

A STUDY OF THE BHAGAVADGITA



Swami Krishnananda

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is a series of discourses that Swamiji gave to the Ashram's Y.V.F. Academy from April to June 1990, on the Bhagavadgita. The Bhagavadgita was one of Swamiji's favorite scriptural texts, and Swamiji was never tired of expounding its truths. All of Swamiji's discourses were delivered extempore, and no matter how many times he spoke on a subject, the approach was always fresh and unique.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BHAGAVADGITA

There are two forces in this world, upon a balancing of which everything functions. They may be designated as the positive and the negative powers of nature, or the subjective and the objective sides of experience. There are two sides for everything in this world: one which receives, and another which is received; that which is conscious of an act taking place, and the object towards which the action is supposed to take place. Philosophically, these phases of experience, or activity of force, are known as the subjective phase and the objective phase.

There is a world in front of you, and you are also there in this world. Right from morning till evening, until you go to bed at night, you are engaged in the handling of this world—the world consisting of anything which you have to encounter, which you have to face in some way or the other, which stares at you as a question, a problem or a task to be executed. The early morning gazes at you as a problem and a series of questionnaires. These are the things to be done in respect of the atmosphere, the environment in which you are living.

The circumstances, the conditions of life taken in their totality, all things that you regard as whatever is to be done or handled, may be regarded as your world. “I live in a world.” This is what you may say to your own self. But what kind of world is it in which you are living? You have in front of you the world of nature: the solar system, the sun,

the moon and the stars, the galaxies, space and time, the mountains and the rivers, the forests, the hills and the dales, and the ground on which you are seated. This is the world indeed.

But you will appreciate that your life in this world, which expects you to do something and often forces a hard question, is not necessarily in the mountains and the rivers, nor the sun and the moon and the stars. You are not thinking of them very much. "Today I have to deal with the sun or the moon or the mountain in front of me in some manner. Today I have to handle this Earth. I have a lot of work to do with the forests and the hills and the dales." These questions do not arise in your mind. The world of nature does not seem to be posing a problem as you would define a problem in your personal experience. When you make statements such as, "I have a lot of difficulty. It is difficult to live in this world," obviously you are not referring to the world of nature—mountains and rivers, or the trees in the forest. You are not even referring to the animals in the jungle, though they are important enough and you have to be cautious of them. All the subhuman species which you may categorise under the animal, plant, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms do not seem to be attracting your concern so much as something else which you have in your mind when you say that this is a difficult world.

If you psychoanalytically subject yourself to a study of what experience it is that you are passing through in your daily life, you will realise that your adjustments, which you call your work in this world, are concerned with human

beings more predominantly than with anything else. You wake up in the morning and prepare yourself for work. Mostly, it may be work in a particular condition where other people are also involved, such as farming, working in a factory or being in an office—all which involve necessary adaptation to human circumstances. All work in this world is related to the existence of people and things other than your own self. This word ‘objectivity’, as distinguished from the subjectivity of your own personality, actually concerns itself with this world which is humanly oriented and externally conditioned. The world of experience is something outside you. Here is the whole problem.

The Bhagavadgita starts with a great human question—a problem that did not appear to be there at all, and suddenly it projected itself into a concrete confrontation under another circumstance altogether. People in an undivided family, for instance, with several brothers involved, may be living a happy life of mutual harmony and adjustable sacrifice. Brothers, as the word itself signifies, constitute a fraternity of affectionate members cooperating mutually in every conceivable way. Brothers are always friends. They cannot be anything other than that. They are cooperative forces. You cannot expect a conflict among brothers; else, they would not be brothers. But apart from the fact that persons are fraternally related in a family, there is another element involved which is often missed in the heyday of our ignorance of the basic relation that obtains between one person and another.

It is not true that conflicts cannot arise between brothers, though the word ‘brother’ is a beautiful word

which implies that such a conflict is unthinkable. Because a person is your brother, a conflict should not arise between you; but because of outside factors, conflicts can arise. A brother is not merely an affectionate participant in a family setup. He is also an independent individual.

