

CHAPTER XVI

Ordinary folk do not get the mind fixed on Madhava so easily at the point of death. It presupposes long training, previous achievement of certain accomplishments, what is called *Purva samskara*. The mind must have gone through a certain course of discipline. It has to be *Yogayuktha*, possessed of Yoga. Even that is not enough. The mind must discard all other thoughts as low and inferior, defiling even. This disgust towards all other objects should grow in strength. When these two are present, the thought of Madhava will certainly emerge and be steady during the last moments.

So your mind is the important thing. When the mind rots, all else rots. Man moves as fast as his mind, in the direction that the mind takes. To tame and train the mind, good habits and disciplines have to be sought. Therefore, Krishna began describing how the Lord has to be pictured

in the mind during the sadhana stages and with what feelings and emotions He has to be fixed in the mind.

“Arjuna! people describe Me in three different ways: (1) as *Nirguna Niraakaara*, (2) as *Saguna Niraakaara* and (3) as *Saguna Saakaara*. I shall tell you about the second, the *Saguna Niraakaara* first, and how you have to picture the Lord in this aspect. Listen, He is described as *Kavi* (poet), *Puraanam*, *Anusaasitha*, Subtler than the Subtle, the Sustenance and Basis of All, having Unpicturable Form, with the Splendour of the Sun as His Complexion, beyond all trace of Ignorance and Darkness.”

At this point, Arjuna interrupted Krishna. He asked, “Lord! You said, He is a *Kavi*! There are *Kavis* among ordinary mortals too. How then can you call the Lord too a *Kavi* and discredit Him? Or, does *Kavi* denote something special when applied to Him? Make that point a little clearer.” Krishna said, “*Kavi* does not mean merely a poet. It means also one who is aware of the past, present and future; and so it is a description of the Lord. He knows all. He sees all. Hence, the derivation of *Kavi* is mentioned as ‘*Sarvajna, Kraantha-darsi*,’ He who sees the next step. It is the Lord who revolves in every heart and effects changes from step to step. For all creation, the *Kavi* is the motivator, the prime basis. He is the Poet; His Poem is all this.” Arjuna again inquired, “Lord, secondly, you said ‘*Puraana*,’ that He is *Puraana*, or Ancient. What is the significance of that?” Krishna replied, “Of course, the Lord is the most ancient, but He is as modern as He is ancient. He is *Sanathana*,

primeval, beyond the beginning; He is also *Noothana*, new every moment. Puraana means *puraa navamithi*, formerly new, new every minute of the past, and the present.”

“What about the word, *anusaasitha*?”

“Independent, unchecked, Master. He lays down the conduct of all. The Five Elements execute His Orders. They cannot overstep the limits laid down by Him. His laws govern also the inner world of all beings, as no human law can. He operates in the regions of the mind.”

“The fourth expression you used was that He is Anoraneeyaan, Subtler than the Subtle.”

“Subtle...? Perhaps, you thought that subtle indicates a diminutive microscopic body! No, no. The expression, ‘subtler than the subtle’ means, *nirguna*, characteristicless, devoid of qualities, something that you cannot fathom with the help of the eye and the ear and the rest of the senses. A thing becomes subtler with the reduction of its characteristics. If it has more, it is less subtle.

“Sabda (sound), sparsa (touch), roopa (form), rasa (taste), gandha (smell)—these are the characteristics of the five elements: Akasa (space), Vayu (air, wind), Agni (fire), Jala (water), and Prithivi (earth). Prithivi has all the five. Jala has only four. Agni has three, roopa, sparsa and sabda. Vayu has just sparsa and sabda. Akasa has only one, sabda. That is to say, each of these is subtler than the rest and Akasa is the subtlest of all.

“This is self-evident. Prithivi or the earth is just stationary. Water or Jala is subtler and so, it flows. Agni or Fire is subtler than water and so it rises up. Vayu or Air which is even more subtle can travel on all sides. Akasa has just one characteristic, Sabda. It has no touch, or form or taste or scent. The Lord who is beyond these five elements has none of these characteristics. He is subtler than the subtlest. He is all-pervasive, immanent in all. It is the characteristic that makes a thing heavy. The Lord has no such burden. So, He is subtler than everything else.

