

CHAPTER XIV

“*Nahi Jnanena Sadrsam.*” There is nothing to equal Jnana. And what is Jnana? That which makes you cross this sea of flux, this samsara. Of course, it is of two kinds. The first is objective knowledge (*Vishaya Jnana*) and the second, integral knowledge, or *Abheda Jnana*.

The first type is knowledge of the world. The second is the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the individual Atma, which is called *Abheda* or undifferentiated or integral Jnana. This Jnana is not a function of the intellect or Buddhi. It is a feature of something beyond it, something which witnesses the activities of even the Buddhi. It destroys the delusion about this constant flux, mistaken to be a reality. It removes fear from the heart of man. It reveals to him the Brahman which he and all this is. So it is called the Right Jnana or *Samyak Jnana*, the *Sameepa Jnana* or the Nearest Jnana.

There are two paths by which man can approach this *Abheda Jnana*; the inner and the outer. The outer sadhana is “*Nishkama Karma*,” engaging in activity without attachment towards the result of those activities as dedicated to the Lord. The inner sadhana is *Dhyana* (meditation) and *Samadhi* (equipoise, devoid of ups and downs). In Vedantic terminology, this is named *Nididhyasana*. Listen and meditate on what you have listened to—those two steps are the bases of this *Nididhyasana* or Inner Concentration. Without these, *Dhyana* is impossible of achievement.

This is the meaning of what is called *Atma-samyama*, the control of the senses, detachment from the outer sensory world, the withdrawal of the mind from the outer world. This is the goal of all life, knowing the Paramatma, attaining Liberation. There can be no second aim for man. Man is endowed with life, not as a means for building bungalows, the acquisition of estates, the accumulation of wealth, the addition of progeny, the earning of titles or ascent into higher rungs of social life. His greatness does not depend on these. The chief success of life lies in the winning of permanent bliss, permanent escape from grief and agitation.

“*Srinvanthu viswe amruthasya puthraah!*” is the call. “Listen, O Ye, children of immortality, all over the world!” That is the invitation. The heritage of immortality must be recognised and experienced. It must be won back. The bonds of name and form must be got rid of. They are but bonds made of dream-stuff. They are changeful and temporary. They are not genuine, natural characteristics of the Jiva.

Real wisdom consists in recognising that man is pure bliss, bliss that persists from the past into the present and the future. Escape from grief for a brief period of time, and the attainment of joy for a short time. These are not signs of real Liberation. “If you seek this steady, genuine, pure state of bliss, you must be attached to Me,” said Krishna.

“Arjuna! Whoever does spiritual practice after attaching himself to Me with a view to liberate himself from old age and senility will know all-that-is-to-be-known of Brahman, Karma and Atma. I am master of *Adhibhutha* (the highest among the physically manifest), *Adhidaiva* (the supreme among gods) and *Adhiyajna* (the presiding deity of sacrifice) and if I am thus worshipped, the worshipper will develop equanimity and full control of the vagaries of the mind. Besides, such a person will dwell on Me, without forgetting Me, even in his last moments. For that reason, he will reach Me too. That is to say, he will merge in Me.

“Arjuna! Everyone is anxious to avoid old age and death. It is human nature so to be anxious. But of what avail is mere anxiety? One’s conduct and behaviour should be in accordance with one’s objective. If one has sincere yearning and if one places full trust and faithfully surrenders to the Lord, the fog of grief will be dispersed by the rays of His Grace. If on the other hand one places his trust on the objects of this world, the consequent grief will never end; nor can they be ended by any other than the Lord. Serve the Master of Maya, the Designer of all this Dreamland rather than the Dream itself. How can attachment to delusion yield anything

but disappointment? How can joy be won by such pursuits? If joy is not won and grief avoided, how can liberation be achieved?” Krishna asked.

Then Arjuna intervened. “Krishna,” he said, “cannot such men attain you? You say that grief must be conquered before one can attain you. Well, what is the origin of that grief? How is it to be tackled? How does it arise? How can one try to overcome it without knowing its origin and course of development? Please tell me how this grief arises in the human mind?”

“Listen, Arjuna,” Krishna condescended to reply. “The source of all types of sorrow is Ignorance, Ajnana. You might ask Me now what is the source of Ajnana? I shall tell you. It is the identification with the body, the delusion that you are the body. This can be removed only by the acquisition of right knowledge. To remove darkness, light is what is needed. You cannot frighten it away, nor can you make it yield by prayer or petition or protest. Unless light is on, darkness will not disappear, howsoever you may try. So too, Ajnana will not disappear by merely wishing for disappearance to happen. Once you understand the nature and ramifications of this trait, this Ajnana, the truth will be laid bare and grief will vanish.