Here is the whole point. How can two persons be independent and yet be cooperative to the hilt? How can you expect total sacrifice on the part of a person who is also independent like you? If you consider that the other person is not independent, then you also may not regard yourself as wholly independent. If an abolition of independence assumed by persons can be considered as necessary for a cooperative life of sacrifice, conflict may not arise. Even nations may avoid war if it is not absolutely called for. But a peculiar trait called egoism in human nature which is in families, in communities, in nations—a self-assertive principle which will not submit to the call of any other person or any other nation—may set up a new type of environment around you.

Father and son are perhaps the best example of immense cooperation and affection in a family. Yet, have you heard of them going to court for partition of land and not speaking to each other? Father and son are mutually sacrificing elements—biologically, psychologically and even spiritually cooperative to the basic substratum. Nothing can be a greater affectionate bond than that between a parent and a child. But even between these two, there can be a conflict because the child, when it grows up, assumes a kind of natural independence. This is perhaps the reason why in a slightly sarcastic or humorous way, the great lawgiver

Manu tells us: *prapte tu shorase barse putra mitra-badacharel*. It is an instruction to the father and the mother that when their son reaches sixteen years old, he must be considered as a friend and not as a son. That is, you should no longer subject him to your orders.

The world of nature and the world of human society, when it is subjected to an acute philosophical analysis, will present itself in this circumstance of a dual action taking place between the world of nature and yourself, and yourself and the people around you, who are also like you. The Bhagavadgita occurs in the context of a big Armageddon, the Mahabharata war. The interesting phenomenon of the delivery of the Bhagavadgita is that the most sacred thing that it is—a holy teaching connected with God and creation, something which you would like to hear in a sanctified spot such as a temple or an ashram, a university or an academy, a school or a college—is given in the worst of human conditions, called battle. Nothing can be more odious and unsuited for the delivery of a divine gospel than the field of war where minds are tuned up to an immediate and immanent attack. Such a circumstance was considered as the best occasion for the delivery of the divine gospel.

The great work of Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, who wrote the Mahabharata, is not merely a story that you can witness as a television drama, as you have it these days. It is not a novel which you can read at your leisure for your own personal pleasure. It is a study of human nature. It is a history, no doubt, but not merely a political history like the history of England, Europe or India, as you read in your

colleges. This is a history of human character, the development of the human psyche, and the ups and downs of human development throughout the process of the march of time—not merely confined to a particular point in time. So you may say this great epic of the Mahabharata is a history of the time process, not the history of India, not the history of the Bharatas. It is the history of humanity as conceivable in the very structure of the time process itself.

The term ‘humanity’ should be understood in the context of the creation of the world itself, and not in the light of the anthropological or the modern historical findings which commence human history sometime after 3000-4000 B.C. The history of the world did not start only at that time; it began when creation itself started. When Brahma created Manu, or God created Adam and Eve, you may say, history commenced. Therefore, for you, from the point of view of what you may have to learn from the Bhagavadgita, history may be regarded as a cosmic process. At one place in the Bhagavadgita, the great Master refers to Himself as the Time Spirit. Kālo’smi loka-kṣaya (Gita 11.32): “I am here before you as the world-transforming Time Spirit.”

Transmutation is the process of creation and destruction, and everyone is involved in this time process, which is basically mutation. Time never stands still for even a second. It undergoes transformation. It is a conflict between the present and the future. It absorbs the past into the present and runs forward into the future. There is a continuous activity taking place with every person and every thing involved in time. There is a confrontation of the

three phases of the time process—past, present and future—something going, something coming, or we may say more prosaically, something dying and something being born. It is something like a war taking place. The history of humanity, which is the history of creation itself, is a story of events dying and being born that constitute the whole of history.

