

## Chapter XXVII

Abandoning pride in the ego and in possessions (feelings of I and mine) and surrendering.

Just as the healthy glow of the body is hidden from sight by the clothes that cover it, so the individual soul obscured by egotism (*ahamkara*) is not able to reveal the splendour of the true knowledge of *Brahman* (*Brahmathathwa*), which is its treasured possession. For egotism is at the root of all evil, all defects, all deficiencies. It is born in desire (*kama*). Be free from egotism too.

The state of desirelessness is really the state of egolessness. And what is liberation (*moksha*) except liberation from bondage to the ego? You deserve liberation when you break away from the bond of desire.

People engage themselves, by and large, in activities prompted only by the desire to benefit from the results. They withdraw from acts that bring no benefit. But the *Gita* condemns both attitudes. For whether consequences follow or not, one cannot escape the obligation to be active. People cannot completely give up activity. How then can they avoid being caught up in the mesh of consequences? The *Gita* teaches giving up all attachment to the fruit of action as the greatest spiritual discipline designed for this purpose.

Whether desired or discarded, hoped for or not, every act ends in some consequence, if not immediately, at least after some time. It is inevitable. The consequence may be good or evil, but if the act is dedicated to the Lord, neither will affect the doer. By that sacrament of dedication, the deed is transmuted into a higher order and made divine, holy, sacred. On the other hand, acts performed under the inspiration of the ego will be fraught with bondage.

Those who are sincerely seeking to realize God have to become free from the taint of desire in order to achieve Him. Become devoid of mine-ness; then you attain *moksha*, salvation. That is the achievement of the goal of life. That stage knows no joy or grief; it is above and beyond them both. Krishna willed that His friend and devotee Arjuna should reach that state, so He endeavoured to save him by teaching him the ways and means through a variety of methods. Moreover, He used him as an instrument to receive this precious gift for the good of all humanity.

Before concluding sacred counsel, Krishna addressed Arjuna and said, “Give up all *dharmas* and surrender to Me. I shall liberate you from all sin. That is to say, give up pride in the ego (*ahamkara*) and in possessions and mine-ness (*mama-kara*). Destroy the identification of the self with the body, which is only its cage or prison; get firm in the belief that all this is the highest *Atma* (*Paramatma*) and nothing else. There is nothing else to be done except to bow to His will and surrender to His plan.

“One has to give up the twin activities of commission and omission, resolving (*sankalpa*) and doubting (*vikalpa*). One has to follow the Lord’s commands, to accept His will and be happy wherever He has placed them, however He has shaped them. One should keep oneself far from the inquiry into the appropriateness or inappropriateness of their acts, but do them as acts of worship to the Lord, acts for which no reward is expected. That is the sum of duty.”

Some dry *vedantins* decked with strings of beads take advantage of this teaching of Krishna to give up all duties (*dharmas*) and, with this assurance that He will liberate them from all sin, idly stretch their legs and loll

with closed eyes. They shirk their legitimate duties and eat, sleep, and roam about as much as they like or can. They do not discriminate between good and bad; their excuse is that the Lord has commanded them to transcend *dharmā*. When elders at home or experienced seekers question their conduct, they answer, “Alas, that you too should blunder thus! Don’t you know what the Lord said in the *Gita*? I have accepted His command, ‘cast aside all duties (*sarva dharmāan parithyajya*)’ as the basis of my conduct. I don’t accept advice from people with lesser authority”. They feel very proud of their devotion and orthodoxy.

Such people select from the words of the Lord only the portions that favour their inclinations. The words before and after are conveniently ignored because they are unpleasant, although they are inseparable portions of the same injunction. They ignore the vital part of the command, in spite of the claim to be staunch votaries of the *Gita*.

Give up all feelings of obligations and responsibilities. “Surrender to Me alone (*maam ekam sharanam vraja*)”, says the Lord. Have they surrendered thus? No. Have they at least the deep yearning for liberation? No, for if they had it, they would not have neglected their legitimate duties. They would not have fallen prey to the demands of food and sleep. Such people are glorious only in gossip; they are great only in glittering. They do not put the Lord’s command into actual practice. They are too idle to do so. Not even an atom of spiritual endeavour can be seen in them.

True aspirants can discern valuable truths in the divine words spoken by the Lord:

Abandon all *dharmas*; Surrender to Me alone.

I shall free you from all sins; Do not fear.

(*Sarva dharmāan parithyajya*

*Maam ekam saranam vraja;*

*Aham thwam sarvapaapebhyo*

*Mokshayishyami, maa suchah*)

Note that the Lord said, “Abandon all *dharmas* (*sarva dharmāan parithyajya*)”, not “abandon all actions (*sarva karmaan parithyajya*)”. What then is the meaning of this statement? It means, “perform all acts enjoined by the Lord for His glorification, without getting involved and lost in discussions of *dharmā* and non-*dharmā*.”

Although you know that there is nothing for you to acquire, for you have placed complete trust in the Lord and live only as an offering to the Lord, still, like Janaka and others, you have to engage in activity for the well-being of the world. The soul immanent in every being is not distinct from the *Atma* or soul that is in you. So, be eager to promote the well-being of all beings. Perform all acts enjoined by the scriptures for this sake, in the spirit of dedication, with no eye on the fruits thereof. This is true renunciation of the fruit of action (*nish-kama-karma*).

Understand the *Gita* well and, observing its injunctions, establish yourselves in the attitude of renunciation of the fruit of action. Do all duties as acts of worship, offerings to God. That is the sole task. Leave the rest to Him: the fruit, the consequence, the result. Then, you receive the grace of Hari and your life on earth is sanctified and becomes worthwhile.

For those who follow the path of *dharmā*, ultimate victory is certain, in spite of diverse difficulties that might hamper them. Those who stray from the path of *dharmā* might have wealth and comfort for a long time, but they will ultimately be overpowered by disaster. The Kauravas and Pandavas are the brightest witnesses for this truth.

The Kauravas, steeped in non-*dharmā*, were so blinded by conceit that they subjected the good Pandavas to

a variety of tortures, but the Kauravas met with total destruction. They had the support of all types of parties but, since they did not earn the strength of the grace of the Lord, they were deserted by fate and ruined beyond repair. The *Mahabharatha* teaches all people of India (Bharath) this one lesson: Nothing can equal the grace of God, not even the mightiest array of arms. This is the most valuable message that it embodies.

The Mansion of *Gita* is the mansion of truth and *dharma*, erected on the soil of India for the benefit of the world. Study it with faith and devotion. Experience the curative and restorative effects of its teachings by actual practice. For people who do this, the *Atma*, so full of the spring of sweetness and bliss (*Atma-rama*), will be ever-present as a reality. The Lord will shower His favours on such people in a trice. Pray to the Lord, who has all the fourteen worlds in Him, and you can certainly become master of the eight treasures that give happiness here below and, what is even more desirable, liberation (*kaivalya*), which is the fountain of eternal bliss, eternal truth, and eternal wisdom .

Why wander about for ghee when you have butter with you? Acquire butter, that is to say, the grace of the Lord, by implicit obedience to the rules of life laid down by Him. When that grace is won, there is no need to pray separately for liberation. He knows best what you should get and when. He will confer what you deserve and what is beneficial. Yearn for Him, suffer anguish for Him; then there is no need to yearn for *moksha*. If that is done with no second thought, He will destroy all sin. Hold fast to Him; He can make you immortal, like Arjuna. Those who seek to escape from this cycle of birth and death must obey the command of the Lord as laid down in the *Gita* and surrender to Him. Then, they will be crowned with success in every undertaking. They will achieve victory.