

## CHAPTER XV

“Karma is of My Nature; I manifest Myself as Karma,” said Krishna, to the great consternation of Arjuna. He made it clear that all karma is Divine, of His Essence! “It is enough if you know that Brahman—the Universal, Atma—the Individual, and Karma, all three are in Me. Knowledge of this will confer release. You need not worry about the rest,” said Krishna, as if He wanted to avoid further discussion. Evidently, Krishna wanted to take the chariot into the ranks of the foes and start the conflict, for time was flying fast.

But Arjuna was adamant. He was different. Ordinary men would not have argued even so long with Krishna. When Krishna says, “Do not worry about the rest,” one should stop worrying. But Arjuna was the right interrogator for Krishna and Krishna was the right teacher for Arjuna. In fact, they are Nara-Narayana (man and God), is it not?

Hence, the appropriateness, the interest and value of this dialogue.

Arjuna was not content to leave the matter at that. He did not accept Krishna’s assurance. “Tell me about the remaining three also, O Lord,” he pleaded. “Save me from the coils of doubt,” he prayed. “Destroy the darkness and reveal to me Your Reality,” he insisted. At this Krishna melted a little. He fondly stroked Arjuna’s back and replied, “Do not grieve; I shall tell you all. *Adhibhutham*, about which I mentioned, is not such a formidable tangle. It is something quite within the reach of all. Everything that declines and dies, everything that has roopa and nama, form and name, is included in *Adhibhutham*.

“To put it in other words, *Adhibhutham* is *Apara Prakruthi* (the evanescent and transitory aspect of God); all these embodied things, on this side and on the other and everywhere are *Adhibhutham*. In spite of this, they are not different from Me,” said Krishna, pausing meaningfully. He did not continue the exposition!

The ways of the Lord are known only to Him. No one else can make out their meaning and purpose. Attempting to unravel them is a fruitless task.

“They are not different from Me!” At these words, Arjuna was petrified with surprise. His head became heavy with doubt. His intelligence was befogged. His conviction was shaken. Doubts multiplied in his brain in frightening

sequence. Why did he suffer like this? What was the reason for all this upset?

After declaring “I am the Sath-chith-ananda, the Sathyanithya (Eternal Truth) entity,” “I am unaffected by Death, Decline or Destruction,” Krishna made the devastating admission that He was the temporary, transitional, destructible deha (material body) also! This was the cause of all this confusion in Arjuna’s brain! Anyone would be confounded by doubt at these conflicting statements. Krishna laughed as He saw Arjuna’s plight.

Still, since He had no intention of causing delay, and since He knew the source of Arjuna’s dilemma, Krishna immediately set about resolving the doubt. “Arjuna! Why do you feel lost? You are confounded, because I said I am the short-lived deha too, is it? Common folk will be shocked on hearing this. Their reaction will be to reject the idea, for it is difficult to reconcile the two. This deha which is temporary, transitional, and transient, has affinity with Me; for I am the base from which it springs. Without Me, the deha or body can never be. This will become clear to you, on a resume of its origin. Listen to the story of the origins of the body, which clarifies the mystery. The body is primarily indebted for its emergence to the food (*anna*) that the parents consume, is it not? Where did that Anna come from? From the Earth-element: the grains and other materials which grew on the earth. And the Earth? The Prithvi-element? It evolved from Jala Thathwa, the Water-element. Tracing back, we find that the Jala Thathwam

emerged from Agni or the Fire-element, and Agni from Vayu (air, wind), and Vayu from Akasa (air from space) and the Akasa from the Maya (space or ether from God’s delusion power) of Godhead! That Maya is merely My apparel.

“My Apparel, which I willed and folded around Me became Akasa, the Akasa got transformed into Vayu, the Vayu changed into Agni, the Agni into Jala (water), and Jala became Prithvi or Earth, the Earth grew grains of food, the food developed into the body! So, it is clear is it not, that the Deha too is Myself? Why doubt this?

“Therefore, I am Adhibhutham also, as much as I am, as I said before, Brahman, Aadhyathmam (substance) and Karma. The cause is the same as the effect. I am the Primal Cause and so, I am all these effects also. I am the Paramatma; the rest are all Adhidaivam. In every physical citadel or body, the Divine Personality named *Hiranyagarbha* (The Golden Womb, primal cause) is immanent. Just as a man is served by his senses, the *Hiranyagarbha* is served by the Adhidaivas (Deific).