God speaks to man in the Bhagavadgita. It is not an individual Krishna that speaks to Arjuna. The symbology, the cosmicality, the inner suggestiveness that is immanent in the entire epic of the Mahabharata is something that you have to read between the lines. Poets do not merely write lines; great poets also write something between the lines. That is the grandeur of the poet. You may read Valmiki, Vyasa, Milton, and Shakespeare. They do not merely tell you their words, but they also tell you something which they have not spoken through the words; that is the spirit of the poetry. It is that which is between the lines, in between the words, that stirs you, stimulates you, enraptures you and causes you to read it again and again. The words, of course, are noted everywhere. Every word in the Mahabharata, every English word used by Shakespeare may be in the dictionary and you know what the meaning of the words are, so no words in Shakespeare can be regarded as unknown to you. But why is it that Shakespeare inspires you? It is not merely the words, but the adjustment of the words, the force that the words are expected to generate by their compilation in a particular manner. That is the poet's power. Poetry inspires you much more than prose—especially great poetry, epic poetry. Vyasa's Mahabharata,

Valmiki's Ramayana, or whatever it is, is some such great example which stimulates you from the heart. What is it that attracts you? It is something you yourself cannot know—a spirit that is operating behind the presentation. The poet's imagination catches you. The battlefield of the Mahabharata, the war that was the occasion for the delivery of the Bhagavadgita, is therefore not merely a local event to which we are making reference.

So when you study the Gita, it is not enough if you merely read the words and understand them grammatically. In almost every good translation or commentary of the Gita, you will find exact grammatical meanings of each Sanskrit word are given; the same thing is arranged in a prose order, and you have the translation. This is good enough. Very few commentaries will go beyond the mere translation and the meaning of the words. There is an old saying that Sri Krishna alone knows what he said, Arjuna knows something of it, the great Suka Rishi knows it, Vyasa knows it, and nobody else can be said to know it entirely. The spirit of the cosmos manifested itself at the time of the delivery of the gospel. It was not the Yadava hero that spoke; the Universal Spirit manifested itself at one stroke, as if the whole world stood up and spoke. Can you imagine how you would receive the gospel if the entire universe stands before you and speaks to you from every corner? Every leaf in the tree speaks, and every atom vibrates and has a tongue before you, which will give you a message. Everywhere is gospel, the whole world coming from all sides. The entire space is speaking to you. What will you feel at that time? You will shudder from the roots of your

being. This happened to Arjuna when the Cosmic Spirit manifested itself; his very roots shook. You can never imagine a condition in which the whole cosmos will speak to you. You have seen only one or two persons speaking to you, or ten people shouting at you. This is all that you know. But can you imagine the entire world speaking to you at one stroke—not merely this Earth, but the whole of creation speaking to you from every nook and corner? That circumstance was stirred up by the conditions described in the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita.

As I mentioned, the conflict which is the battlefield, under which circumstance the Bhagavadgita was thought to be properly delivered, is connected with your very soul itself. It is an *adhyatma-vidya*; it is a spiritual teaching. It is not a war gospel, it is not a military science, it is not a science of sociology, it is not human psychology, it is not even cosmology—though all of this the Bhagavadgita is, because of its integrated nature. As a parent speaks to a child from every aspect of the well-being of the child, God speaks to man from the point of view of the welfare and well-being of creation as a whole. It is a message to me, to you, to all those that were, all those that are, and all those that are yet to be. It is a gospel of eternity. Eternally valid is this message. You cannot say that it was good only at that time when the war took place.

Actually, this war is taking place always. It did not simply take place once upon a time, five thousand years back. The context of the spiritual significance of the Mahabharata battle is an eternal occurrence, and therefore it is taking place even now. As an Arjuna, you are facing the

world context in the same manner as he seems to have faced it many, many years ago. The problems he faced, you are also facing today, but not every day. Today, just now, you are in a hall of teaching; you may not be thinking of a serious problem in your life. Arjuna did not have a problem always in his life. It rose up only when confronted by him. You can know the nature of a human being when you oppose that person. In a very friendly and chummy way you cannot know what a person is, but opposition coming from all sides will rouse up the spirit of even a rat. If you corner it in a room, it will jump on you although it is small. You have cornered it from all sides, and so it asserts its last might—that is, jumping on your face. A mouse can do that, and you will run away. You would not like a mouse to be on your nose.

