

CHAPTER 10

THE KRISHNA MYSTERY

Bhima managed to muster up some courage. He said, “Brother! Grant me leave and I shall proceed to Dwaraka in an instant and return quick bringing full information of all that has happened to remove your fear.” Even while Bhima was praying on bended knees for permission, the sun set and the lamps started emitting feeble light, from every place.

Meanwhile, a guard from the main entrance rushed in, announcing that Arjuna had come and that he was approaching the Royal apartment. Everyone rose as if they had suddenly come to life. they hurried forward to meet Arjuna, thirsty for news from Dwaraka. Arjuna came in, depressed and despondent, devoid of any sign of joy. Without looking the brothers in the face, he rolled over the feet of Dharmaraja.

Dharmaraja noticed the signs which confirmed his fear and became eager to inquire further. He asked about the welfare of friends and kinsmen at Dwaraka. Arjuna could not rise or turn his head. The brothers saw the feet of Dharmaraja streaming with the tears shed by him and were shocked into immobility. Dharmaraja lost all hold on his mind. He tried to lift Arjuna; shaking him by the shoulders, he shouted in agony into his ear, “Brother! What has happened? What has happened? What has happened to the Yadavas? Tell us about that. Our hearts are about to burst. Save us from terrible anguish.”

But Arjuna did not reply. He could not rise or even spell out words. Dharmaraja, however, continued raining questions on him, inquiring about the welfare of the Yadavas and others, mentioning them by name and asking about each one separately. Arjuna did not react even to this desperate fusillade. He showed no response. He did not raise his face and look on his brothers.

“You need not tell us the rest; but this you must tell us; what has Vaasudeva directed you to tell us, what is his message to us; tell us that,” Dharmaraja appealed. Arjuna could not bear it any longer. The grief that he had held back so long gushed out in full flood. “We have Vaasudeva no more. Oh, we are orphaned. We could not keep Him, we have no more luck,” He said and fell on his face, sobbing on the floor.

Sahadeva grasped the situation and its possibilities and he closed all doors that led into the Hall. He engaged himself in attempting to soothe the distress.

“Alas, that we lived to hear this, what a fate! Oh, Destiny, how could you treat the world so cruelly?” the brothers lamented together. “Lord, why have you deserted the Pandavas thus? Why this breach of trust? We have survived to hear this news; this is the result of the accumulation of sin during many generations,” they asked and asserted. Each one was submerged in his own grief, in his own despair. The Hall was filled with gloomy silence.

It was Dharmaraja who braved it first. Wiping the tears that filled his eyes, he questioned Arjuna in pathetic tones. “Have you news of the condition of the parents, and of Nanda and Yasoda and of the other Yadavas? Tell us about them. They must be broken with the grief of separation from the Lord. When we too have been reduced to this helpless depth, what can we say of them? They must be sunk in unfathomable despair. How can they keep body and breath together? Why refer to individuals? The entire city of Dwaraka must have sunk in the sea of inconsolable grief.”

Dharmaraja was sobbing with sorrow as he pictured to himself these scenes. Seeing him in this condition, Arjuna said, “Brother! The people of Dwaraka are far more lucky than ourselves. We are the least fortunate. We are the only hardened beings that have withstood the shock of the news of the departure of Vaasudeva from this world. The rest left the world even before news came of His departure.”

At this Dharmaraja exclaimed, “Hari, Hari, Oh God! What is it you said now? What is this catastrophe? I do not

understand anything. Did the sea rise and engulf Dwaraka? Or, did any wild barbarian horde invade and overwhelm the City and slaughter the population? Arjuna, tell us what happened. Put an end to our frightful surmises, which raise up awful pictures.” Dharmaraja held the hand of Arjuna and turned his face up in an attempt to make him answer his queries.

Arjuna said, “No, no sea got furious and swallowed Dwaraka; no ruler led his army against that City. Wickedness and vileness grew madly wild among the Yadavas themselves and excited their strife and hate to such an extent that they slaughtered each other with their own weapons.” Dharmaraja asked him, “Arjuna, there must be some overpowering Force that urged the Yadava clan, young and old, to sacrifice themselves in this holocaust. No effect can happen without a cause, isn’t it?” and, waited to listen to the details of what had actually led to the slaughter.

Arjuna paused a little to overcome the grief surging within him and then he began his account of the events. The other three brothers drew near and heard the tragic tale. “I learnt that day that not even the tiniest event can happen unless willed by Vaasudeva. I got fully convinced of this. He is the *Suthradhari*, the holder of the strings that move the puppets and make them act their roles; but He seats Himself among the spectators and pretends He is unaware of the plot or story or cast. The characters cannot deviate a dot from His directions. His Will guides and determines every single movement and gesture. The varying emotions

and events on the stage by which the drama unrolls itself affect the hearts of those who witness the play; but they do not cause a ruffle in the heart of the Suthradhari.