“You might wonder what the role of these Adhidaivas is! They are Deities that serve the Divine Purpose; that is to say, the eye is illumined by Surya (Sun), the ear by the Deities of the Quarters, Indra motivates the hand—these and other presiding deities are the senses of *Hiranyagarbha*. However great a Sadhaka might be, whatever eminence he might have reached, he can attain the Highest only through *Hiranyagarbha*. *Hiranyagarbha* is indeed Godhead; there is

no distinction between the two. Is this clear, Arjuna? I am as much Adhidaivam as I am *Adhi-bhutham* (all these embodied things). As much as these two I am Brahman, Aadhyaathmam (substance) and Karma. They are all fully Divine.

“Now for the next entity—Adhiyajnam (activator of all karmas) That is also Me! This is the entity that consumes joy and grief, the result of the multifarious karmas they are engaged in. I am the recipient of the sabda (sound), sparsa (touch), roopa (form), rasa (taste), and gandha (smell); through the five senses in all beings, the Adhiyajna principle! I am not only the *Kartha*, the entity responsible for the karma; I am also the *Bhoktha*, the entity for which that karma is gone through, the recipient of the fruits. I am the benefactor as well as the beneficiary.”

Of course, Krishna was able to open the eyes of Arjuna and clarify this truth, this fact of His being the Adhiyajna. But ordinary intellects may not be able to grasp its implications. It will be easy if we take some illustrations from life. When you want breeze, you switch on the fan. When you want light, you switch on the lamp. When you want to cook, you light the stove. When you want to address a vast audience, you fix up a mike and loudspeakers and switch them on. Or if it is printing you require, you operate the press with a switch. Consider these as separate operations and you will notice that they are related to one another. Light and air, heat and sound, are unrelated. They are distinct in every way, it would seem. But for all these,

the *Kartha*, the motivator is the same, viz., the electric current. The expressions, the manifestations may be different. But the basis, the inspiration, the latent potency, the base is the same.

Like the current, Godhead too operates through all instruments, and awards the consequences of all the activities of all the instruments. He is the *Daatha* (giver) of *Sarva-karma-phala* (the fruits of all actions). Like the current, He is the inner motivator of all beings, *Sarva-bhuthaanthara-atma* (The soul immanent in all beings). Since He is the activator of all karmas, He is called Adhiyajnam.

“The seventh is Pranava (OM), which, when pronounced at the moment of death, awards merger with the *Akshara Para Brahman* (imperishable absolute) Itself!” When Krishna said this, Arjuna immediately prayed to Him to elaborate the point a little more, so that he might grasp it clearly. Krishna was only too glad to do so. ‘The moment of death’ does not mean ‘Some future point of time.’ It means, ‘this very moment’! Any moment might turn out to be the ‘moment of death.’ So every moment is the ‘last.’ Every moment must be filled with Pranava. The fate of man after death is moulded by the thought that predominates at the moment of death. That thought is the foundation on which the next birth is built. “Whoever at that time remembers Me attains My Glory, reaches Me in fact.” declares Krishna. So, each karma of man, every striving of his, every sadhana, should be aimed at sanctifying that fateful moment. The

years of life must be devoted to the discipline that will bring up at that moment the thought of Paramatma or Pranava.

“What has to be discarded is the Deha, this physical case. What has to be earned is Para Brahman, the Universal Absolute. The Deha has your Reality, your Swaroopam, the undiscardable, indestructible, undying Sathyam (truth) and Nithyam (eternal). That Reality is the entity called Atma, or what is the same thing, Paramatma. Since you are that, you cannot cast it off. Casting off the body is akin to shifting from a house occupied for some years, and birth is your entry into a new one. Both these are physical acts, not affecting the Atma. Arjuna! The Atma does not come in, nor does it go out. Those who are toiling in the falsehood of *Deha Thathwa* (the physical) cannot have the Atma revealed to them. The Deha Thathwa is liable to decay and death. Therefore, more than the six items mentioned by Me already, the Pranava which is such a potent instrument of liberation has to be understood clearly. All the long years of life are to be utilised for this consummation—the mind being fixed on Pranava when the body is being cast off. You belch the flavour of the food you have taken. Your last thought indicates the food you have fed on.

“Your *Sadgathi* (progress) is in accordance with your sadhana (spiritual practice). Progress is in accordance with practice. Be always aware of the need to fix the mind on holy thoughts, when the body is got rid of. That is to say, immerse yourself in holy thoughts every moment of your life.”