The world does not always fight with you. Nobody will fight with you always. Even the Kauravas did not fight with Arjuna every day. It looked as if everything was fine. But something unexpected was an inner and outer occurrence, which is the description you have in the First Chapter of the Gita, and that brought the cat out of the bag, as they say; it brought out the true nature of the human individual. There are certain conditions when your true nature comes out, not always. You have enough money in your hand, you have a nice family, you have a friendly society, you are very secure in every way. What is the problem? Everything is good. Honey and milk are flowing in this world. You may think like that, but honey and milk will not always flow. There will be thorns, and you will have to pass through thickets.

Arjuna thought that he lived in a friendly atmosphere of human relation. Bhisma was his grandsire, Drona was his teacher, and the Kurus themselves were very close in blood relation. They were more than friends; they were relatives. Your relative is more concerned with you than a friend. Arjuna, the hero who was the generalissimo in the battle of the Mahabharata, faced the world.

Many of us do not face the world properly because we are cosily placed, and are not being wrenched from all our pet relations. Some good karmas that we performed in the previous life seem to be keeping us satisfactorily happy. But the earth can shake one day, even for the best of men. Even a king can become a pauper tomorrow. Nations can perish. The Roman Empire can go to dust. This is not unthinkable. King and beggar make no difference when they are on their deathbed. They want a little glass of water. The king will say, "Give me a little sip of water. My throat is parched, and I am passing." He will not think of his kingdom, his queen and his ministers. This will also be what the beggar will think: "Give me a little water. My tongue is drying up. I cannot speak." This is what you want finally, when the world tells you what it really is. When it confronts you, it will tell you what it is. *Kālo'smi loka-kṣaya*: It will stand before you as a destroying power.

You may ask, "Is the world so unkind to us? Is God so merciless?" It is nothing of the kind. These ethical and social rules do not obtain in a world which is wider than human society and family relation. 'Mercy', 'goodness', 'kindness', 'affection' are words which are meaningful to us human beings; but the cosmos God has created is not made

up of human beings. God has not created human beings, actually. He has created forces, energies. As modern science will tell you, quanta of powers by a process of permutation and combination become larger by logical embodiments and may look like organisms, plants, animals, and human beings; but really, in God's eye, or to the eye of the world itself, there may not be plants, animals and human beings. There are only cosmic forces operating.

Any kind of attachment or aversion, any emotion which is sunk in love and hatred, is not the way in which the world is working or, perhaps, God Himself is working. God does not love you or hate you. *Nādatte kasyacit pāpaṃ na caiva sukṛtaṃ vibhuḥ* (5.15): The Lord wants not your good deeds, nor does He care for your bad deeds. The actions that you perform are the dispensers of your own justice. The universe is more an embodied law than a field of force that looks like human beings.

Perhaps many of you are scientists, or at least acquainted with the science of Newton, and so on. The classical science of Newton says that many things are in this world of space and time as things can be in a basket or glass balls can be in a soda bottle. In that way, the world of matter seems to be inside space and time. This is the classical picture that Newton and Laplace presented before us, making out thereby that there is no organic relationship between space and time and the world of matter, much less the relation between ourselves and space and time. That would keep us away from the structure of the cosmos, vitally speaking. If Newton's statement was entirely true, space and time would not be vitally connected with us. We

would be like apples in a basket. A basket knows not that there are apples, and the apple does not know that it is inside a basket, though it is inside. Such is the case that is made out by classical science, classical mathematics. Two and two make four. They cannot make anything less or anything more.