“He decides what this person should say or that person should do and He prompts in them the appropriate words and deeds. And the consequence of the Karma performed and inherited by each individual from previous lives also adds its quota to this destiny. The Yadavas who are our own kith and kin were spiritual personages, full of devotion to God as you all know well. Perhaps, some day, some sage had cast a curse on them; or else some day some dire sin was committed by them. For, how else can we explain this sudden upset in their history, this unexpected tragedy?

“They performed a magnificent Sacrifice (Yajna) at Prabhasakshethra. For seven full days, the Yajna was celebrated in unprecedented pomp and style; the Valedictory Offering in the Sacred Fire was poured in true Vedic grandeur in the Presence of Lord Krishna Himself, the participants and Priests performed later the Ceremonial Bath in Holy Waters. The Brahmins then received their share of the Yajna Offerings and distributed it to the Yadavas also. Everything went off, in an atmosphere of perfect calm, contentment, and joy.

“Towards noon, Brahmins were served with food. Afterwards, the Yadavas seated themselves in long lines to partake of the feast. During the feast, as ill-luck would have it, some of the Yadavas filled themselves with drink and lost

self-control so much that they mistook their own kinsmen as their foes. They started quarrels which raged into fights of severe fierceness. It must have been in the Plan of God, for however unruly and vile a man might be, he would not slaughter with his own hands his own children and parents. Oh, the horror of it! In the general melee that ensued, son killed father, father killed son, brother slew brother, son-in-law killed father-in-law, father-in-law killed son-in-law, in one insane orgy of blind hate, until there was no one left alive!” Arjuna could not speak further; he leaned against the wall. He held his head, bursting with pain and grief, between his pressing palms.

Dharmaraja heard this account with anguish and amazement. He placed his hand on Arjuna’s back and said, “What is this that you are saying? It is an unbelievable story. Since your tongue will never speak untruth, I am forced to put faith in its correctness; or, else how can we ever imagine such a sudden transformation of character and such a lightning massacre? I have never seen or heard anywhere else such intensity of mutual friendship as marked the Yadava clan. Besides they do not deviate in the least from the path marked out for them by Krishna. They will not deflect from it even on the most frantically furious occasions. That such people should, in the very Presence of Krishna, regardless of all canons of good behaviour, beat one another to death is strange indeed. Such a turn of events comes only when the end of the world is near.

“Well, Arjuna! Could not Krishna stop the fight and advise them to desist? Did He attempt to bring about some compromise between the factions and send them back to their places? Krishna is the greatest adept in the arts of war and peace, is it not? That He did not try to stop this tragedy makes me wonder more, at this awful tale of destruction.”

Dharmaraja was lost in sorrow. He sat with his head resting on his clenched fist, the hand placed on the knee; his eyes were so full of tears that they rolled continuously down his cheeks. Arjuna tried to speak some words of consolation. “Maharaja! You are aware of the Glory and the Grace of Krishna, but yet, you ask questions and entertain doubts, whether He did this or that; what can I say in reply? The fate of the Yadavas is the same as the fate of our own clan. Weren't we and Kaurava brothers? We had kinsmen who were well-wishers on both sides and we had this same *Shyamasundar* in our midst, but yet, we had to go through the Kurukshetra battle. Can we not see that this war would not have happened, had He willed it so? The forty *lakhs* (100,000) of warriors who died on the field of battle would not have been lost then, isn't it? Did we ever wish to rule over this land after slaughtering all these? Nothing can ever happen without His express command. No one can cross His Will or act against His command.

“This world is the stage on which each one acts the role He has allotted him, on which each one struts about for the time given by Him and each one has to obey His

instructions without fail or falter. We may think in pride that we have done this or that by ourselves, but the truth is, everything happens as He wills.”

When Arjuna concluded, Dharmaraja thought aloud. “Arjuna! Many motives dragged us into the Mahabharatha War. We tried our best through diplomacy and peaceful means to regain our kingdom, our status and what was legitimately our due. We bore patiently many insults and discomfitures. We had to wander in the jungle as exiles. Through Divine Grace, we escaped many a plot laid to kill us. They tried arson and poison on us. They heaped public ignominy on our Queen. They broke our hearts by systematic ill-treatment.

“Still, there are but three reasons for the final fight everywhere: wealth, dominion, and woman. But take the instance of the Yadavas. They had no such reason to fall out among themselves in mortal combat. It appears as if Destiny was the only overpowering reason for this cataclysm.

