

CHAPTER VIII

“The Avathar Purushas have no merit or demerit accumulated in former births, which like ordinary mortals, they have to pay off in this birth. Theirs is a Leela (divine play), a birth taken on. The goodness of the good and the wickedness of the bad provide the reasons for the Avathar of the Lord. For example, take the Avathar of Narasimha. The merit of Prahlada and the wickedness of Hiranyakasipu combined to cause it. As a result of the coming of the Lord, the good will be happy and the bad will suffer. The Avathar, however, has no joy or grief, even when it is enveloped in the body it has assumed. The Avathar is not constituted of the five elements; it is *Chinmaya* not *Mrinmaya*, spiritual not material. It can never be disturbed by egoism or the sense of ‘mine’ and ‘thine.’ It is untouched by the delusion born of ignorance. Though men may mistake an Avathar as just human, that does not affect the nature of the embodiment.

It has come for a task and it is bound to accomplish it.

“I shall tell you what that task is. It is protecting the Sadhus, punishing the wicked and supporting Dharma. By Sadhus, I do not mean monks and ascetics, who are indicated generally by that word. It means Sadhu Guna, goodness, uprightness, virtue; and these can be possessed by animals and even insects. Really speaking, the promotion of Sathwa Guna (purity) is the best means of fostering Sadhus. The Avathar is the embodiment of this sacred guna and so It fosters it, wherever it is found. But since Sanyasins (ascetics, monks) are striving to earn it, they are called sadhus and supposed to be specially blessed by the attention of the Lord.

“But they are not the only Sadhus. All those who follow *Sadachara* (good conduct), who have *Sadseela* (good practices), who adhere to Sathya (truth) who yearn for the *Sannidhi* (Presence) of Sarveswara (the Lord), who observe *Saddharma*, who consider *Sarvajana* (all) as *Samaana* (equal); all of them are Sadhus. Such characteristics are found among the animals and birds even. In the *Ramayana*, Jatayu (eagle) was saved as a result of this Guna. That is the reason why the elephant was blessed and the monkeys were given a chance to serve and be blessed with His Grace. The same reason prompted the Lord to bless the squirrel. A Sadhu is not made by a string of beads, an ochre robe and a stick in the hand. The clothes one wears and the language one has on the tongue do not decide who is a Sadhu and

who is not. It is the Guna that settles it. All animals have the potentiality to be good. So fostering goodness in all is the best means of ensuring the welfare of the world.

“Next, the punishment of the wicked. Those who transgress the limits set for each type or genus of animals, those who indulge in *Akarma*, *Anyaya* (injustice, negation) and *Anaachaara* (immorality), and who roam about caught in the coils of *Ahamkaara* (ego) have to be punished. Those who have allowed *Rajo Guna* and *Thamo Guna* to predominate and *Sathwa Guna* to be extinguished in them and who have thus lost all trace of *Daya* (compassion), *Dharma* and *Daanam* (charity) have to be punished.”

Thirdly Krishna informed Arjuna that the fostering of Dharma is also His work. The word *Sadhu* has another meaning, important in this context. A *Sadhu* is he who does not deviate from his duty, whatever the temptation and whatever the danger. The wicked revel in creating trouble for such men and indulging in acts contrary to the injunctions of the *Sastras*. What then is the establishment of Dharma? It is acting strictly according to the Dharma laid down in the *Sastras*; spreading among people the glory and the splendour of a life lived in Dharma; stabilising reverence towards the *Vedas* and the *Sastras*, towards God, *Avathars* and *Paramapurushas* and the *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) that leads to liberation and a blessedness beyond this life. It is called *Dharma-samsthaapana*, *Dharma-rakshana* or *Dharmoddhaarana*. “Whatever I do, it is all for this high

purpose. Nothing is for My own advancement. Those who know this secret can escape birth and death,” said Krishna.

To feel that the Lord is away, afar, separate from you—that is called *Paroksha Jnana*. To feel that the Lord, who is immanent in the Universe, is in you also as the *Atman*—that is *Aparoksha Jnana*. If all activity is moved by the dedicatory spirit, the *Chiththa* (inner consciousness) of man can be rendered pure. Only those who have pure consciousness can recognise the Divine Nature of the Lord’s *Janma* (birth) and *Karma*, said Krishna. All cannot so recognise them as Divine. Yet, no one should avoid contact with the Lord come in human form. Try your very best and utilise every chance. There should not be any lapse on your part.

