

## Chapter XII

Creation is saturated with God; the basis and the based; name-form; Om as the life-breath of the Vedas; merging the mind in Om; all forms of strength should be free from desire and attachment; believe that He is the Cause, that it is all His play.

Krishna continued, “The lower world about which I speak is just a manifestation of My power, My glory, My remember. Seen superficially, with the gross vision, the universe might appear as many, but that is wrong. There is no many at all. The yearning of the inner consciousness (*anthah-karana*) is toward the One; that is the real vision. When inner vision is saturated with wisdom, creation will be seen as *Brahman* and as nothing else. Therefore, the inner consciousness must be educated to interest itself only in wisdom.”

Creation (*jagath*) is saturated with the Lord of creation. Creation is nothing but the Creator in that form. All this is God (*Isavaasyam idam sarvam*), it is said.

Although there is only One, it appears as many. Let us remind ourselves of an example with reference to this statement of Krishna. We walk in the thick dusk of evening when things are seen but dimly; a rope lies higgledy-piggledy on the path; each one who sees it has their own idea of what it is, although it is really just a length of rope. One steps across it, taking it to be a garland. Another takes it to be a mark made by running water and treads on it. A third person imagines it to be a vine, a creeper plucked from off a tree and fallen on the path. Some others are scared that it is a snake, right?

Similarly, the One Highest *Brahman*, without any change or transformation affecting It, being all the time It and It only, manifests as the world of manifold names and forms. The cause of all this seeming is the dusk of delusion (*maya*). The rope might appear as many things —it might provoke various feelings and reactions on various people; it has become the basis for variety. But it never changes into the Many; it is ever One. The rope is ever the rope! It does not become a garland or a streak of water or a creeper or a snake. *Brahman* might be misinterpreted in a variety of ways, but it is ever *Brahman* only. For all the various interpretations, *Brahman* is the One Real Basis. Like the string for the garland, *Brahman* is the string that penetrates and holds together the garland of the souls. Like the foundation for the building, *Brahman* is the foundation for the structure of creation.

Note this. The string and the structure are not visible; only the flowers and the building are evident. That does not mean that the string and structure are non-existent! In fact, they support the flowers and the building. Well, you can know of their existence and their value by a little effort at reasoning. If you do not take that trouble, they escape your notice. Reason, examine, and you can arrive at the string that holds the flowers together and the foundation hidden in the earth. Do not be misled by the thing being contained (*adheya*) into denying the holder, the container, the basis, the support (*adhara*). If you deny it, you miss the truth and hold on to a delusion. Reason and discriminate; then believe and experience.

For the seen, there is an unseen basis; to grasp the unseen, the best means is inquiry and the best proof is experience. For those who have experienced, no description is needed.

The nature and qualifications of individual beads are not important at all; they should not distract our attention. Concentrate rather on the inner reality, the basis of all the beads, the *Brahman*; that is the essential quest. There may be many varieties of flowers in a garland, even trivial or flashy or nice pure ones (*thamasic, rajasic, or*

*sathwic* individuals) but the string, the basis, the highest *Atma* is independent of all of them. It is unaffected; it is truth, eternal, without blemish.

Flowers cannot become a garland without the string; so too, *Brahman* unites all souls. You cannot separate the two in all things and substances; *Brahman* fills everything. The five elements are but Its manifestations. It is the inner motive, unseen by those who look only at the surface. It is the inner motivator, in other words. That is why Krishna said, “I am taste (*rasa*) in water; I am effulgence, brilliance (*prabha*) in the sun and moon; I am the *Om* (*pranava*) in the *Vedas*; I am sound in space; I am heroism, adventure, and aspiration in humanity.”

Let us consider the topic of *Om* (*pranava*), which has just been mentioned. Krishna said that *Om* is the very life of the *Vedas*, didn't he? The *Vedas* are reputedly “beginning-less”. *Om* is spoken of as the very life-breath of the *Vedas*, which are themselves beyond all beginning. Take it that *Om* is the subtle essence, the underlying form of every particle and substance in the universe.

There are two parts in every single substance in the universe: name and form. Take away these two and there is no more universe. The form is conceived and controlled by the name. The form is dependent on the name, so if you reason out which is more lasting, you will find that the name is eternal and the form is impermanent. Consider the case of people who have done various good works, achieved meritorious deeds, constructed hospitals or schools or temples or places of worship. Even when their forms are not present in the world for people to see, their names with all the associated fame are ever present in human memory, aren't they? The form lasts for only a brief time, but the name continues.

