the consciousness, into the heart. At a certain point we could say formally it turns from bhakti in practice to bhakti in ecstasy.

At the moment, Krishna is often a theological person to us. We are talking about Him theologically and philosophically. But now the theological person of Krishna becomes a real person. I also become a real person. As much as I was a thing, and I started to move away from that, my real personhood starts to come out in relation to Krishna. I start to become a participant in that lila.

It is invisible to others. It takes place within. Krishna is talking about that here. Bhakti comes on the mind or the citta. The example is used of an iron rod that we put in the fire. If I touch you with it, that's not what an iron rod feels like. It is what fire feels like. It has taken on the qualities of fire. There is a point where this mind or citta becomes taken over by the shakti that is bhakti, this internal illuminating shakti. This influence is what lila is governed by, driven by. This divine play is there, so one becomes a player in it; one starts to experience that. Experience that world of consciousness and its possibilities.

We understand ourselves fully, that I am a unit of consciousness, and all the possibilities of consciousness come before us. This is what Krishna is talking about here. Their minds are completely taken over by Me. They can't think of anything else. They are moving only for my purpose.

Citta is speaking of the psychic dimension. Prana means air, life air, like the breath. This refers more to the physical component of our present situation. We have a psychic and physical component. Their citta is absorbed in Me

and their prana, their life, their breath, their body, is also. Ma gatah pranah means the life air is totally permeated. Their life is totally consumed.

This is why Srila Rupa Goswami says don't go there to the Yamuna in the verse we read last week. Krishna will completely take over your whole life. Prana means breath and it implies that we are dependent on things like food to eat, air to breath. Mat gatah prana speaks of Saranagati (surrender). They are dependent on Me like others are dependent on food to live. Their life is dependent on their breath. They cannot live without Me. This is the idea, that they are saranagata. They are surrendered with no other ambition. What was their practice before, the medicine of their practice, now it has become like food. Nobody needs to say take your medicine now. They generally think, when will I eat next? When is lunch? When is dinner? When is breakfast? When can I hear about Krishna? Who can I talk about Krishna to? What did you dream about Krishna last night? This is mat gata pranah. When we arrive here, then ma citta. First, from saranagati (surrender), then will come bhava bhakti. Those whose lives are completely sold out to Krishna, like an animal dependent on their keeper or domestic master. They put themselves completely in His hands. Those people whose minds then become fully absorbed in Me, they conduct themselves like this.

Those who do this smaranam of Me (Ma cittah), minds completely absorbed in Me, thinking of Me in relationship of dasya, sakhya, vatsalya, madhurya, cultivating these rasas internally, those who are saranagatas (which can't just be imitated), they support that by sravanam and kirtanam. They hear from one another.

Paraspara means together, mutually. About Me they are always talking, always chanting. They get together with other like minded people and they hear from them. And those people hear from you about your experience about Krishna.

Bodha implies they talk about philosophy, the philosophy that underlies this love. It means wisdom or intellect. Their intellect is fully absorbed and their

citta is fully absorbed. Their mind, their body, their consciousness, their intellect.

The intellect being absorbed is another way of saying hearing. They are hearing the book or the text. They are thinking about the implications of this. Then they go on to talk about it with others. What do you say? What do you think? Any questions? Any comment? Can we keep it going? Something like that. This they are feeling. So they do hearing.

Katha means they do chanting. Sravanam, kirtanam and smaranam. These are the three principle limbs of bhakti relative to raga bhakti and this is what is being described here. We will explore this concept more in the next session where we will churn this verse a little more.

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GLOSSARY:

Antah-karana: The inner subtle material body / psychic matter

Ahankara: False ego / identification

Manas: Mind

Buddhi: Intelligence

Citta: Internal organ of awareness. Storehouse of impressions, memories and experiences.

Vrttis: Flow of sense experiences and our thoughts in relation to them. Streams of consciousness.

Samskaras: Thought patterns or psychological impressions. Collection of vrttis and judgments about them.

Vasanas: Samskaras from previous lives in subconscious leading to psychological dispositions or behavioural tendencies.