Then, Arjuna inquired, “O Lord! Has one to strive for it, from now on, if one wishes to get holy thoughts at the last moment of life? Can we not get them at that time itself?” The Lord realised his doubt and replied, “Your intelligence seems to have been blunted a great deal! For you are hesitating to accept the need to develop holy thoughts from now on. Arjuna! The mind has to be educated into the habit, through what is called Abhyasa Yoga, the discipline of constant practice. It has to be trained to avoid other thoughts and concentrate on the Lord only. Then only can you reach the Paramapurusha, the Oversoul, the Supreme Spirit. Unless you systematically teach it and train it, it will not remember the Paramapurusha at the moment of death.

“You might ask Me the reason. Well. Think of your own case. You are able to use these weapons of offence and defence in the battle that is imminent because you taught yourself the art of handling them over many years, is it not? Could you have used them with confidence, without preparation, on the spur of the moment? Is it ever possible? The Kshatriya (warrior) will be called upon to wield weapons someday, so he is taught the art from childhood so that he may be ready for the emergency.

“Similarly whatever else a man may not meet with, during life, he is certain to meet with death. So each one must be trained to have at that time the attitude and thought that are most beneficial to him. Otherwise, life is a failure, a waste. A person unready for this consummation has to suffer the fate that will befall him. No one enters a battlefield in

order to suffer defeat. So too, no one voluntarily accepts a fall. He seeks only progress. Will it not be wise therefore to strive for the end that is in your own best interest? Hence, every man must take earnest steps to secure the thought of the seventh item, Pranava, at the last moment of life. Whoever dies in that thought attains Me,” said Krishna.

This is the entire essence of the Geetha. For the goal for all man’s actions is to attain the acme of progress, is it not? That is the urge which makes him engage himself in prayers, in Japam (recitation of name of God) and Dhyanam (meditation), in Archana and Thapas (austerity). All those who have placed faith in these have to remember the Goal throughout.

Krishna said that Om or Pranava has to be remembered at the moment of Death. There are certain points that require elucidation in connection with this for there are many who argue that the Pranava can be repeated only by a few and that others are not entitled to it. This is wrong. This false conclusion has been arrived at since they do not know the truth. It springs from a mistaken belief.

The Geetha does not mention this group or that group, Krishna declares “whoever,” without any qualifying words, limiting it to one class or sex. He has not even said, “who deserves or who does not deserve,” “who is authorised or who is unauthorised.” He has only said that for meditation on the Pranava, (mere ‘calling it to memory’ is of no use) some preliminary disciplines have to be gone through, like

the control of the senses, the concentration of the mind, etc.

For, when the mind is flitting from one fancy to another how can the production of a sound Om, Om, by the vocal organs be of any benefit? The sound will not help the attainment of Liberation. The senses have to be curbed, thoughts have to be one-pointed, the Glory has to be apprehended. That is why the Lord advised that from birth to death, one must be engaged in the search for Truth. Instead, if you postpone sadhana until the last moment, you will be like the student who turns over the pages of his textbook for the first time, just before he enters the examination hall! If the student feels that he has before him one full year and if he neglects to learn from the teacher and from lecture notes and from books, how can anything enter his brain when he opens the pages of his book that very morning? It will only add to his despair. He can be pronounced proficient only in indolence.

No tree will yield fruits the moment you plant the seedling in your backyard. To reach that stage, you have to foster it with care over a long period of time, is it not? Similarly, whatever result you seek, you have to follow carefully, without break, the preparatory disciplines. No one can acquire the fruit without vigilance and steadfastness.

Sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) must be always aware of this. The yearning must be directed away from “how to be born” towards “how to die”! For birth depends on how

death takes place. Death comes first, birth happens later. Folks believe that men are born to die and they die so that they may be born. This is wrong. You are born so that you may not be born again; you die, so that you may not die again. That is to say, the man who dies must so die that he is not born again. When once you die, you should not be born again to meet another death. Death is inevitable if you are born. So, avoid birth and avoid death.

So, the Sadhaka should not aspire for a good birth. He should seek a good death. You may be born well, in a good family or with many favourable circumstances. But subsequent karma may not ensure a good death. So, if a good death is aimed at, the trouble of being born and becoming once again subject to death can be avoided.

Every man born must have the end always in view. Cultivate good habits of thought and action in order to make that end genuinely auspicious. Attaining such an end is the unmistakable sign of having won the Grace of God.