“When Ajnana goes, grief too goes. So attach yourself to Me and earn the light of True Knowledge and tread the path of No-grief,” said Krishna.

Immediately, Arjuna interjected, “Krishna! You were saying till now of certain paths by which we can reach you. Now, at the end of it all, if you throw this cannon ball, how can I ever grasp its meaning? You did not even confer, as a preliminary, a little power to do so! Please therefore make me happy by describing this point in greater detail, so that I might follow You better and attain You.”

Krishna replied, “My dear brother-in-law! Listen. My mystery can be understood, once you are clear about the meaning of Brahman, Aadhyaathmam (The Paramatma), Karma, Adhi-bhootham (The supreme in the physical), Adhi-daivam (The supreme among gods) and Adhiyajnam (The presiding deity of sacrifices). Let Me tell you this also. Whoever understands My mystery attains Me.”

“Then, O Lord, tell me about the first of these, Brahman,” exclaimed Arjuna.

“Arjuna! *Aksharam-Brahma Paramam*”—Brahman is referred to as the Akshara which is param. Akshara means without kshara or destruction, indestructible. Brahman comes from a root which means big, vast, etc. How vast, you may ask. Vaster than whatever you call vast, that is the answer. The word Akshara has another meaning also. It means omnipresent, immanent everywhere. Brahman is not mere Aksharam, as you will have noticed. It is Param Aksharam. What does that mean? It is that type of Akshara which is beyond the reach of Time and Space and knowability. It cannot be known by any or all the categories. It never

declines or ends. It is Param Aksharam, the Highest Indestructible, Indescribable.

“The Goal of Humanity is to attain that Brahman; Aksharam and Brahman signify the same Goal. They indicate the Saguna (with form) and the Nirguna (formless) aspects of the same Truth. For Akshara means also a letter, the Pranava, Om, which is a symbol of Brahman. That is why it is called Akshara Para Brahma Yoga (The eternal changeless supreme yoga). Brahman has two adjectives, Paramam and Aksharam. Akshara indicates the Pranava as well as Maya. Maya too is subsumed by Pranava. These two are ‘attributeful,’ qualified, *Savishesha*. Brahman, however, is *Nirvishesha*, qualificationless, attributeless, pure, in its own right. He who understands this attains Me.

“Now for a second point. It is Brahman that dwells in every body in the form of ‘I.’ In fact, every body hangs around this entity called ‘I.’ In the body, each part and organ in the organisation performs one chief task. Each sense contacts and informs about one particular set of impressions from the outer world. But though related to the senses, there is an ‘I’ shining in the body, above and behind all of them. If that relationship is broken, everything becomes inert material!

“When the ‘I’-power flows through the senses, they are able to carry on their allotted tasks. That power is Aadhyaathmam. It cannot be known without great effort. Use the sharpest discrimination and you know it to some

small extent. Brahman is the ‘Thath’ entity; Aadhyaathmam is the ‘Thwam’ entity. To make the matter clearer to you take these two as appearance and character, form and substance. Brahman is the form, Aadhyaathmam is substance,” said Krishna.

Let us dwell on this matter a little. The Sastras describe Brahman as Sath-chith-ananda. This is a way of denoting it, in Vedantic vocabulary. It is also described as Asthi-Bhathi-priyam. Are both the same? Or do they mean differently? Sath means that which persists in the past, present and future. The same meaning is conveyed by the word, Asthi. Chith means that which is conscious of everything. The same meaning is conveyed by the word, Bhathi. Ananda means unending source of joy. Priyam also means the same. These three are found in every human being, why, in every beast and bird.

Take the first of these—Sath—and this will become clearer. The body is subject to destruction, sooner or later. Everyone is aware of this. No one is ignorant of this elementary fact. Nevertheless, everyone is apprehensive of death! No one welcomes death, or is eager to meet it. Death is inevitable. You have to meet with it, even though you do not welcome it, or try to avoid it. All that is born has to die some day. Still, no one likes to die.

What is the key to this paradox? Note this: What is it that does not welcome death? What is it that meets with death? What is it that leaves and what is it that remains? The

answer is, it is the body that dies. It is the body that falls. What does not die is the Atma. Only you delude yourselves into thinking that it is the Atma or “you” that dies. The Atma has nothing to do with death or birth. The body experiences death; the Atma which is Nithya, Sathya, and Nirmala—Eternal, True and Pure—does not die. You are the Atma that does not like to die. That is to say, you are Sath; your nature is Sath. The Atma is the “Child of Immortality,” not the Deha or the Body. The Atma is the Sath, not the Body.

