

## CHAPTER VI

In seventeen verses, from the 56th to the 72nd, Krishna described in the second chapter the characteristics of the Sthithaprajna, and the excellence of that stage. Then, saying that He Himself had established Jnana Yoga for the Sankhyas, and Karma Yoga for the Yogis, as means of attaining Liberation, He spoke of the importance of karma.

Everyone has to bow to the demands of Nature and engage himself in karma. It is inevitable. Therefore, Krishna said, “Do the *Karthavya Karmas*, karma that is your bounden duty. Being engaged in karma is to be preferred to not being so engaged. If you desist from karma, the task of living becomes difficult, nay, impossible.

“The karmas that do not bind by consequence are those referred to as *Yajna* (sacrifice). All the rest are bondage-producing ones. Therefore, O Arjuna, give up all

attachment and engage in acts, as if they are each a Yajna, sacrifice dedicated to the Lord.” Krishna taught Arjuna the origins of karma, the roots from where the urge to do karma sprouts and grows. He taught them so clearly that Arjuna’s heart was really moved and modified. “The Vedas emanated from God; karmas emanated from the Vedas; from karma originated Yajna; from Yajna, Rain; from Rain grew food; from food came all living beings. This is the cycle that has to be accepted and honoured.

“Consider this, O Arjuna, I have no need to do any karma, no not anywhere in the three worlds. I am under no compulsion. Still I am ever engaged in karma. Think of this. If I desist, the world will be no more. Have steady faith in the Atma; then dedicate all acts of yours to Me: with no desire for the fruit thereof, no egoism and no sense of possession or pride, engage in battle,” said Krishna.

If the wheel of Creation is to move smooth, each one has to keep on doing karma. Whoever he is, he cannot get round this obligation. Even he who has achieved the highest Jnana has to observe this rule. Eating and drinking, intake and release of breath—these too are karmas. Who can exist without these acts?

“You derive benefit from the world and from the community and so some activity on your part is their due. This *Brahmaanda* (Supreme Bliss), this *Viswa* (creation), is really speaking a huge workshop. Every human being is a limb in this organisation. The limb is allotted a task in

accordance with its structure and it must find its fulfilment in doing that particular work. Whatever work one has been allotted has to be done as an offering to God. There is no single thing in the Universe that does not engage itself in this great task. Plant and insect, stone and stump, wind and rain, heat and cold, if each of these does not work as per Plan, the world cannot subsist. The Sun and the Moon carry on their routine tasks. Wind and fire have to perform their duties without demur. If the earth and sun refuse to do the allotted duties what is to happen to the world? So, there is no one who is karma-less, but yet with body! It is only when each performs his task without fail, and with care, that the wheel will move quick and smooth.

“You may wonder why Jnanis (liberated persons) should still do karma; not only you, but many others may be worried at that statement. Well, people usually follow the ideal set by those in higher levels. Their acts form the basis of Dharma for all. If Jnanis are inactive, how are ordinary mortals to save themselves? They have no guide and so they lose themselves in the easy paths of sensory pleasure. The duty of the wise is to foster the right and to practise it before others, so that they too may be prompted to follow, drawn by the hope of becoming as contented and as joyful as they are. The wise have to do and get done, see and show, so that the rest might be persuaded to follow the example set by them.

“Arjuna! pay attention to just one fact! How warm is your body now? It may be about 98 degrees. How did it

happen? Because, the Sun bears many million times this heat at that distance, is it not? Now if the Sun feels that it will not put up with all that fire and becomes cool, what will happen to mankind? Again, if I desist from karma, this vast Viswa Karma of working in and through this Universe, imagine what will be the fate? That is why I am engaged in karma, remember. Not that I derive any profit thereby, or get any good, or any fruit.

“Almost everyone in the world is bound by the rule of karma. But people are so immersed in ignorance that they are unaware of their own moral or intellectual status and of the secrets of karma. Such can be saved only by being inspired by the example of the great. That is why the Jnani has to be engaged in activity. He has to remove the sloth and delusion of ordinary men. So all have to obey the rule of karma, without any deviation.”

