

## CHAPTER XIII

**T**his Universe itself is a superstructure, the basis being Paramatma, Godhead; this is apparent, the other is the Real. People ignore the basis and crave for the 'based.' They do not stop to inquire how the 'based' can exist without a base! This too is an example of faulty vision. When this *Drishti-dosha* (error of vision) is set right, *Srishti-kartha* (the creator) can be seen. When the defect in the vision is removed, the author of this Universe can be cognised.

This subject was raised by Arjuna before Krishna. He asked, "What exactly is faulty vision? Please tell me in detail, O Krishna." He also sought to know how the fault originates and develops. Now, Arjuna is not just an ordinary individual. He is not one to nod his head, whatever is told to him. He is bold enough to stop Krishna in the middle of a sentence if he feels a doubt rising in his mind. He had the courage and

the steadfastness needed. He persisted until he got from Krishna an answer that was verifiable by experience, that was in accordance with the wisdom enshrined in the Sastras. So, the Lord too provided the answers immediately, with a smile!

For this question, on faulty vision, Krishna had the answer. He said, "Listen, Arjuna! Between Me and this Universe, there moves Maya, called Delusion. It is indeed a hard task for man to see beyond Maya, for Maya too is Mine. It is of the same substance; you cannot deem it separate from Me. It is My creation and under My control. It will turn in a trice, even the mightiest among men, head over heels! You might wonder why it is so difficult to overcome. Of course, it is by no means easy. Only those who are wholeheartedly attached to Me can conquer this, My Maya. Arjuna, do not take Maya to mean some ugly thing that has descended from somewhere else. It is an attribute of the mind. It makes you ignore the True and the Eternal Paramatma, and value instead the attributeful, created, manifold multiplicity of Name and Form. It causes the error of believing the Body as the Self, instead of the Embodied (the Deha instead of the Dehi). Maya is not something that was and will disappear; nor is it something that was not, but later came in and is. It never was, or is, or will be.

"Maya is a name for a non-existent phenomenon. But this non-existent thing comes within view! It is like the mirage in the desert, a sheet of water that never was or is. He who knows the truth does not see it; only those ignorant with the

ways of the desert are drawn by it. They run towards it and suffer grief, exhaustion and despair. Like darkness arising in the room hiding the room itself, like moss growing on the water hiding the water itself, like cataract growing in the eye, hiding the vision, Maya too attaches itself to whoever helps it to grow. It overpowers the three Gunas and the three gods. That is to say, all who identify themselves with the limited, the named, the formed, the individualised, are affected by it. *Jiva-bhranthi* (identification with Jiva) brings it about; *Thathwa-bhranthi* (identification with the Thath thwam, (That-this entity) removes it. It hides the thathwa; it does not hold sway over those who have once known the thathwa.

“Arjuna, you might ask Me whether this Maya which pervades and injures the very place where it originates has not tarnished Me, in whom it has taken birth. It is natural that such a doubt should arise. But that is a baseless doubt. Maya is the cause of all this Jagath (creation) but it is not the cause of God. I am the Authority that wields Maya. This Jagath which is the product of Maya moves and behaves according to My Will. So, whoever is attached to Me and acts according to My Will cannot be harmed by Maya. Maya acknowledges their authority also. To overcome Maya, the only method is to acquire the Jnana (wisdom) of the Universal, and to rediscover your own Universal nature. For, you attribute the limit of life on that which is eternal and it is this which causes Maya. Hunger and thirst are the characteristics of life. Joy and grief, impulse and imagination,

birth and death are all characteristics of the body. They are all an-Atma, un-Atmic. They are not the characteristics of the Universal, the Atma.

“To believe that the Universal which is you is limited and subject to all these un-Atmic characteristics, that is Maya. But remember, Maya dare not approach anyone who has taken refuge in Me. For those who fix their attention on Maya, it operates as a vast oceanic obstacle. But for those who fix their attention on God, Maya will present itself as Madhava (God)! The hurdle of Maya can be crossed either by developing the attitude of oneness with the Infinite God or the attitude of complete surrender to the Lord. The first is called Jnana Yoga, the second is named Bhakthi Yoga.

“All men do not get the inner prompting to conquer Maya, by surrendering their all to the Lord. It depends on the merit or demerit, accumulated during many births. Those who have only demerit as their earnings will pursue the fleeting pleasures of the senses. Like the birds and the beasts, they revel in food and frolic. They take these as the purpose of life. They do not entertain any thoughts of God. They dislike the company of the virtuous and the good. They stray away from good acts. They become outlaws from the realm of God.

