

## CHAPTER III

**I**t is more useful for the student to search for his own faults with a view to remove them, than to seek excellences so that he might exult over them. A student who does this can progress fast. He is not dragged behind by fear or anxiety. He can move on, with faith in the Lord, on whom he has placed all his burdens. He reaches a state of mental calm, which is the sign of the true aspirant. Arjuna arrived at that stage, and then, Krishna gave him (and, through him, to all mankind) the teaching that confers immortality.

For whom was the Geetha spoken? Just think of that for one moment. Milk is not taken from the udder for the sake of the cow, for cows do not drink their own milk. Arjuna, the calf, has had his fill. Krishna is ever-content and He needs nothing, not to mention, milk! For whose sake was it that the Upanishads were milked by Krishna to get

this Geetha? Krishna says it is for the “*Sudhee-jana*,” the persons who have “*Su-dhee*.” Intelligence that is moderated by Goodness. Intelligence that is controlled by Virtue.

What of the place where the Teaching was given? Between two opposing Armies! Therein lies the great significance of the Geetha. On one side, the forces of Dharma, on the other, the forces of Adharma. On one side, the Good, on the other, the Bad. Between these two pulls, the Individual, unable to decide which course to adopt, weeps in despair. The Lord speaks the Geetha to all such and grants them light and courage. Do not think that the distress of Arjuna was just *his* affair, *his* problem and no more. It is a universal human problem.

For, Arjuna sought from Krishna, not *Preyas*—the pleasing, worldly glory of power and status and wealth; but *Sreyas*, the lasting glory of full Joy. He said, “*Preyas* is available for human effort. It can be won by human activity or karma. Why should I crave from You what I can win by my own endeavour? I am not so foolish as all that. Grant me the *Sreyas* that is beyond the reach of my effort. *Sreyas* is not the fruit of karma. It is the fruit of Grace!” Thus Arjuna rose to the height of *Saranagathi*, absolute Self-surrender, the state called *Prapaththi*.

Much can be said of *Saranagathi*. Man surrenders his dignity and status to other men for various purposes in life: wealth, fame, possessions, pomp, power, etc. But rarely does he get the chance to surrender to the Lord for the sake

of the Lord! How can he get the urge, so long as he craves for the *Aadheya* (entire creation based on the five elements) and not the *Aadhara* (The Universal, pure existence)? He longs for the object, but does not long for the base on which the object rests. How long can a baseless object satisfy? He wants the gift, not the giver—the created not the Creator, things from the Hand, but not the Hand! He is running after a non-existent thing. Can there be an object without a pre-existent Cause? No, if there is One, it can only be the Uncaused God. It is, therefore, sheer ignorance to surrender individuality for the sake of the transitory products of action, the “caused” rather than the Cause. Surrender rather to the Basis, the Cause and the Origin of All, the *Sarveswara*. That is genuine Saranagathi (surrender).

There are three types of Saranagathi: *Thavaivaaham* (I am Thine), *Mamaiva-thwam* (You are mine) and *Thwam-eva-aham* (Thou art I). The first affirms, I am Yours, the second asserts, You are mine and the third declares, You and I are One, the Same. Each is just a step in the rising series and the last is the highest step of all.

In the first stage, *Thwam-eva-aham*, the Lord is fully free and the Devotee is fully bound. It is like the cat and the kitten. The cat shifts the kitten about as it wills. The kitten just mews and accepts whatever happens. This attitude is very gentle and is within easy reach of all. In the second, *Mama-eva-thwam*, the devotee binds the Lord, who is to that extent “un-free.” Surdas is a good example of this attitude. “Krishna! You may escape from my hold, from the

clasp of these arms; but you cannot escape from my heart, where I have bound you,” challenged Surdas. The Lord just smiled and assented; “I am bound by My devotees,” He asserts, without any loss of self-respect. The devotee can tie up the Lord with his Prema (love); by Bhakthi (devotion) that overwhelms and overpowers his egoism. When man is full of this type of Bhakthi, the Lord will Himself bless him with everything he needs; His Grace will fulfil all his wants. Remind yourself here of the promise made by the Lord in the Geetha: “*Yogakshemam vahaamyaham*,” (I carry the burden of his welfare).

Next, about the third stage: “*Thwam-eva-aham ithi thridhaa*”; this is the *Avibhaktha Bhakthi*, the inseparable devotion. The devotee offers all to the Lord, including himself, for he feels that he cannot withhold himself. That completes his surrender.