Does the aeroplane stay on above, denouncing the earth below? Those who have earned the right to travel in it cannot fly towards it and into it! Therefore, to take them in, it has to come down at the places where they gather by previous arrangement, and then soar high into the sky with them. So too, though the Jnani has no desire or urge to do karma, he comes down into the region of karma and helps those who would not have otherwise put their talents into proper use. Even great personages like Janaka performed Dharmakarmas with this view. Aswapathi too did likewise, to save the rest from sheer idleness or wickedness.

Then, in reply to another question of Arjuna, Krishna said, “Kama (desire) is the root cause of all evil” and He elaborated on its nature, cause and cure. “He who is bound by the Deha-atma-buddhi (the false idea that he is just this body and nothing more) can never hope to conquer karma. One must acquire the Brahma-atma-buddhi (the awareness that he is just Brahman and nothing less) in order to be sure of victory. All acts must be performed in the spirit of dedication to the Lord. The Universe must be identified with the Form of Vishnu, the Universal Transcendent.”

In this chapter, three important subjects have been clarified: (1) Everyone has to do karma for if this is not done, the world will come to nought. (2) The karma of the great is the ideal that the rest have to keep in view. (3) Almost all in the world are bound by the obligation of karma.

Krishna most graciously made Arjuna imbibe these lessons. Not satisfied with this, Krishna told him that Jnana is the final goal and gain of karma. Jnana is the treasure that is won by man’s efforts to purify the mind, and to earn the Grace of God. Jnana not merely grants Ananda but is itself the seat of Ananda. Thus, He initiated him into Jnana Marga, the path of Jnana.

This subject is carried on till the fifth Chapter. Jnana Yoga shines as a precious jewel amidst the Teachings of Bhagavad Geetha Sastra. Krishna declared “*Nahi Jnanena sadrisam pavithramiha vidyathe*” (nothing as holy as Jnana is known here)! Even later, in the 7th chapter, He has said, “*Jnani thwathmaivame matham*” (I consider the Jnani as

Myself) the excellence of Jnana Yoga has been similarly extolled in many other contexts also in the Geetha.

That is why Jnana Yoga is believed to be the most fruitful of all spiritual sadhanas. All Sastras find their fulfilment in Jnana alone. Dhyanam (meditation) is just the contemplation of the Jnana Swarupa, which is one’s real nature. All are in you, you are in all. You have to get this conviction fixed in your consciousness, by means of analysis, discrimination and intellectual exploration. You have to isolate and dismiss from the consciousness the impressions of the senses, the mind, the intelligence, etc. These have nothing to do with the Atma, which you really are. The Atma is unaffected by any subject or object. Even if the senses, mind, intelligence, etc. are inactive, that inactivity will not affect the Atma! To know the Atma as such an entity, unaffected and unattached, is the secret of Jnana.

Every single act of yours must be carried out with this Jnana (wisdom) as its background. That awareness of the Atma will guide you in both the out-moving and in-drawing paths, the Pravritthi Marga and the Nivritthi Marga. It will not block action but fill it with purpose and meaning. It will build up faith and moral life, it will take man to the realm of deliverance along the road of Nishkama Karma, the renunciation of the *fruit* of action, and not of *action* itself.

For the achievement of Liberation, Jnana is the direct road. Therefore, it is declared to be incomparably sacred. And, naturally, it follows that Ignorance is indubitably the most despicable. “See the Universal in the Particular; see

the Particular in the Universal; that is the essence of Jnana,” said Krishna. “All Kshetras (bodies, fields) know only one single Kshetrajna (knower of the field or body). And, who is that? The Atma, that is to say, you yourself, your own self! Know this and you become a Jnani. So realise that the Atma is Paramatma (creator, universal soul); that is the Vijnana (wisdom).” Krishna, who is All-knowing, began to teach Arjuna this Yoga, in order to cast off all doubt from his mind.

“Arjuna! I taught this sacred Jnana Yoga to Surya, then it was handed down from one generation to another till Manu and Ikshvaku and from them, Rajarshis came to learn it. Then it (got) lost in the world. That ever-existing Yoga had to be restored to the world, and so I had to come.”