But modern findings, as you are all perhaps aware, have shown a vital relationship between even space and time and your own selves, so that you are sitting in this hall at your desk, not unconnected with the walls around you, not unconnected with the sun that is shining in the sky, not unconnected even with the distant stars or what you may call the white hole or the black hole. With that you are connected even just now. Though modern science is not regarded as a spiritual science, it tells you, very strangely, that every cell in your brain is connected to every atom of the cosmos. Every person is a cosmic individual, you may say. Certainly you are made in the image of God; and as God is a cosmic entity, anything that is made in the image of that cosmic substance should also have a cosmic significance. So you are not Mr. so-and-so, a little boy born of somebody who is your father. This is not the way in which the Bhagavadgita asks you to understand yourself, your relations, your friends, your society.

Arjuna never knew that there is such a profundity involved in his relation with the atmosphere outside. He thought he was a Pandava, a son of so-and-so, brother of so-and-so, relative of so-and-so, student of so-and-so—none of which is our description. The Bhagavadgita becomes an eternal gospel only because of the fact that it

stands above all sciences, all teachings, and every branch of learning in schools and colleges as a solution to your ultimate problem, which is the relation of yourself to creation itself. When you die one day, what happens to you? Your sciences, your geographies and histories do not know what happens to you, though it is an event that can take place at any moment. What is the good of your education, your degrees, if tomorrow something happens to you and they cannot help? The whole thing is gone. You have gone to the winds. You have become ashes. Is this the tragedy you are expecting in this world by working so hard, by the sweat of your brow, in offices and factories to take care of your family when you are going to die tomorrow? It is a predicament you cannot escape, which you have to face.

But nature has a trick, a peculiar stratagem by which it prevents you from knowing that such a tragedy can take place; else you will not eat today, you will not sleep, you will not drink a cup of water if you know that tomorrow is the last day—which it can be, but it should not be known. The stratagem of nature keeps you in ignorance of the facts of life and presents before you a golden apple brought from the garden of Hesperides. This is very, very unfortunate.

Sri Krishna's gospel is God's gospel to mankind, not merely to people in India, in an eternal setup. It is not a religious gospel of Hinduism, or a religious teaching at all; it is a scientific teaching connected with your relationship with the entire creation. Therefore, ordinary commentaries will not be of much utility to you though, of course, they introduce you to the basic framework of the teaching.

The Bhagavadgita is the Lord's song, as they say. Bhagavan is Bhagavat. Song is a musical message that has sprung from God, as it were. When God speaks, He speaks in a language of Eternity. He does not speak in English or Sanskrit or Latin. It is the tongue of the Eternal that spoke here. That ferocious and fear-striking picture that is painted in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita is a faint attempt that is made by the best ability of the poet to tell you what you can expect finally when the world does not want you any more. When you go to war, you do not always go with the idea of coming back safe. You may go to the other side also; but what is the use of going to the other side? What is the purpose? Even if death is the outcome of a war which is considered as very unavoidable, what happens to you after death?

If nothing happens after death, perhaps nothing happens in this life also. There will be no significance in what you do in this world. If the life that you live in this world is full of meaning, there will also be meaning in what happens to you after the passing of this body. Life and death are connected in the life that is eternal. Life is disconnected from death in the life that we live in time; but our life is not merely confined to time. It is timeless. You have taken many births. How many births you have taken, nobody can say. Right from the original will of the Almighty Himself at the time of creation, and the evolutionary process, which is the process of mutation, you have been conditioned to all these subjections to the different species through which you have passed. Indian tradition says that eighty-four lakhs [8,400,000] of *yonis* or

species are there through which you have to pass before you become a human being, and even the birth of a human being is not the last terminus of human evolution.

The restlessness that you feel in this world and the unhappiness that characterises your daily life will tell you that life in this world as a human being is not complete. If human life is complete, you would be happy always and no problem would be facing you. There would be no anxiety of any kind if human life is the last point, the terminus.

The Upanishads say there are realms of being that transcend human life, and modern evolutionary doctrine says there are species above the mineral, the plant and the animal, leading to the human species. The Upanishads say that there are realms of being, denizens occupying a different order of life altogether, larger than what can be comprehended by a human being. The Gandharvas, the Devas, the realm of Brihaspati, Narayana and Nara, up to Prajapati, Brahma, Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Ishvara, and the Absolute, are used to take your mind beyond the concept of human satisfaction and human limitation.