The *Thwam-eva-aham* feeling is the Adwaithic (non-dualistic) Saranagathi (surrender), based on the realisation that all this (*Idam*) is Vaasudeva and nothing less, nothing else. So long as the consciousness of the *deha* or body persists, the *bhaktha* (devotee) is the servant and the Lord is Master. So long as the individual feels that he is separate from other individuals, the *bhaktha* is a part and the Lord is the Whole. When he progresses to the state when he gets beyond the limits of the body as well as of “I” and “Mine,” then, there is no more distinction; *Bhaktha* and *Bhagawan* are the same. In the *Ramayana*, Hanuman achieved this third stage through *Bhakthi* (devotion).

This same subject is mentioned in the seventh sloka of the second chapter of the Geetha. The word *Prapanna* (one who has surrendered to God), used there indicates that Arjuna has the qualification, the discipline of Bhakthi. Moreover Arjuna had analysed his own faults and recognised them as such. Again, he had awakened from Thamas (dullness). Krishna appreciated this, the moment it happened. He said, “You are called *Guda-kesa* for you are *Jitha-nidra*: *Nidra* or sleep is the characteristic of thamas. How then can this thamas overwhelm you now? It is just a temporary phase. It can never bind you fast.”

If Arjuna has, by his efforts, won control over his senses and earned the name Gudakesa, Krishna as Hrishikesa, is the Presiding Deity of all the senses! On the field of Kurukshetra both are in the same chariot, one as learner and the other as teacher!

What exactly is the cause of all grief? It is the attachment to the body that produces grief as well as its immediate precursors: affection and hate. These two are the results of the intellect considering some things and conditions as beneficial, and some other things and conditions as not. This is a delusion, this idea of beneficence and malevolence. Still you get attached to objects that are considered beneficial and you start hating the others. But from the highest point of view, there is neither, the distinction is just meaningless. There are no two at all. How can there be good and bad then? To see two where there is only One, that is *Maya*, or Ignorance. The ignorance that plunged

Arjuna into grief was of this nature—seeing many, when there is only one.

Absence of the knowledge of the identity of *Thath thwam* (the word ‘*thathwa*,’ used to mean principle, enshrines this great philosophical doctrine) is the cause of all ignorance. If this truth is not learnt, man has to flounder in the ocean of grief. But if it is learnt and if man lives in that consciousness, then he can be free from grief. Many a prescription is recommended, used, publicised and repeated parrot-like by all kinds of quacks. But they do not go to the root of the matter. They are balms applied to the eye to cure an ache in the stomach. The disease and the drug have no co-ordination! The ache must be spotted and diagnosed and the drug must be such as will remove it. Then alone can it be cured. Narayana is the only medical expert who can do so. He has diagnosed Arjuna’s illness correctly and decided on the treatment.

The wound that will not be healed by external application of balms has to be cured by internal remedies. So Krishna prodded Arjuna with queries. “Why do you weep like a coward? Is it because Bhishma, Drona and the rest are about to be killed? No, you weep because you feel they are ‘your men.’ It is egoism that makes you weep. People weep not for the dead, but because the dead are ‘theirs.’ Have you not killed until now many who were ‘not yours’? You never shed any tears for them. Today you weep, since you are under the delusion that these whom you see before you are somehow ‘yours’ in a special way. When

you sleep, you are unaffected by this feeling of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’; so you are unaware what happens to your body or the bodies of these, ‘your men,’ or to your possessions, items which you carefully remember while awake. ‘Mine’ is the possessive case of ‘I’ and so it comes in its trail. The fundamental ignorance, my dear fool, is the identification of yourself with something that is not you; viz. the body. *Deha* (material body) is *An-atma* (non self); you believe that it is the *Atma* (Divine self). What a topsy-turvy bit of knowledge is this. To cure this *Ajnana*, I must administer the medicine of *Jnana* (wisdom) itself.”

Thus, Krishna started giving him, in the very first instance, the most effective drug, *Jnana*. This is detailed from the eleventh sloka of the second chapter. This is a key sloka for all students of the Geetha. Krishna condemns outright two objections that were haunting Arjuna for long, saying that the destruction of the body does not mean the destruction of the *Atma* and that he is grieving for those he need not grieve for. “*Prajnaa-vaadaam-scha bhaashase*: You talk like a wise man. You say this is *Dharma* and the other is *Adharma*, as if you know how to distinguish them,” said Krishna.

