

## Essence Of Vedanta Is The End Of Vedas

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The Bhagavata Purana describes an annual festival of Indra, the god of thunder, clouds and rain. Cowherds in Braj were busy preparing for the event on the banks of the river Yamuna. Krishna's foster father Nanda explained to him that Indra bestowed prosperity and happiness. He gave water in the form of rain. As a token of gratitude this festival was held in Indra's honour every year. We are pleasing the gods for everyone's welfare, he said.

Krishna, though, firmly believed that we are masters of our own destiny through our karma. The gods have nothing to do with human destiny because destiny was nothing but the accumulated fruit of man's own karma.

Krishna is quoted in the scripture as saying: "Karma alone is man's guru, nothing but karma alone is his Ishwara — Karmeva gururishwara".

Krishna's view was that dependence of man on gods would undermine his faith in his efforts and actions or karma. If you start believing that Indra alone is the source of water you would stop exploring other sources. But if you place faith in your own karma you would dig wells, build tanks, dig canals and waterways for navigation.

Krishna further argues that Man takes birth and finally dies according to his own karma. The sorrow and pain which he suffers is his own doing, as also experiencing happiness and pleasure in life. Even if we consider that there is someone called Ishwara, He can at the most dispense the fruits of human karma. If this is the case what is the need to believe in a deity who cannot change the course of human destiny?

Krishna says in the Bhagavata that utpatti, sthiti and laya are caused by three gunas: sattva, raja and tamas. The universe comes

into being with the union of male and female principles propelled by rajoguna. Clouds shower rain by dint of the same guna. Rain brings food and human life is sustained by it. What has a deity like Indra got to do with it?

This approach rejected any overt role of divinity in human affairs. It placed more faith in human karma as a basic cause of human destiny.

Yoga is nothing but a form of karma. In the Gita (chapter 2) Krishna defines Yoga as the "art of proper action". Yoga is karma or action done skilfully. He did not explain yoga as a way of God-realisation or spiritual attainment.

Krishna's ideal human being is Sthitaprajna. Prajna is mind, intellect, wisdom. Sthita means stable. Sthitaprajna is a person whose mind has stabilised. Whether he has faith in the divine is immaterial, as long as he is in a state of equilibrium while facing the ups and downs of life.

Krishna's Sthitaprajna is not a religious person engaged in rituals. In this state you do experience life but remain unmoved by it because your mental faculties are always in a state of equilibrium. You can even be an atheist.

The Gita (chapter 2:53) describes such a person as shrutivipratipanna. According to one translation it means a person "bewildered by a variety of revealed truths". It may mean false opinions you form through the shrutis, even the Vedas. Krishna moves away from rites prescribed by the Vedas.

Krishna says (Gita 18:66) "Throw away religious cultism". What he means is that one should refrain from religious bigotry that leads to blind zeal, clouding mental faculties. Karma is Ishwara, guru, and therefore yoga.

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