Life is not complete merely with bread and jam. Even with the best of comforts that you have in this world, you are still very poor in comparison with the great blessing that is ahead of you. That will be opened up in a series through the chapters of the Bhagavadgita, which are eighteen in number. There are also eighteen books of the Mahabharata. They seem to be designating a gradational ascent of teaching, the movement of the spirit of man in an advance in the direction of higher and higher dimensions

of experience until God-experience becomes the fulfillment of life.

In the earliest of stages, which is the First Chapter, it is a tragic experience. It is a battlefield that is described there, with kettledrums of war, bands beating for the forthcoming neck-to-neck fight, and arms drawn for the eventuality. With that, the Bhagavadgita commences the First Chapter. And the greatest hero Arjuna, representing humanity itself we may say, cowed down. The best of men cannot face the forces of nature. The widest learning that you have will not give you even one piece of bread that is not earned and produced by somebody else.

To this condition of a possible descent of human nature into an utter helplessness of understanding of what is ahead, Arjuna was introduced. It is something that any one of us can expect. Perhaps some of us have an inkling of what the bitter side of life is. I do not think every one of you is the happiest of human beings. There is something pricking your back that you are trying to ignore by adding a cushion, but still it is pricking. Life tells you that it is not always very soft. With every beautiful rose flower, you will also find a little thorn on its stem. So for every pleasure that comes to human nature, there is also a little poisonous sting which may manifest itself one day or the other.

When you study a subject, you have to see the whole of it. Therefore, learning should not be merely a branch of learning such as physics, mathematics, history, or geography, because a historian does not know what geography is, and a geography student does not know what history is. Their knowledge is parochial, very limited. But

the wisdom of life, the insight into things, is a total grasp of things and knowing all things at the same time by an intuitional sight. That it is which the Bhagavadgita will provide for us.

Chapter 2

THE BACKGROUND OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ, māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva kim akurvata sañjaya (Gita 1.1). This is the first verse of the Bhagavadgita. It is a query raised by King Dhritarashtra to his counsellor, Sanjaya: “When the Pandavas and the Kauravas were arrayed in the field for a battle, what actually happened? How did they get on among themselves?”

This world, this field of universal conflict, may also be considered as Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra at the same time. The field of the Mahabharata war was the geographical location called Kurukshetra—a place of pilgrimage even now, which you can visit whenever you have time. It is also designated in this verse as Dharmakshetra because it is said that in this particular holy spot many *yajnas* or sacrifices were performed by *rishis* of yore; therefore, the place has the blessedness of being charged with the atmosphere of sanctity generated by sacrifices—*yajnas* performed even by gods themselves, as the tradition goes.

This world in which we are living is also, simultaneously, a Dharmakshetra and a Kurukshetra. Commentators on the Bhagavadgita referring to this particular verse make out that Kurukshetra may also mean ‘a field of activity, being busy’, and Dharmakshetra may mean ‘a field of righteousness’. This world—which is also a field of conflict in many a way, as I tried to point out in the previous discourse—is indeed busy with the process of the

evolution of the created beings on Earth. Everything is busy; all are active. From the minutest particle of the mineral world right up to the human level, you will find everything is busy doing something. Even the galaxies and the systems above in the skies are not static entities. Everything moving in a state of flux is this world. Momentary is the appearance of anything, at any time. As it is well said, you cannot touch the same water of the river in two consecutive seconds. The river flows. You are not now what you were a few minutes before; and in the future, a few minutes later, you shall not be what you are now. Everything is hurrying forward like the carriages of a railway train. So the world, this entire creation, is one of intense activity, movement, restlessness, transitoriness, fluxation, a hurrying onward.

It is also, at the same time, a field of virtue and goodness, of righteousness of the law. This activity of the world is not a haphazard movement in any direction whatsoever. It is a well-organised movement. It is a systematised activity, which means to say, it is conditioned by a law that is directing it. Though endless is the variety of activity that is going on everywhere in this world, this endlessness is rooted basically in a single orderliness. It is not that anything is going anywhere, in any direction whatsoever. There is a methodology in the universal activity. This method is the law, so-called.