Here attention has to be paid to one fact. Arjuna is suffering from two types of delusion: (1) Ordinary and (2) Out of the Ordinary. To confuse the body with oneself and pine for the body as if something has happened to you is the Ordinary Delusion. To discard one’s own *Dharma*—(in this case, the *Dharma* of a *Kshatriya* [warrior]) as *Adharma*

is a delusion Out of the Ordinary. Krishna destroys the first and removes the second. The first is dealt with from the 12th to the 30th sloka of the second chapter; Krishna has to tackle the second as a special problem and explain in eight slokas the idea of *Swadharma* or His own *Dharma* to Arjuna. These are collectively called *Dharmashtakas*. *Swadharma* does not bind and produce further birth. It can lead on to Liberation. It has to be done as *Karma Yoga*, without attachment to the fruit. Towards the close of the second chapter, there is also the description of the successful aspirant who has steadied himself in a purified intellect, the *Sthithaprajna*.

Krishna continued His Discourse: “Arjuna! Think for awhile who you are and what you are proposing to do. You declare you know everything but yet you weep like a helpless woman. Your words proclaim that you are a *Pundit*, but your acts reveal you as a simpleton. Hearing you, one would infer you are a (wise, liberated man); but seeing you, one would find that you are an *Ajnani* (ignoramus)! Your condition is disgusting, to say the least. Well, if I take you to be a *Pundit*, I cannot reconcile that view with your tears; for *Pundits* do not grieve over life and death. If they grieve, they are no *Pundits*. *Pundits* have the capacity to discover what is fundamentally true. Those who know the secret of the physical, and the mystery of the spiritual, such alone can be called *Pundits*. How then can they weep over either the embodied or the disembodied? They will not forego their inner calm, whatever the stress or distress.

“The fully ignorant and the fully wise—both will have no grief over the living or the dead. Do you weep because the bodies of Bhishma and Drona will fall, or is it because the Atma of those two will be destroyed? For the bodies, do you say? Well, are tears any good? If they are, certainly, people would have kept the corpses of their dead and revived them by their weeping. No, it can never be. Immerse the body in vessels of *Amritha* (Divine nectar); it cannot come back to life. Why then weep over the inevitable, the unavoidable?”

“You might say that you are weeping for the Atma, the spiritual core. That reveals greater foolishness. Death can never even approach the Atma. It is eternal, self-evident, pure. It is evident that you have no *Atma Jnana* (Atmic knowledge) at all.

“Again, for the Kshatriya, fighting is Swa-dharma. Do your duty, regardless of other considerations. You ask, ‘How can I cause the death of Bhishma in war?’ But they have all come to get killed and to kill. You are not killing them in their homes. Of course, it is Adharma to kill them in their homes, but on the battlefield, how can it be against Dharma? I am sorry you have not got this much of *Viveka* (wisdom).

“It is enough. Get up and get ready for the fray. Why slide to the ground under the weight of all this useless ego? The Lord is the Cause of all, not you. There is a Higher Power that moves everything. Know this and bend your will to it.

“Bhishma, Drona and the rest have come like true soldiers and Kshatriyas to engage in battle. They do not weep like you. Consider that. They will never grieve or withdraw. Arjuna! This is the testing time for you, remember! Let Me tell you this also. There was never a time when I was not. Why? There was never a time when even you and all these kings and princes were not. *Thath* (That, the Divine) is the Paramatma (Creator, universal soul), *Thwam* (this, yourself) is the *Jivatma* (embodied being), and both were the same, are the same, and will be so forever. Prior to the pot, in the pot and after the pot, it was, is and will be mud.”

Arjuna was shocked into awareness and wakefulness by all this. He said, “May be You are God; may be You are indestructible. I weep not for You, but for such as us: come yesterday, present today, off tomorrow. What happens to us? Please enlighten me.”

One point has to be carefully noticed here. *Thath*, that is, the Godhead is *Nithyam*, Eternal; everyone accepts it. But *Thwam*, the individual too is Godhead! (*Asi*). It too is eternal, though it cannot be grasped so easily or so quickly. So, Krishna elaborates this and says, “Arjuna! you too are eternal as the Absolute. Seen apart from the limitations, the Individual is the Universal. Prior to the appearance of the jewel, there was just gold; during the existence of the jewel, there is just gold; and after the name-form of the jewel has gone, the gold persists. The Atma persists in the same way, body or no body.

“Though it is associated with the body, the Atma is unaffected by the Gunas and the Dharmas; that is to say, it has no qualities and characteristics. You are unaffected by the changes that the body undergoes when you grow from the infant to the boy, from the boy into the youth, from the youth to the middle-aged man and thence to the old man. You persist, in spite of all this. It is the same when the body is destroyed, the Atma persists. So the hero will not pine for the change called death,” Krishna said this with such emphasis that the chariot shook!