This is emphasised in the tenth sloka of this Chapter, where the signs of the *Adhikari*, the deserving candidate, are given. “Arjuna! Not all can understand the *Divyathwam* (divinity) of my *Janma* and *Karma*. Only those who are free from attachment, hatred, fear and anger; only those who are immersed in the Name and Form of the Lord; who know of no other support than Me, who are sanctified by the knowledge of the *Atma*; only these can grasp it. Those who seek Me undeviatingly, possessing *Sathya*, *Dharma* and *Prema* (love), will reach Me. This is absolutely true, take it from Me. Give up any doubt you may have.

“Men render the inner consciousness impure by dwelling on the objective world through ignorance. They

take delight in mere sabda (sound), rasa (taste), gandha (smell), etc. When they seek objective pleasure they are tempted to secure the objects that give the pleasure. Foiled in the attempt, they get restless, hateful and afraid. Fear robs man of his mental resources. It creates anger that cannot be easily pacified. Thus, desire, anger and fear are aroused one after the other and those three have to be removed. Arjuna, revolve in your mind these facts and then act. Become reasonable. Have faith in My words.”

Arjuna heard all this and asked, “Nandakumara! Why can You not make this sacred and high stage available for all persons? You have announced Yourself as *Premaswaroopa* (Embodiment of Love) and *Dayamaya* (Embodiment of Compassion). Why then all this partiality? I must declare it as favouritism, for you endow this stage only on Jnanis and deny it to the Ajnanis. I would even say that the Ajnani, the ignorant person who has no discrimination, the person who swings like the pendulum of the clock from one thing to another, merits your Grace more. The Jnani knows everything. He is aware that the *Jagath* (transitory world) is *Vishnumayam* (Divine power to delude). Why then should it be made further clear to him? They have no more need of Grace.”

Krishna replied, “Yes. Men are usually overwhelmed by such doubts. You represent humanity and so your doubt is humanity’s doubt. By clearing your doubt, I can also announce My Message to Humanity. Listen. Those who seek Me are of four types. One is always worn out by ills

that affect the body. He is the *Aartha*. Another is worried by the struggle for prosperity, power, self, property, posterity, etc. He is the *Artha-arthi*. A third yearns for the realisation of the Atma, reads the scriptures and sacred texts, moves ever in the company of spiritual sadhakas, acts along the lines laid down by the sages as *Sadachara* (good conduct), and is always motivated by the eagerness to reach the *Sannidhi* (Presence) of the Lord. He is the *Jijnasu*. The fourth is the Jnani. He is immersed in the *Brahma Thathwam* (Brahma Principle).

“The first, the Aartha, worships Me only when he is in difficulty and suffers from grief or pain. When he prays to Me, I hear it and I satisfy him only in relation to that particular difficulty, that particular grief or pain. So too, when the Artha-arthi prays for riches or position or power or high status, I listen and award him only the particular thing he craves for. The Jijnasu is blessed with chances to do Nishkama Karma (desireless karma), with a proper Guru as guide, with an intellect that is sharp enough to discriminate between Atma and Anatma, and thus helped to achieve the Goal. I bless him so that he is saved from distractions and helped to concentrate on the single aim of Liberation.

“I am like the Kalpa Vriksha (Tree of Heaven, wish-fulfilling tree). My task is to give each what he asks for. I have no prejudice and no favouritism. Not even the shadow of cruelty can touch Me. No fault can be imputed to Me. The rays of the sun fall equally upon all that are directly in their way. But if something is behind something else, inside

a closed room for instance, how can the Sun illumine? Cultivate the higher yearnings and you receive the higher stages. The fault lies in the aspirant and his aspirations, not in the attitude of the Lord.

“Arjuna! man gives up revering and seeking Me, who is his very Self. How foolish of him! He is not anxious to reach Me. On the other hand, he pursues lesser attainments that are temporary, untrue, transitory. I shall tell you the reason for this strange and stupid behaviour. *Karmopasana* (Work with an eye on the fruits) gives quick results. Man seeks only what is available here and now, in a concrete form, capable of being grasped by his senses. Man, generally, finds Reality too difficult to attain. So he is carried away by the attraction of flimsy pleasures, away from the full joy derivable from transcending the senses.