“On the other hand, those who have earned merit strive to grow in virtue, in uplifting thoughts, in the contemplation of the Divine Presence and they yearn for the Lord. Seekers such as these may be drawn to the Lord through suffering

or want or the thirst for knowledge or keenness to acquire wisdom. But the fact that they turn towards the Lord for relief shows that they have grown into the higher path through many births.”

The Geetha does not approve *Sakama* Karmas, acts done with intention to benefit therefrom or with the result as the prime motive. It is only *Nishkama* Karma, acts done without being concerned with the benefit that may accrue, that will free you from delusion.

Now, a doubt may arise about the *Aartha-bhaktha*, the one who turns to the Lord to relieve his suffering. The question may be raised whether such a person can be called a *Bhaktha*. There is no single person on earth who is free from some want or other. Each depends on some one or other to fulfil his wants, is it not? Now, to have such wants, wants relating to objects, is itself wrong; and to lean on a man like oneself to fulfil them is an even greater wrong. The *Aartha-bhaktha* turns, not to man, but to the Lord whom he trusts and reveres. He implores Him only to fulfil them. Though it is wrong to cultivate wants, he avoids the greater wrong of putting trust on inferior instruments. So he is superior, is it not? The superiority of this attitude can be seen, when you know that it is not what you want that is important, but whom you ask for its fulfilment. The goal is the Lord. He is the Giver. His Grace alone can confer boons. When this faith is fixed, you can be certain that the *Aartha-bhaktha* is really worthy.

The first three of the types of *Bhakthas* mentioned in the Geetha—the *Aartha*, the *Artha-arthi*, and the *Jijnasu*—all adore the Lord in an implicit form, as *Paroksha* (invisible, imperceptible). They seek the Lord as a means for the realisation of their desires or goals. Of course, they will always be in prayerful and worshipful mood and remembering the Lord at all times.

The *Jnani*, the fourth type mentioned in the Geetha, has *Eka* (one) *Bhakthi*, while the others have *Aneka* (not one, many) *Bhakthi*. The others are attached to the objects or the states they desire and for their sake, are attached to the Lord also. They are devoted not merely to the Lord, but to the objective world also. The *Jnani* will not raise his eyes towards anything other than the Lord. Even if he does, he sees the Lord wherever his eyes are cast. That is the reason why the Lord has declared that the *Jnani* is the dearest to Him. Of course, all are the same for the Lord. But among those who have reached His Presence and are present there, *Prema* (love) is explicit, *prathyaksha*, immediate, directly cognisable and experienceable. Therefore, it can be inferred that the *Jnani* is nearest to the Lord and so, the dearest.

Of course, it is the nature of fire to warm you up when you shiver from cold. But how can it help you to keep warm if you do not approach it but keep away at a distance? Similarly, those who are earnest to remove the chillness of worldly ills have to seek the fire of *Jnana*, which is won by the Grace of God and be in the immediacy of God.

The Sadhakas in the midst of their efforts sometimes imagine God to be less glorious than He really is! They feel that the Lord differentiates between sinners and saints, good and bad, jnanis and ajnanis. These are unsound inferences. The Lord does not separate men thus. If He really did so, no sinner can survive His anger on earth for even a minute. All are living on the earth, since the Lord has no such distinction. This truth is known only to the Jnani. Others are unaware of this. They suffer under the false belief that the Lord is somewhere far, far away from them.

The Jnani is free from Maya. He is unaffected by the Gunas: Rajas, Thamas or even Sathwa. The Jijnasu, the seeker of Knowledge, however is different. He uses his time for unbroken contemplation of the Divine, in pious deeds and holy thoughts. The other two, the Artha-arthi and the Aartha, they gather elevating experience and ruminate over the real and the unreal and transform themselves into Jijnasus, seekers of knowledge. Later, they become Jnanis, and are saved. The goal is reached thus, stage by stage. You cannot attain the goal in one leap.

This can be better understood by an example: Jnana is like the “through train.” That is to say, the passenger need not detrain and enter another train to reach the destination. The Jijnasu has entered the “through carriage”; he too need not detrain and board another train, but the carriage will be detained and attached to other trains en route. He reaches at last the place he wants to reach. The Aartha boards the

ordinary train and since the carriage he is in is neither “through” or one in a through train, he has to alight at a number of places en route and wait until another train comes by, so that he can reach the goal by stages. It is a long and arduous journey. But in spite of those difficulties, it can be accomplished by the Aartha if he persists. The goal is attained by all; only the process and the pace are different. No wonder the Lord has declared more than once that all these four types of Bhakthas are “My Own.” Why has He so declared? Because they all seek the same High Goal.

“Therefore, yearn always for the Vast, the Immeasurable. Do not limit your desires to the little. They are misers who crave for little things. Those who yearn for the Lord are generous, large-hearted,” said Krishna.

