

Chapter Two

Equality — The Chief Support

Equality or Samata

There can be no firm foundation in sadhana without equality, *samatā*. Whatever the unpleasantness of circumstances, however disagreeable the conduct of others, you must learn to receive them with a perfect calm and without any disturbing reaction. These things are the test of equality. It is easy to be calm and equal when things go well and people and circumstances are pleasant; it is when they are the opposite that the completeness of the calm, peace, equality can be tested, reinforced, made perfect.

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Yogic Samata is equality of soul, equanimity founded on the sense of the one Self, the one Divine everywhere — seeing the One in spite of all differences, degrees, disparities in the manifestation. The mental principle of equality tries to ignore or else to destroy the differences, degrees and disparities, to act as if all were equal there or to try and make all equal. It is like Hriday, the nephew of Ramakrishna, who when he got the touch from Ramakrishna began to shout, “Ramakrishna, you are the Brahman and I too am the Brahman; there is no difference between us”, till Ramakrishna, as he refused to be quiet, had to withdraw the power. Or like the disciple who refused to listen to the Mahout and stood before the elephant, saying, “I am Brahman”, until the elephant took him up in his trunk and put him aside. When he complained to his Guru, the Guru said, “Yes, but why didn’t you listen to the Mahout Brahman? That was why the elephant Brahman had to lift you up and put you out of harm’s way.” In the manifestation there are two sides to the Truth and you cannot ignore either.

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Samata means a wide universal peace, calm, equanimity, an equal feeling of all in the Divine.

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Equality is to remain unmoved within in all conditions.

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Equality is the chief support of the true spiritual consciousness and it is this from which the sadhak deviates when he allows a vital movement to carry him away in feeling or speech or action. Equality is not the same thing as forbearance,—though undoubtedly a settled equality immensely extends, even illimitably, a man's power of endurance and forbearance.

Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital; it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you but to look at them with a straight look, free from the distortions created by personal feeling, and to try to understand what is behind them, why they happen, what is to be learnt from them, what is it in oneself which they are cast against and what inner profit or progress one can make out of them; it means self-mastery over the vital movements, anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the rest, not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to act and speak out of a calm inner poise of the spirit. It is not easy to have this equality in any full and perfect measure, but one should always try more and more to make it the basis of one's inner state and outer movements.

Equality means another thing—to have an equal view of men and their nature and acts and the forces that move them; it helps one to see the truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and judgment and even all mental bias. Personal feeling always distorts and makes one see in men's actions, not only the actions themselves, but things behind them which, more often than not, are not there. Misunderstanding and misjudgment which could have been avoided are the result; things of small consequence assume

large proportions. I have seen that more than half of the untoward happenings of this kind in life are due to this cause. But in ordinary life personal feeling and sensitiveness are a constant part of human nature and may be needed there for self-defence, although, I think, even there, a strong, large and equal attitude towards men and things would be a much better line of defence. But, for a sadhak, to surmount them and live rather in the calm strength of the spirit is an essential part of his progress.

The first condition of inner progress is to recognise whatever is or has been a wrong movement in any part of the nature, — wrong idea, wrong feeling, wrong speech, wrong action, — and by wrong is meant what departs from the Truth, from the higher consciousness and higher self, from the way of the Divine. Once recognised it is admitted, — not glossed over or defended, — and it is offered to the Divine for the Light and Grace to descend and substitute for it the right movement of the true consciousness.

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Complete samata takes long to establish and it is dependent on three things — the soul's self-giving to the Divine by an inner surrender, the descent of the spiritual calm and peace from above and the steady, long and persistent rejection of all egoistic, rajasic and other feelings that contradict samata.

The first thing to do is to make the full consecration and offering in the heart — the increase of the spiritual calm and the surrender are the condition for making the rejection of ego, rajoguna etc. effective.

Samata and Loyalty to Truth

No doubt hatred and cursing are not the proper attitude. It is true also that to look upon all things and all people with a calm and clear vision, to be uninvolved and impartial in one's judgments is a quite proper Yogic attitude. A condition of perfect samata can be established in which one sees all as equal, friends and enemies included, and is not disturbed by what men do or by what happens. The question is whether this is all that is

demanding from us. If so, then the general attitude will be one of a neutral indifference to everything. But the Gita, which strongly insists on a perfect and absolute samata, goes on to say, “Fight, destroy the adversary, conquer.” If there is no kind of general action wanted, no loyalty to Truth as against Falsehood except for one’s personal sadhana, no will for the Truth to conquer, then the samata of indifference will suffice. But here there is a work to be done, a Truth to be established against which immense forces are arranged, invisible forces which use visible things and persons and actions for their instruments. If one is among the disciples, the seekers of this Truth, one has to take sides for the Truth, to stand against the Forces that attack it and seek to stifle it. Arjuna wanted not to stand for either side, to refuse any action of hostility even against assailants; Sri Krishna, who insisted so much on samata, strongly rebuked his attitude and insisted equally on his fighting the adversary. “Have samata,” he said, “and seeing clearly the Truth, fight.” Therefore to take sides with the Truth and to refuse to concede anything to the Falsehood that attacks, to be unflinchingly loyal and against the hostiles and the attackers, is not inconsistent with equality. It is personal and egoistic feeling that has to be thrown away; hatred and vital ill-will have to be rejected. But loyalty and refusal to compromise with the assailants and the hostiles or to dally with their ideas and demands and say, “After all we can compromise with what they ask from us”, or to accept them as companions and our own people — these things have a great importance. If the attack were a physical menace to the work and the leaders and doers of the work, one would see this at once. But because the attack is of a subtler kind, can a passive attitude be right? It is a spiritual battle inward and outward; by neutrality and compromise or even passivity one may allow the enemy Forces to pass and crush down the Truth and its children. If you look at it from this point you will see that if the inner spiritual equality is right, the active loyalty and firm taking of sides is as right, and the two cannot be incompatible.

