

CHAPTER X

“Dhananjaya! Only he is entitled to be called a Pundit, who has seen clearly the distinction between karma and akarma. If he has only stuffed in his head the matter contained in books, he is not a pundit. The Pundit must have an intellect which grants the vision of the Truth—*samyag-darsana*. When that vision is gained, all karma becomes ineffective and harmless. The fire of Jnana has the power to consume and burn karma.

“Some people say that a Jnani must perforce suffer the consequences of *Prarabdha Karma* (that which we are presently undergoing); he cannot escape from it. This is a conclusion that other persons draw, not the experience of the Jnani himself. To those who watch him, he might appear to be reaping the fruit of past karma. But he is absolutely unaffected. Whoever is dependent on objects for happiness, or pursues sensory pleasures, whoever is motivated by

impulses and desires, is bound by karma. But those free from these cannot be affected by the temptations of sound, touch, form, taste, smell and other attractions of the senses. Such is the true Sanyasin. He is unmoved. The Jnani is supremely happy by himself, without the need to be dependent on other things. He finds karma in akarma and akarma in karma. He may be engaged in karma but he is not affected in the least. He has no eye on the fruit of actions.

“You may ask how he is able to do that. Listen: He is ever content. The contented man is free, he does not depend upon others. He is unaffected by the feeling of agency. He is content with whatever happens to him, well or ill. For he is convinced that the Lord’s Will must prevail. His mind is unshaken and steady. He is ever jubilant. Want of contentment is a sign of the Ajnani. Those who give up the *Purusharthas* (goals of human life) and walk the path of sloth, how can they be said to be happy, whatever happens? Contentment is the treasure that is won by the Jnani. It cannot be won by the Ajnani who piles one wish on another, and builds one plan after another, who pines perpetually, worries himself and sets his heart ablaze with greed.

“The Jnani is not mastered by the dualities of Joy and Grief, Victory and Defeat, Gain and Loss. He is *Dwandaatheetha* (beyond duality). He scorns hatred and never allows it to affect him. Both the *Swaroopa* (form, reality) and the *Swabhava* (essential quality) of the Atma guarantee that It is unaffected. It is *Asanga* (not of the world). It is uninfluenced by anything that is not Atma. It has neither

birth nor death, hunger nor thirst, grief nor delusion. Hunger and thirst are qualities of the *Prana* (vital essence, breath). Birth and death are characteristics of the body. Grief and delusion are affections of the mind. So, Arjuna, do not assign any status for these. Know yourself as the Atma. Give up all delusion and become unattached. Be like the lotus leaf in the marshy lake of Samsara (change); do not get smeared with the mud around you. That is the sign of Asanga; in it but yet outside it. Be like the lotus leaf, not like the porous ‘blotting paper’ that gets tainted with whatever it comes in contact with.

“Do *Abhisheka* (ceremonial bath of deity) to the Atma-linga, with the pure waters of your own pure *Chittha-vritthi*, mental impulses. When the *chittha* (consciousness, heart) moves in one direction and the *indriyas* (senses) move towards another, the person is doubly confused. So, keep attachment afar. When that is done, whatever you do becomes a sacrifice, a Yajna. Whatever you speak becomes a holy manthra. Wherever you plant your foot, the place is rendered holy.

“Arjuna! I shall tell you something about Yajna also. Listen calmly, controlling all agitations of the mind. People talk of *Dravyayajna*, *Thapoyajna*, *Yogayajna*, etc. If a pit is dug, the earth excavated becomes a mound by its side. There is no pit without a mound. When riches accumulate in one place, there must be corresponding charity too. The proper utilisation of one’s riches is *Dravyayajna*. What is proper utilisation? Gift of cows, of lands, of skill are included

under *Dravyayajna*. Again, when all physical activities, mental activities and speech are utilised for *sadhana* (spiritual discipline), then, it becomes *Thapoyajna*. How can it be *Thapas* (asceticism) if you are laid down due to weakness arising from missing a meal? Doing karma but yet remaining unbound by karma—that is *Yoga Yajna*.

“And *Swadhyaya Yajna*? It means studying with humility and reverence the sacred scriptures that lead you to liberation or *Moksha*. This study is the means to repay the debt due to the Rishis who put the Scriptures together. The next one is *Jnana Yajna*. By this is meant not the knowledge of the visible and perceptible but the *Jnana* of the invisible, the imperceptible, (the *Paroksha Jnana*, not the *Aparoksha Jnana*). Listen to the *Sastras* that are related to this *Jnana*, study them and ponder over the teachings in your mind, weighing the pros and cons. This is called *Jnana Yajna*. *Jnana* means also the eagerness to realise the Atma *Thathwa* through inquiry from elders and those who have spiritual experience.

“Arjuna! You may ask Me about the means whereby this can be acquired. Those anxious to get it have to go to realised souls and win their grace; and studying well their moods and manners, they must await the chance to ask for their help. When doubts arise, they should approach them calmly and courageously. Studying bundles of books and delivering hours-long discourses and wearing the ochre robes do not make the genuine *Jnani*. *Jnana* can be won only from and through elders who have experienced the Absolute. You

have to serve them and win their love. How can doubts be ended by the study of books? They only tend to confuse the mind.

“Books can at best inform, they cannot demonstrate by direct proof. Only the realised can convince by direct demonstration. So they have to be sought after and served reverentially. Then only can this precious Jnana be won. No amount of sea water can slake one’s thirst. No amount of Sastric study can solve doubt.