Names are countless, and so are forms. But there is one matter that you have to take into consideration here, a matter that is within the daily experience of all, from the pundit to the ignoramus: letters. In Telugu, there are 52 letters; in English, just 26. If you pile up the entire literary output in Telugu or English and the pile rises mountain high, it is all composed of the 52 Telugu letters or the 26 English ones, not a single letter more.

Similarly, in the human body there are six nerve centres, all in the form of the lotus flower. All six lotus forms have one letter or sound attached to each petal. Like the reeds in the harmonium, when the petals are moved, each one emanates a distinct sound. Those who follow this statement intelligently may get a doubt; if the petals are said to move, who or what is moving them? Yes, the force that moves them is the primeval unstruck sound (*an-aahatha-dhwani*), which emanates without effort, regardless of conscious will. That is *Om*. Like beads in the string, all letters and the sounds that are present are strung on *Om*. That is the meaning of the statement that He is the “*Om* of the *Vedas*”. Krishna's teaching is that you should merge your mind in *Om*, which is the universal basis.

The mind has an innate tendency to merge in whatever it contacts; it craves this. So, it is ever agitated and restless. But, by constant practice and training, it can be directed toward *Om* and taught to merge with it. It is also naturally drawn toward sound. That is why it is compared to a serpent. The serpent has two crude qualities; its crooked gait and its tendency to bite all that comes in its way. These two are also the characteristics of people. People also seek to hold and possess all that they set their eyes on. They also move crookedly.

But the serpent has one praiseworthy trait. However poisonous and deadly its nature, when the strains of the charmer's music are played, it spreads its hood and merges itself in the sweetness of that sound, forgetting everything else. Similarly, through practice, people can merge themselves in the bliss of *Om*. This close attention to sound (*sabda*) is a principal way to realize the highest *Atma*, who is “the *Om* of the *Vedas*”. He is not other than sound. That is why the Lord said that He is the “vitality (*pourusha*) of humanity”, the breath of humanity.

Without it, a person has no manliness. However strong may be the force of the drag of previous births, it has to yield to the strength of adventure and achievement emanating from vitality. Unaware of this potentiality, foolish people are misled into cursing their fate, cursing the “inescapable” effects of what they dread as consequences of actions in previous births!

Everyone has to exercise vitality (*pourusha*), for without it, life itself is impossible. Living is struggling, striving, achieving. God created people to wield the talent of vitality and achieve victory. His purpose is not to make people consumers of food, a burden upon the earth, or animals that are slaves to the senses. He does not aim at creating a horde of idlers and loungers, who shy at hard work, accumulate fat, and grow into monstrous shapes. He does not create people with the idea that they should, while alive, ignore their Creator, deny *Atma*, and wander about like animals, allowing both intelligence and discrimination to go to waste, moving about without an iota of gratitude to the Giver of all the gifts that they consume and enjoy!

Creation also punishes those who exploit it for self aggrandizement, saying “This is mine, that too is mine, that belongs to those who belong to me”. She punishes heavily those who break her code; that is why Krishna describes to Arjuna the way of contemplation (*upasana*) in great detail, for worship is using creation to reach the Lord who transcends it.

Krishna said, “Arjuna! Many people anxious to offer uninterrupted worship to Me go into the thick forest. That is an insane step. There is no need to seek the jungle, as if I am only there. There is no place where I am not; there is no form that is not Mine. I am the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether! Where can you find a place devoid of one or other of these five? There is no special place to experience My presence and My glory, for I am everything, everywhere, ever. The fiery nature of fire is I Myself. I am life in all living beings. I am the strength of the strong, the strength that is free from greed and lust. Mine is the nature that prompts beings to desire *dharmic* things and means.

“Of course, when I say ‘strength’, I mean the strength of the intellect (*buddhi*). For the world knows many varieties of strengths: strength of riches, born of wealth; strength of education, born of scholarship; strength of people, coming from the consciousness that one has a large following; strength of mind, arising from one’s determination; physical strength, which is just muscular force, etc. All these are to be considered as Mine, for I am the supreme Lord. However, all forms of strength have to be free from desire and attachment. If desire and attachment adhere, then it becomes bestial strength, not divine; it is animal strength, not the strength of the lord of animals.

“Desire (*kama*) means the desire to possess a thing that is so strong that even when there is no chance of securing it, the mind hankers for it. Attachment (*raga*) is the feeling that a thing must be in one’s possession, even though it is evident that it cannot be there long, for it is after all an evanescent thing. *Ranjana* (enjoyment) is the root of the word *raga* (attachment). *Ranjana* indicates the capacity to give pleasure. Any form of strength that is polluted by either of these two cannot claim the dignity of divinity.