You are the Sath—the Atma, the entity that has no death. It is this Atma that is in every casement and so, every being feels the force of that Sath in the form of eternal unchanging Existence. This is clear and unmistakable.

Now, take the second: Chith—the force that urges you on to know everything. Everyone is eager to know about anything that is apparent to his consciousness. He asks the questions: “What is this? How does this happen?” The number who actually succeed in knowing may be only a few. Others may have the eagerness only and not the steady intelligence needed to persist and win. That makes no difference. The essential fact is the thirst, the urge.

Take a little boy with you when you go to the market or the bazaar or an exhibition. You will note that the boy does not simply move along seeing the various things on both sides. He will be continuously asking the person who is leading him by the hand, what this is and what is that. It

may be something he does not need or something that is beyond his power of understanding. But yet, the stream of questions will not get dry.

Just consider the inner significance of this hunger for knowledge. It is the Chith Shakthi (power of consciousness) that expresses itself. It is not its nature to leave things alone. It cannot rest until knowledge is gained. So, the hunger emerges as a stream of questions. The Chith Shakthi is self-luminous. So it has the power of illuminating even inert things. That is why these qualities shine in man and make other things clearer to him. This is enough to make it plain that man has in him the Principle of Intelligence or Chith Shakthi.

Now for the third: Anandam. Even beasts and birds crave for joy without any prompting or persuasion from others. They make every effort to win it. Not one of them craves for grief or pain. They make every effort to escape from pain and grief and put an end to them, when they become unavoidable.

As for man, no further elaboration is necessary. He seeks unbroken joy, at all times and in all acts and activities. At no time, at no place, at no stage of life, does he desire grief. He prays for the joy and happiness of himself and his kindred through whatever worship he offers, or whatever *Bhajan* (spiritual singing) he shares in, or whatever vows he fulfils or rites he performs, or pilgrimages he undertakes or gifts he makes for spiritual merit. Why? When the body

suffers from any illness and the doctor prescribes a medicine to cure it and make him whole, man wants even that to be sweet, soothing and pleasant!

What is at the root of this desire? Man is fundamentally happy-natured, *Sukha-swabhava*. Bliss is his very personality. He is not of the nature of the body he occupies. He is the Atma. Happiness is the nature of the Atma. That is why no one is surprised when you are happy. They are not inquisitive about your happiness, for it is something natural to you. Surprise arises only when you observe something that was not there before. What you see every day does not arouse your curiosity. It comes only when something unnatural happens or is observed.

Take this instance. A child is in the cradle. It playfully laughs at either the jingling of bells or some toy or perhaps some sensation which is pleasant enough to make it bloom. No one is surprised or worried at all this. No one loses his peace of mind as a result of this. Now, let the child that was playing and laughing, start shrieking and weeping—everyone within earshot will run towards the cradle and frantically search the bed and bedclothes to discover the causes of all this commotion. This is the experience of all who have something to do with children. No one was worried to find out the reason why the child was happy, but all sought for the cause when it wept. Why? Because Ananda or joy is its nature, grief is unnatural, against its inner composition.

This is not the entire point. There is something more. Let us take another example from experience. When some friend or kinsman of yours is happy and affluent, no one takes the trouble to inquire from him why he is so happy. They ignore him and do not harry him with questions regarding himself. But when grief strikes him and he is unhappy, you start worrying him and yourselves. Why? Happiness is natural, it is to be expected, it is nothing surprising. For it is the nature of the Atma, which everyone is. That is why one is craving for constant happiness, Ananda.

The above three, Sath, Chith and Ananda, we see in every being as the very core of its very existence, as its reality itself. So it is the Lord Himself who has assumed the Jiva pose and plays as an individual in that role. It is this inner meaning that Krishna elaborated upon, so that the relationship of the Brahman and Aadhyathmam, that is to say, the identity of both with Him could be understood by Arjuna.

Then, Arjuna prayed that the third subject, karma, may be fully explained to him. Krishna was quite ready to oblige him. He began, “Arjuna! The limitation that is necessary for the creation, fostering and destruction of beings is what is called karma. The movable and the immovable, all are beings. Why, the very act of the very resolution of Creation is karma, the very first, which still activates all everywhere—this entire Universe and all the movements and agitations and activities in it are the direct consequence of Primal

Karma, My Sankalpa (Divine Will). And as long as My Resolution lasts, the stream of karma will flow along. It can never go dry so long as I do not will it. All that you do is to get drawn into this flood. Why, you are but currents in this rush, or ripples or waves. My will has prompted all karma and so, karma done in consonance with My will, becomes part of Me.