You will not fail to notice the discrepancy of the Yoga being described as ever-existing and the statement that it was lost! Of course, the statement was not made without thought. The indestructible is here spoken of as having been destroyed! It is called indestructible or *Avyaya* for two reasons. Its origin is the Veda, which is free from decline. This Yoga on account of passage of time, neglect and disuse, was forgotten. That is to say, it disappeared, it was lost to view, it declined. The statement does not mean anything more. Bringing it into life means, bringing it once again into use, not creating it *ab initio*. “Lost to view” is the sense in which the word “destroyed” is used in a general way. That is how you have to interpret it, for the Lord will never devise a thing that will suffer “destruction.”

The reference to Surya also merits consideration. The people of Bharath are intimately associated with the Sun-god. The heroes of Bharath, the Kshathriyas, are from the beginning attached to Surya. Even for ordinary men and women, Surya is so highly sacred that He has been raised to the status of the Great Guru. The sacred scriptures and legends of India have not assigned a status of similar glory to anyone else. It is a unique position that Surya occupies. Why, for the whole world, the Sun is the visible manifestation of the Lord. And the Sun is the source of Time. Surya is the father of Time (*Kala*) as the Sastras declare. The Sun limits and regulates the number of years each one lives. The Sun diminishes every day a fraction of the allotted span. So the Sun is the supreme arbiter, the maker of man’s destiny. Whether one wills or not, every deed of his is performed under His auspices and dedicated to Him.

Above all, consider the service the Sun does to this world! That is within the daily experience of all. Everyone is witness for that. The Sun is the source of all life, plant and animal, upon this planet. Without His rays, it will be a desolate waste. He draws up into the sky the waters of seas and lakes, and from the clouds He pours rain on the crops. He is ever the *Dharmadevatha* (God of Righteousness), scattering His rays equally on all.

Surya is the great *Thyagi* for unequalled renunciation. He is the great Yogi. Without a second’s thought of His own glory or of rest, He performs His Duty without thought of reward. He is humble and steady in work. The service

He does something no one else can fulfil. The happiness He contributes is something no one else can confer. But He has no pretensions to pride. He moves above unconcerned with the consequences of His energising mission of service.

Imagine the patience with which the Sun puts up with all that extreme heat for the sake of the world and of humanity. It is He who keeps the human body warm and comfortable. This material body is so full of energy and intelligence on account of the Solar Energy that it imbibes. If the Sun is idle for a moment, the world will be consumed in flames. Instead, He is fostering the world. He feels it as His Mission, His Purpose, and not as His Service.

It is only in the karma that is your very nature that you can have fortitude. If it is just an assumed duty, you will find it difficult to put up with the troubles and travails. Assumed karma is called *Asahaja Karma* and karma that is the expression of one's genuine self is *Sahaja Karma*. Now, *Sahaja Karma* will sit light and *Asahaja Karma* will always be a burden. *Asahaja Karma* will induce conceit, or the feeling "I am the doer"; so it will result in exhaustion or elation, disgust or pride.

Think of this one point; when a man is well, no one will inquire about his health. But if he is stricken with illness or sorrow, everyone will inquire why and bombard him with anxious queries. Why this anxiety? Man is fundamentally happy and healthy. His nature is joy. That is his *Sahajaswabhava* (innate quality). So when he is happy and

healthy, no one is surprised or worried. But grief and sorrow are strange to his makeup. They are the result of a delusion that has overwhelmed his nature. So people get worried and they set about finding out how he got so deluded.

The Sun is teaching us that when one is oneself, there will be no exhaustion or elation, no disgust or pride. The task of Surya is not something imposed from outside and taken up under compulsion. That is why it is performed systematically and smoothly. He is also exhorting mankind to use the time that He creates and allots, fully and fruitfully, not merely for living comfortably and safely, but for living a moral and elevating life, worthy of the destiny that is man's. Now, you can realise why the Geetha was first taught by the Lord to the Sun. He is the great Karma Yogi, the great Nishkama Karma Yogi.

Krishna is now teaching this indestructible Geetha Sastra to Arjuna, the representative of Man at the crossroads. He chose *him* for he has the same excellences, is it not? Reflect on that for a moment. If Arjuna was not a vessel endowed with such virtues and splendour, Krishna would not have decided to use him as the recipient of the Geetha. The Lord will not give gifts to the undeserving. Arjuna had the qualities that were needed for receiving the teaching and he was chosen.