“Some forms of strength attain height or depth according to the status they are allotted by their owners. Consider, for example, riches. If riches reach a wicked person, they create vanity, pride, cruelty, and contempt. If they are with a good person, they are directed along the paths of charity and good works. The wicked use physical strength to injure others, while the good use it to protect others from harm.”

Another point has to be noted here. Krishna said that even anger and greed that are not opposed to *dharma* are forms of expression of the Divine. Therefore, why repeat it a thousand times: all feelings, all forms, all things

and beings are born out of the higher (*para*) and the lower (*apa-ra*) nature of the self-same divine Essence. But, to have higher feelings and emotions, you must accustom yourself to see My form in the higher feelings, higher forms, and higher beings. Still, you must not get away with the idea that only the higher is divine and the lower is not. That is not correct; the objective world with all its pure (*sathwic*), passionate (*rajasic*), and dull (*thamasic*) things, reactions, impulses—all originate in God. This conviction can grow in you and get firmly fixed only by reasoning it out and getting its truth affirmed.

The Lord Himself declared: “Arjuna! All this originated from Me, all this exists in Me, but I am not dependent on it; remember, I am unattached to all this.” Here, there are two points of view: the soul’s (*jivi*) and the Lord’s. The soul has the dual experience of good and bad, the Lord has no duality at all. When all is God, when God is the inner *Atma* in all, how can there be two, one good and another bad?

Now, ordinary folk may get some doubts on this point. The Lord says that all things, both good and bad, originated from Him and that He is the prime Cause. But at the same time, He declares that He is neither bound nor affected by the effects or defects of all that has thus originated! He says He has no relationship with them and that He is above and beyond that for which He is the Cause.

You might infer that people also are not in the least responsible for the good and evil done through them by the Divine, that their real nature is beyond both good and evil, that their acts, however evil, were basically prompted by the Lord Himself, for people have nothing they can claim as their act. True. But faith in this attitude that “nothing is done by you”, that “it is all the Lord’s will that is being worked through you”, must be steady, sincere, deep, and unshaken. There should be no trace of ego. If that is so, then certainly such a one has attained the highest goal of life. One is blessed to the utmost. That reality has to be known; that knowledge has to be stabilized. Indeed, those who have the conviction that all this is God, that they have no sort of relationship or kinship with the objective world, that they are above and beyond it, are true souls (*sathya-jivis*), the individuals whose sojourn here have been worthwhile.

Words, however, are futile. You may repeat certain set phrases like a parrot that has been taught for a long time—like “Everything is the Lord’s,” “I am but a puppet; and He pulls the strings, and I dance as He wills,” “Nothing is mine; I am just carrying out His will.” But what do you usually do? You claim praiseworthy acts for your own and ascribe blameworthy acts to the prompting of the Lord! You shout from platforms till your throats get dry that by your own effort you won honour, fame, status and standards, authority and position, property and possessions, attainments and achievements. But when it comes to confessing your share in earning ill fame and defeat, evil and wrong, you conveniently transfer the responsibility to the Lord, saying, “I am but an instrument in His hands; He is the Master, I am but a tool.” This has become the habit today. Nay, it has developed into a fashion. People swing from “I” to “He” like the pendulum of the clock. This is sheer deceit, hollow spiritual sham.

Mind, word, and act, all three must be filled with the belief that all is His play. That is the genuine path. It is a human frailty to separate things into good and evil; to impute this to God is sacrilege. Sometimes, it might appear that the Lord also has that weakness, but it is a passing phase, a cloud that hides His glory and not a blemish that adheres to Him.

Although qualities emanate from the Lord, He is unaffected. Smoke arises from fire, but fire is unaffected; clouds form and move about in the sky, but the sky is unaffected by them. All are attached to Him, like beads, but He is free, unattached. The universe is based on Him, but he has no need for the universe as base.

Take the example of cloth. Cloth is based on yarn, it is dependent on yarn; but yarn does not depend on cloth, it is unaffected, unattached to cloth. The pot depends on clay, but clay is independent. Again, cloth is yarn, pot is clay. Clay is *Brahman*; the pot is creation. Yarn is *Brahman*; cloth is creation (the universe of manifold variety). Ignore the shape, the form and the name —the pot is just clay. Ignore the form of the cloth and the name; observe the basic thing that stays in and through the cloth, then you know it is but yarn. Without clay, you can have no pot; without yarn, there can be no cloth. So too, without *Brahman*, there can be no creation. It is truer to say that all is *Brahman* than to say, “*Brahman* is in everything”. It is grander to picture *Brahman* as the basis of all (*sarva-adhara*) rather than to conceive It as the inner reality of all beings. That is the truth.