“Besides, the aspirant for Jnana must have not only Bhakthi (devotion) and *Sraddha* (steady faith) but he should also be simple and pure. He should not grow impatient and irritate the teacher. Haste ruins chances of success. Whatever the Guru tells should be practised and experienced. You should not try out every single item of advice that you hear or learn, thus changing the sadhana as fancy takes hold, even from the desire to become a Jnani quick. Doing thus, you will only end as a complete Ajnani. Why, it is sometimes preferable to remain an Ajnani; for such people tend to end up in madness. Therefore, one has to be very careful.

“You must endeavour to please the Guru and win his favour by obeying his orders and serving him lovingly. You should have no other thought than his welfare and happiness. Give up all else and win his Grace. Then, Jnana is yours. Instead, if you are disobedient and critical through egoism and want of faith, you cannot be blessed by the vision of the Truth. You will be plunged in gloom.

“As the cow takes her calf near when it sees it, so the Guru will draw the *Sishya* (disciple) to his presence and give him the milk of Grace. The Sishya ought to be of sterling character. Then, just as a clean piece of iron will be attracted by the magnet, he will receive the immediate attention of the Teacher.

“The qualification of the Guru can be inquired into by the Sishya; in fact, he ought to. For, he needs a Teacher. Arjuna! I shall describe the characteristics which a Teacher should possess. He must have not merely book-knowledge, but the wisdom derived through direct experience. He must be established in the Reality, that is, in *Brahmanishta* (steady contemplation of Brahma). Mere Sastra Jnana is incompetent to grant *Mukthi* (Self-realisation). It can at best help in gaining Bhukthi (a living). Why, there are some who by sheer *Anubhava Jnana* (knowledge gained through your own experience) have won Mukthi, without a grain of Sastra Jnana. But such persons cannot save disciples who are pestered by doubt. They cannot understand their difficulties and sympathise with them.

“There are lakhs (100,000) and lakhs of persons who are Gurus in name only. All those in gerua (ochre) are now ‘Gurus.’ Even those who smoke *ganja* (drug like marijuana) are ‘Gurus.’ All those who indulge in discourses are ‘Gurus,’ all who write books are ‘Gurus’! Wandering over the country and learning to argue, no one can claim the name. He should possess the power through direct experience to uplift the disciple and put him on the track of sadhana prescribed by

Sastras. Of what use is argumentative skill? Whatever is said and done by him must have the sanction of the Sastras. Spouting of things imbibed from books in long speeches which move the listeners from one wave of excitement to another does not make a Guru. They may be heroes in lecturing, but they are zeros in sadhana and in the mastery of the spiritual field. They can be schoolmasters, but they cannot confer Bhakthi or point out the way of Liberation. These ‘Gurus’ attain only that stage and the Sishyas who resort to them get just that. They have as much value as the books which contain all the matter that they pour forth. Many unwary Sadhakas are attracted by the magic of words and the verbal gymnastics of such showy ‘Gurus.’ They may be called Pundits. They may give lectures. But just because of this, they do not become entitled to grant the boon of Jnana. That can be done only by Avathars (the Lord come in human form), *Devamsa-sambhuthas* (Divine Beings), and *Thatwavidis* (Masters of Wisdom) who have realised the Absolute. and Jnanis who have attained the summum bonum of spiritual sadhana and tasted the Supreme Bliss. It is no use claiming a fraction of this or that experience. The experience must be of the Full and itself full. Those who know only a fraction will take you up to a certain point and leave you there, in the middle region, like Thrisanku, who was hung between heaven and earth.

“The Guru must study the virtues and qualities of the aspirant who seeks his guidance. He must not be moved or prejudiced by his wealth, or position. He must be able to

judge the aspirant’s heart, his real nature. The Guru must act as the alarm clock to the disciples who are caught in the sleep of Ajnana. If the Guru is a miser and the disciple is a sloth, woe be to both.”

Thus Krishna taught Arjuna very clearly the qualifications of both the Guru and the Sishya, their conduct, scholarship, virtues and weaknesses, activities and characteristics. These valuable gems of advice were addressed not only to Arjuna, but to the whole world. All who seek to become either Gurus or Sishyas must pay attention to these precious words.

The natures of the Gurus and Sishyas of today are in keeping with the low standards of today. In ancient times a Guru could be found only with great difficulty. Thousands of eager seekers searched in the forests for them, for they were so rare and so precious. Now, Gurus are available at every street corner by the dozens, but true Sishyas are declining in number. Both are deteriorating fast, and each is becoming as the other, suited to the other’s level. The Gurus have been reduced to the necessity of feeding and fostering Sishyas; not that it is wrong, when the Sishyas are worthy. But the Gurus are afraid of the Sishyas deserting them and so they have to cater to their tastes and fancies. The Sishyas claim to be *Guru-puthras* (Sons of Gurus), to be *Ashramavasis* (residents of hermitage), *Sadhakas* (aspirants), etc., but their lives are untouched by the Ashram atmosphere, sadhana or Sadhu qualities. They have not even elementary gratitude to the Guru. They mouth slogans like

Krishnarpanam, but their acts reveal only *Deha-arpanam*!
(dedication to the Body, not to God).

Besides, the Sishyas lay down conditions! Their desire for recreation, easy living and comfort has to be honoured by the Guru. The Guru must ensure the happiness of the Sishya without insisting on any sadhana, or causing any loss or worry. Moksha must fall like a fruit right into their lap. The Guru should not recommend any rigorous discipline or rule of life. The Guru must respect all the wishes of the Sishya. If he goes against him, the Guru is immediately given up and condemned.