“The Yadavas were rolling in plenty. They had no lack of grain or gold. And their wives? They were models of virtue, faithful and devoted. They never deviated from the wishes or commands of their husbands. They could not bring insult or discomfiture to their lords from any quarter. How then could faction and internecine strife raise their heads so suddenly among them?”

Arjuna replied: “My dear brother! We see the outer circumstances, the processes which result in the final event and in our ignorance we judge that this set of causes produced these effects. We guess the nature of emotions and feelings from what we gauge from events. But circumstances, events, emotions and feelings are all simply ‘instruments’ in His Hands, serving His Will and His Purpose. When the moment comes, He uses them for His Plan, and brings about the fight He has willed. He is the embodiment of Kala or Time; He comes as the Master of Time and, through some denouement of the plot, He finishes the drama. That which brought about Birth brings about Death, too. He finds reason for both, in the same degree. Do we seek to know why there was a birth? Then, why seek to know why Death occurs? It occurred; that is enough. Reason-finding is a superfluous occupation.

“He causes beings to create beings and He causes beings to end beings. Bodies get born, bodies die; nothing more serious happens at birth or death. This has been taught us often by Vaasudeva. Why then should we doubt or deviate from the steady courage He has sought to give us?

“You might say that it is not just, that He who caused us to be born should be the person who kills us. Between birth and death, man too has some capacity to earn *punya* and *papa*, merit and demerit and this has some influence on the course of events. Within these limits, the Lord plays the game of football with birth and death, and life.

“Birth and Death are two high cliffs between which the River of Life flows. The Force of Atmic Faith (*Atma Sakthi*) is the bridge that spans the chasm and for those who have developed that Force and Faith, floods are of no concern. With *Atma Sakthi* as their safe support, they can reach the other bank, braving all dangers. Oh, King! All this is but a grand puppet show by that Master Director. The Yadavas today, like the Kauravas yesterday, had no individuality of their own; there is no use blaming either.

“Can this material body, composed of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—move or act without His Prompting? No. It is His Amusement, to cause one to be born through another and to cause one to die through another. Else, how can you explain the fact of the snake laying eggs and warming them to bring out the young and then, eat the very children thus born? Even among them, it eats up only those whose term is ended, so to say, not every one of the snakelings. The fish that live in the waters get caught in nets when their term ends; why, the small fish get eaten by the big ones and they in their turn get swallowed by even bigger ones. This is His Law. The snake eats the frog, the peacock eats the snake; this is His Game. Who can probe into the reasons for this? The Truth is: ‘Every single event is the decision of this *Balagopala*.’

“We cannot sense the mystery of His Play. We have failed to understand it. There is no profit in worrying over that failure, now. With that deluding Human Form, He moved

with us, mixed with us, dined with us, behaved as if He was our Kinsman and well-wisher, our friend and guide, and saved us from many a calamity that threatened to overwhelm us. He showered His Divine Mercy on us and solved for us the toughest problems that defied solution, in remarkably simple ways. During all this time that He was near and dear to us, we were carried away by pride that we had His Grace; we did not try to fill ourselves with that Supreme Joy, to dive deep into the Flood of His Grace. We sought from Him mere external victory and temporal benefits. We ignored the vast Treasure with which we could have filled our hearts. We never contemplated on His Real Reality.

“He guarded us as if we five were the Five Vital Airs (*Panchaprana*) for Him. He came forward to help us and lead us in every undertaking, however small; and He fulfilled it for us. Brother! What shall I say? We might be born many times over, but we can never get again such a Friend and Kinsman. I have received from Him love much more intense than that of a mother, a love which no mother can confer.

“On many an occasion He bore the burdens of the Pandavas as His own and to relieve us of the bother, He used to plan measures within minutes and carry them on to final success. It is due to the gift of His Grace that we Pandavas have survived in this world to this day.

“Why repeat a thousand things separately? Every drop of blood coursing through these veins is but a drop from the shower of His Grace. Every muscle is but a lump of His

Love. Every bone and cartilage is but a piece of His mercy. Unable to understand this secret, we strutted about, boasting ‘I achieved this,’ and ‘I accomplished this.’ Now it has become clear to us that without Him we are but bags of skin.

“Of course, the fate of all men is the same. They forget that the All-ruling, All-knowing Almighty plays with them as puppets; they assume that they are the actual doers and enjoyers; like me they are plunged in ignorance of the basic truth. When we who are far-famed heroes and warriors are in this sad plight, what can we say of ordinary folk who have no chance of awakening into this Jnana?

“For this, the sad experience I had on my way is the ‘direct proof.’” Thus said Arjuna and fell back, leaning against the chair that was behind him; for he could not bear the separation from his life-long Support and Guide, Krishna.