“The achievement of Jnana is the inner victory; it is won after long and arduous struggle. Men do not generally have the needed patience. Moreover, they attach greater importance to the gross body, the *Sthula Sarira* itself. The body can be happy only with objects that cater to the senses. So men do not seek Jnana, which will send them to paths where the senses are unwanted. They yearn for Karma Siddhi (Fulfilment of worldly ambitions), not Jnana Siddhi. Those who are caught by urges of the intellect are fewer than those who are caught by the senses and their urges. The sensual minded are drawn by the obvious, the patent, the perceptible and the physical. The few who are spiritually minded yearn for the imperceptible, invisible Bliss of merging with the

Universal Absolute. Theirs is the correct path. *Karmopasana* (Work with an eye on the fruits) is the incorrect path. My task is to make clear to all the value of Dharma Karmas which have to be adopted after due discrimination.

“But Arjuna, there is one method of reviving Dharma, the task for which I have come. That is *Chaathur-varnyam*, the organisation of the Four Varnas (caste) based on the Karma (work, dedicated activity) and the Guna (attributes) of the People. The Varna system is essential for the functioning of the world. Its significance is not easy to grasp. Some mislead themselves into the belief that it causes unrest and divides men from one another. If the problem is reasoned out, then, the real truth will become clear. To conclude that the Varna system is not beneficial shows only ignorance. Such a judgement creates confusion. I have established this organisation in order to promote the welfare of the world, i.e., *Loka Kshema*. The Varnas help man to engage himself in acts that he finds congenial and to fulfil himself. Without it, man cannot earn happiness for a moment.

“For successful activity, Varna is the very breath. Those endowed with the Sathwa Guna, who have understood the Brahma Thathwam, who foster spiritual, moral and progressive living, who help others to earn the Bliss of visualising the Reality of their Nature, are the *Brahmins*. Those who stand by and guard the sound political system, law and justice, as well as the welfare and prosperity of the country, and the moral order laid down for the people; and

who keep under control the wicked and the immoral, and come to the rescue of the weak and the distressed—these are the Kshatriyas.

“Those who store and supply, within proper limits, to the people at large the wherewithal for happy physical living are *Vaisyas*. Those who lay the foundation for human welfare by service activities, and provide the strength and sinews are *Sudras*. I have laid down these Four Varnas in this manner. If these Varnas carry out their assigned duties, humanity will attain all-round progress. As a result of this system, a division of service is brought about. The individual leads a happy, harmonious social life, without any grief or fear. This Varna system is an example of the Grace that the Lord has bestowed on Bharath.

“The people of Bharath are indeed blessed, since they look upon every act as but the execution of His Order and as leading to His Grace. This point has to be reflected upon. It is an important issue. The Divine Command is now in great danger of being set at naught. If the rulers change the face of this Varna system, the world will not have the welfare they strive for. Many people argue and teach that Bharath came to this sorry condition only because of this Varna system. But these folk have to sit quiet for some little time and ponder over the question: ‘Has the country survived as a result of this system? Or, has it come to this sorry condition because the system has weakened?’ Then on the basis of their conclusion, they can advise the discarding of the Varnas. When people find fault with the Varna organisation,

without such impartial investigation, their opinion cannot be valued.

“Of course, it is a fact that the system has veered from the proper path and taken to moving in wrong directions. This has been noted by many great men. But that cannot be sufficient reason to throw it overboard. For the reason that the leg is doing the work of the hand, and that the head is performing the function of the feet, it is not advisable to cut off hands and feet. Attempts have to be made to set things right, rather than destroying the very system itself.

“The Varna system is not the cause of all this confusion and unrest. The fault lies more in the haphazard manner in which it has developed. It became a plaything in the hands of all types of people. So it lost its original symmetry and harmony. This system is essential, not merely for Bharath, but even for the world. In countries outside India this system is not absent. The name may be different, the working is the same. There also there are four classes—the *Sikshaka Varga* (Teachers), the *Rakshaka Varga* (Kings), the *Vanig Varga* (Businessmen) and the *Sramika Varga* (Servants). But in Bharath, the Vargas are decided by birth. In other parts of the world, they are decided by karma, the work each is engaged in. That is the distinction.

“Now, among the Brahmins who have been honoured by being established in the very first cadre, many can be found who have left off the path and strayed into mean ways. So too, in the fourth Varna, the Sudras, many can be

found who are moved by holy ideals, high spiritual aspirations, and who are striving to attain purity of mind as a means of realisation. Just because these things are possible, it is not proper to conclude that the Varna organisation of human society is useless.”