“Next, about the fifth expression: Sarvaadhaara (the Basis of All). There are two categories: Aadhaara and Aadheya. All that exists is seen by the eye or heard by the ear, (why, the entire Creation) is Aadheya, the based; they are all composed of the Five Elements. Well, the Five Elements are all Aadheya; for, they are based on the Basis, Brahman. Brahman is the Only Basis. It is not based on another entity, for, there is no Second. Therefore, He is Sarvaadhaara, the Basis of All.

“The sixth too, I shall make clear to you. *Achinthya roopam*, with an Unpicturable Form, a Form that cannot be delineated or imagined. For He is beyond the reach of the Mind and it is the mind that pictures, delineates or imagines. So, His roopam or Form is Achinthya or incapable of being imagined by the mind. You might hesitate to accept this. But the mind is matter. It is inert. It is fleeting. But Brahman or Paramatma is pure ‘Consciousness.’ It is eternal, everlasting, imperishable. It and Mind are at opposite poles,

the fleeting and the fixed. They are totally unrelated. One dies, the other remains! The inert and the active are unrelated.

“The question may arise in your mind: what then is the Sadhaka to do? Oh, he is not deprived of hope. Let him picture the Paramatma as unpicturable, that is enough. Dwell on such thoughts as this and the fruit will be vouchsafed unto you. The Sadhaka must first learn the channels along which his thoughts should run.”

At this, Arjuna pleaded with Krishna thus: “Lord, let us proceed. Time is running fast. We cannot be stationary in this battlefield without assuming responsibility or making a decision. War is facing us with open jaws, ready to swallow and overwhelm. I am ready to obey the instruction you may be pleased to give me. Only, let there be no delay.” Hence, quickly enlighten me about the seventh attribute of the Saguna-nirakaara (God with qualities but without form).”

“Yes, the seventh is: Aadhithya-varnam, with the Splendour of the Sun as His Complexion. This means, ‘He is self-effulgent as the Sun. He is independent. He is the Source of the light He shines with.’ He is the effulgence of the Sun. He makes the Sun shine. So, He is named Aadhithya. I shall tell you about the eighth too, straightaway. ‘Thamasah Parasthaath’—‘Beyond Darkness.’ He is the Witness of Darkness or Ajnana. For Para means Witness, one unaffected. No darkness is as dark as Ajnana; it is so deep and so dangerous. Maya is another word for this Ajnana and so Thamasah Parasthaath means ‘beyond Maya.’

“Arjuna! Just close your eyes for a moment; what is it that you experience? Complete Darkness, is it not? How did you know that it is dark? You cannot see darkness. Then how did you announce that there was darkness there? There are two entities there—darkness and he who sees the darkness, is it not so? If you are yourself darkness, how can you see the darkness? No, you are the Seer and so you are not Darkness. Darkness is that which is seen. The Seer is you. You are the witness.

“Now, consider another fact: Man very often condemns himself as an ignoramus, but if he really were an ignoramus or a fool, how is he able to recognise his own ignorance? From where did he get that knowledge? When did that Jnana enter him? And how?

“Ajnana is the ‘seen’; Jnana is the ‘seer.’ You are the Drk (seer) which sees the Drsya or Ajnana (ignorance). In the same way, all the eight descriptions above have to be contemplated upon. That is the correct meditation of the Form of the Lord.”

Arjuna asked, “Krishna! Is such meditation alone enough or has it to be supplemented?”

“Of course, when this meditation is practised, care should be taken to see that the mind is concentrated on that thing only. It should not pursue diverse objectives. It must attach itself to that One Supreme, with Love and Devotion, Prema and Bhakthi. Usually, man’s love gets fastened to trifling temporary things and so gets entangled in setbacks

and sorrows. So the love has to be withdrawn from such objects and centred on the Lord.

“I shall tell you briefly what Bhakthi consists of, listen! Bhakthi is the complete identification of one’s mental activities with those of the Ideal on which the attachment is centred.”

Here, Arjuna intercepted and asked, “How is that ever possible, O Lord?” “It is possible, Arjuna. Control the senses, let the mind be effaced as much as possible and let the heart be purified, let the vital airs be uplifted into the highest region of the *Seersha* (Head), let the individual be established in the Atmic truth, and let the Pranava be the only point of attention at the moment of the Prana leaving the body. Such a one comes to Me and joins with Me. His mental activities become the same as Mine,” said Krishna.