The Bhakthi or Devotion of the Jnani is what is termed *Sahaja Bhakthi*, direct bhakthi. The bhakthi of the others can be called *Gouna Bhakthi* or derived bhakthi, indirect bhakthi. The Jnani cognises the Lord as his own Atma. His bhakthi is *anu-rakthi*, attachment towards or affection for God. ‘*Poojyaeshvanura-ago Bhakthi*,’ it is said: affection towards the venerable is bhakthi, said Krishna. The Jnani becomes so as a result of the merit accumulated through many lives. It is not a stage attainable on the spur of the moment, nor is it available readymade in shops for a price. It is not a marketable commodity. It is the culmination of the spiritual endeavour practised in many lives. It is desired that many good doctors must be produced for ministering

to the people. But years of study and experience alone can supply them. If those unequipped are appointed as doctors in the hospitals and if they start prescribing and operating, they are bound to kill where they should cure. So too, if a person has become a Jnani today, you can imagine the years and years of sadhana (spiritual discipline) that won for him that height. The inheritance of spiritual impulses from previous births also helps his endeavour.

All kinds of people now name themselves as Jnanis. They do not know, perhaps, that a Jnani is marked by certain characteristics. The mark that proves him genuine is, of course, his declaration based on his own experience that “*Vaasudevas-sarvamidam*,” “Vaasudeva (God) is all this.” The steady assimilation of that experience is the true sign of the Jnani. By Vaasudeva is meant here not the son of Vasudeva, but He who has made all beings His Home, His *Nivaasa* (Residence). It is only a person who perceives the Lord in all beings that deserves to be called a Jnani. Instead, if others name themselves as Jnanis, they are so only in name. They have no genuine experience of Jnana. What exactly is that Jnana? It is the possession of that knowledge which enables you to have knowledge of all and so enables you to dispense with the knowledge of all else.

This is the height which the Jnani reaches. On the other hand, no one can claim to be a Jnani who has simply learnt a few slokas by heart, or skipped through a few books, or ascended platforms with ten others and lectured for hours in the full pride of scholarship, reeling off ponderous

sentences (like a magician and his ball of thread), pouring out what has earlier been swallowed. We have large numbers of such self-styled Jnanis going about now. Their dress is ochre, but their hearts are ogre. Well, how can stones shine as gems? All stones are not precious stones. Who will assess a stone as equal to a gem? Only fools will be so misled. For they know neither the one nor the other.

Sri Krishna declared the King of Manthras, “*Vaasudevassarvam*” (God is all this) in the Geetha, just to counteract such pseudo-Jnanis, whose emergence He anticipated. That one Manthra is sufficient to save all mankind. That is His Indirect Gift; consider it as such and concentrate on it and its meaning. That is the highest good. That is the highest goal. Without the inner ever-present experience of those words, there are many who have named themselves Mahatma, Jagadguru, Bhagawan, Paramahansa, Jnani, Thyagi, Ananda, etc. and who alas, though counterfeit, receive currency among people as genuine. No one conferred these titles on them. They were selected and assumed by their present owners and worn as plumage to catch the people’s eye. They are not genuine and so the glamour too wears out soon enough. The exterior is *Sanyas* (asceticism), but the interior is *Athyaas* (too full of desires). Outwardly the form is Yoga, but inwardly they suffer from Roga, (Disease). Their names all speak of Ananda but they roam around in the alleys. Their words are honey. Their acts are spoony and often zany. A householder who is immersed in the daily duties of his stage of life is far better spiritually

than these dressed-up specimens of Thyaga (detachment, surrender) and Yoga.

The chief reason for the decline of the culture of India, of its ancient way of life and its moral rectitude is this: the evil perpetrated by such fakes. Faith in God has declined for the same reason. They advise Thyaga (renunciation) and aspire for Bhoga (luxury). They glorify morality and operate through hatred. This behaviour cuts at the very root of Sanyasa. They inevitably rush towards doom. Where words and deeds are not co-ordinated, there is no trace of Truth.

Well, householders do hold on to truth, more or less tenaciously. There are among them many who are devoid of hate, of pure unsullied hearts, and who tread the path of morality and virtue. But we find that the Thyagis and Yogis who parade as such are full of all possible types of hatred and all the manifestations of desire. They fall into the pit which these dig for trapping them. Egoism, envy, exhibitionism—these bring to end all the efforts of the Sadhaka. Therefore, seekers and devotees must be ever vigilant. They must keep away from all these undesirable traits and they should try to grow in the contemplation of the Glory of God, and in the practice of morality, eagerly striving to experience the real Bliss of Attainment. This Bliss has then to be shared with the world. That will inaugurate World Peace and World Prosperity.

Krishna was referring to such real Jnanis when He said that the World will shine in splendour through the Jnanis. A man, without Jnana, is a home without light.