I have of course treated it as a general question apart from all particular cases or personal questions. It is a principle of

action that has to be seen in its right light and proportions.

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It [*samata*] is to face it [*an attack*] without being disturbed and to reject it calmly. Whether one tries to remedy or not remedy should make no difference. Only when one acts against it, one must do it calmly, without anger, excitement, grief or any other disturbing movement.

Samata and Ego

Samata does not mean the absence of ego, but the absence of desire and attachment.

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I have said “samata” shows absence of desire and attachment — the ego-sense may disappear or it may remain in a subtilised and widened form — it depends on the person.

Equality and Detachment

As for the detachment of which you speak, it comes by attaining the poise of the Spirit, the equality of which the Gita speaks always, but also by sight, by knowledge. For instance, looking at what happened in 1914 — or for that matter at all that is and has been happening in human history — the eye of the Yogin sees not only outward events and persons and causes, but the enormous forces which precipitate them into action. If the men who fought were instruments in the hands of rulers and financiers etc., these in turn were mere puppets in the clutch of these forces. When one is habituated to see the things behind, one is no longer prone to be touched by the outward aspects — or to expect any remedy from political, institutional or social changes; the only way out is through the descent of a consciousness which is not the puppet of these forces but is greater than they are and can force them either to change or disappear.

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The Yogic attitude consists in calm, detachment, equality, universality — added to this the psychic element, bhakti, love, devotion to the Divine.

Equality in Times of Trouble and Difficulty

Equality is a very important part of this Yoga; it is necessary to keep equality under pain and suffering — and that means to endure firmly and calmly, not to be restless or troubled or depressed or despondent, to go on in a steady faith in the Divine Will. But equality does not include inert acceptance. If, for instance, there is temporary failure of some endeavour in the sadhana, one has to keep equality, not to be troubled or despondent, but one has not to accept the failure as an indication of the Divine Will and give up the endeavour. You ought rather to find out the reason and meaning of the failure and go forward in faith towards victory. So with illness — you have not to be troubled, shaken or restless, but you have not to accept illness as the Divine Will, but rather look upon it as an imperfection of the body to be got rid of as you try to get rid of vital imperfections or mental errors.

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To be free from all preference and receive joyfully whatever comes from the Divine Will is not possible at first for any human being. What one should have at first is the constant idea that what the Divine wills is always for the best even when the mind does not see how it is so, to accept with resignation what one cannot yet accept with gladness and so to arrive at a calm equality which is not shaken even when on the surface there may be passing movements of a momentary reaction to outward happenings. If that is once firmly founded, the rest can come.

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It is very good that you have had this experience; for this kind of consciousness full of equality (samata) is just the thing that

has to be acquired and the very basis on which a sound Yogic consciousness full of the Mother can be built up. If it can be fixed, then most of the trouble and difficulty of sadhana disappears — all necessary changes can proceed quietly without these disturbances and upsettings which break and hamper the progress. Also in it there can grow a right and clear understanding of people and things and how to deal with them without friction which can make work and action much more easy. Once this consciousness has come, it is bound to return and increase.

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Through an equality gained by strong mental control [*the worldly man is able to bear all kinds of difficulty*] — but that is not *samatā*, it is *titikṣā*, the power to bear which is only a first step or a first element of *samatā*.

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It is not enough to have that equality and silence and freedom only when you are in communion with the sky and sea. It is at all times that you must be able to receive it from above — then there will be a true foundation of the sadhana.

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You must establish a basis of equanimity within — the peace of the inner being which these surface movements cannot touch, — then if they come on the surface, there will be no violent reaction and they can be rejected with more ease.

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The sadhak has to keep his quietude and faith and equanimity in all conditions — even when the higher consciousness and experience are not there.

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One has to proceed on a basis of firm quietude and equanimity with a steady aspiration. It is only if there is a vital excitement that progress becomes a strain and relaxation is needed; for this

demand for relaxation is the vital's counterpart of excitement and its way of relief from it.

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A perfect spiritual equanimity throughout the being is a sure defence against all the perturbations that might come through the environmental nature.

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The difficulty of getting the perfect equanimity is a fact, but not for you alone — it has been so for all of us — it is too universal for you to make it a legitimate ground of discouragement. Nothing is more necessary, but nothing is more difficult. So there is no reason why you should discount my encouragement. My encouragement is given in spite of difficulties and not because I think there are none. Never mind these momentary mishaps — shake off the mood and once more *en avant*.