Here, readers should fix their attention on what the Lord told Arjuna. The Lord spoke of the control of the senses, not their destruction. Control means under one’s behest, obedient to the will. Destruction means denial of activity, full inaction. The Lord also said of all the senses, not of any one or two only. Man must keep all senses under his control and use them only when the purposes for which they have been devised are to be fulfilled. They should not be let loose, just because one has them. Give them the functions they are designed for, but do not allow them to master you and ruin you. Let them work strictly on regulated lines. That is the Lord’s intention.

There is another thing too. You must yourself reason out and discover what exactly will expand your heart and what will breed disquiet. Then, hold fast to the former and give up the latter. Or else, straying in devious paths like an insane ape, you will have to twist and turn in confusion. What is the cause of all the troubles and discontent to which many are subjected nowadays? It is the improper use they make of the senses.

Who are the proper people to enter through each door of your home? You must decide and carefully watch. Those who must enter by one door should not use some other door. If they do, then, that house will have only discontent, confusion, disorder. It is wiser to take precautions against such disorder before entrance is effected, rather than deal with the intruders after they have come in, through the wrong door. You may excuse the trespass for the first time. But certainly, you must take enough care to see that it is not repeated. That is the better method, though not the best.

Again, Arjuna felt a doubt arising in him. If the senses are bound, how can the Om be pronounced? Krishna understood this. He took up the matter Himself. “Arjuna! Om has to be pronounced in the mind, not through the mouth as a sensory organ!” Next, Arjuna raised another question to relieve himself of another doubt. “You said, *Japathonaasthi paathakam*, he who does Japam has no sin. But if Japam cures one from sin, what happens to Liberation, Moksha? Evidently, Japam is powerless to bring that about. Japam will not enable one to concretise the Lord.”

The Lord was happy when Arjuna mentioned this doubt. “Partha (Arjuna)! Your question is important. But let Me tell you, Moksha need not be sought after, separately, apart from other objectives. If Om is recited and the significance of the Om, that is to say, the Lord, is meditated upon, then the Lord is attained by you. In other words, you are liberated.” Arjuna insisted on his point. He asked, “Lord! Is it ever possible for Japam to bring about both results? Of course, it is easy for You to declare so, but trouble starts when we follow the path of Japam and Dhyanam.”

Krishna replied, “It is just for this purpose that I mentioned at the very start about Abhyasa Yoga, the value of practice or Abhyasa. Practice, steady practice, will ensure you both results, freedom from sin and Liberation. Probably, you do not realise the importance of practice. O foolish Arjuna, do you not see here how practice makes an animal execute difficult tasks? Look at these horses yoked to the chariot, these elephants ranged on the field. They render the assistance in battle which even man with the superior equipment of reason cannot give! Consider how this was made possible. Where have elephants dwelling in the forest observed the tactics of battle? Or do you hold that fighting on the battlefield is their nature? No, their present skill is proof of the value of practice, Abhyasa.

“Similarly, practise the withdrawal of the mind from the senses, steadily. Then it will develop skills which will release you from bondage. Let Me tell you, those who repeat with their last breath the sacred Pranava do attain the Lord.” Krishna said this with emphasis.

Arjuna made bold to put another query. “Lord it is good that those who repeat the Pranava with their last breath attain the Lord. But what about those who do not? Their number is certainly much larger. Have they no chance of release? In the Court of the Almighty, are only some to be honoured with seats? Have the miserable and the poor no accommodation at all? Tell me where they go, where they will be admitted.”

“Arjuna! You are falling into a great error, beware. The Lord does not discriminate between the weak and the strong or the high and the low. Such an attitude will never warp His Vision. All are entitled to His Grace. All are entitled to enter His Durbar (Convocation) Hall. Its doors are ever open. No guards are there to bar the entrance of anyone. No one is prevented. No one is invited. All are welcome to enter. What can anyone do if some do not approach the door? Those who desire warmth have to go near enough to the fireside and sit there. Those who stand afar can know only the light that emerges from that fireside. What do you say of that man who, standing afar, declares that the fire has no warmth? He certainly is not sane.

“All who yearn for the Presence, all who desire to enter the Durbar of the Lord and who strive in their mind constantly for the fruition of that desire, all have admission and accommodation there. It is not everyone that can repeat the Pranava at the last moment. That is the reason why constant remembrance of the Lord is said to have the power of inducing the Lord to bear the burden of your Yogakshema,

happiness here and hereafter. Of course, this too has to be practised long. Sadhana gains everything, sadhana, steady and strong.