On the one hand, therefore, you are intensely active; on the other hand, your activity is guided by a principle. The guiding principle is the *dharma*, the righteousness mentioned here, and the activity is that in which you are

engaged. That which subjects you under a compulsion of activity to do something or other every day is the Kurukshetra aspect of this world—the karma field, as it is called. But all the multitudinousness of your activity is finally determined by a principle, and everyone who is busy in this world knows that it is this principle that guides them.

You are busy and active because there is something that you wish to achieve through that activity. The achievement is a future occurrence. A thing that has not taken place, and is yet to be, is the futurity of the expectation through the activity that is a present involvement. That a future, which is only an expectation that is hoped for, is connected with the present, which is the actual activity, would indicate that there is a law that connects the present with the future. Though every bit of time process is disconnected, as it were—the past has gone, the future has not yet come, and the present is like a hair's breadth of indescribable duration—notwithstanding this fact, there is a connection between the past, the present and the future. The memory of the past, the involvement in the present, and the expectation of the future are a total occurrence in the psyche of the individual. If you cannot expect anything which is not yet to be—if the future has no connection with the present, and something which you are expecting many years ahead is not related to the present activity—that expectation would be a futile exercise. "I shall reap a harvest of satisfaction twenty years afterwards." With that hope, you plant a little tendril or sow a seed in the garden. The connection of the present activity with the future

expectation is a part of the law. And there is actually a single law operating in the whole world. Its manifestations are several, but its root is single.

Dharma, the principle of righteousness or justice, is what we may consider as the law of integration of things—the cohesion of factors—bringing together discreet particulars and creating a meaning between items which are apparently not related to each other. Several things in this world do not appear to be connected to one another; but there is a connection between what happens on this planet Earth and the distant stars. It brings about an inner correlation between the apparently remote principle or entity with the location of your own self.

In this field, which is therefore the world of action and the world of righteousness, two forces are arrayed for the achievement of an expected result. The principle of battle and war is the breaking down of the present circumstance and the creation of a new condition altogether. What is now has to be broken down, it has to be effaced completely, and what is not now should be generated by the very action of the effacement of the present. War is a destruction of what is at present, with the expectation of something that will be created in the future. With this expectation it is that the Pandavas and the Kauravas armed themselves in the field of Kurukshetra.

The word used by Dhritarashtra is also significant: “My people.” This is the word that he used first: *māmakāḥ*; *pāṇḍavāś caiva*: and the sons of Pandu. “What did my people and the sons of Pandu do in the field of Kurukshetra, having arrayed themselves for battle?” There

is a marked difference between how we evaluate things related to ourselves and things which we consider as not related to ourselves: "My people are the group headed by Duryodhana. The sons of Pandu belong to Pandu only; they are not mine."

This world is constituted of two things: what is mine and what is not mine. The whole battle is just between these two forces: mine and not mine. Don't you think that the world is made up of only these two things? Is there anything else in this world? "This is my house, these are my relations, this is my family, this is my property, this is my village, this is my hutment, this is my country. That is not mine." Sometimes parents tell little children, "Your neighbour is your enemy; don't go to that house." So children are initiated at the very outset as to how to think in terms of 'mine' and 'not mine'.

You have to put on a dual attitude in your daily life in respect of what is yours and what is not yours. It does not mean that you are involved only in what is yours. You are also daily involved in things which are not yours. The world is not compartmentalised in such a marked way that you can completely be free from relation with what is not yours. Wherever you are, even in a motorbus or a railway train, you will find what is not yours and perhaps what is yours.

Inasmuch as what is yours and what is not yours is to be found everywhere, you have to put on an attitude of adjustment daily, right from the beginning of the day. You place yourselves in a state of tension because of this dual principle that seems to be confronting you. You arm yourselves psychologically when you enter an office, go for

a meeting, enter a parliament house or work in a factory. Psychologically, you are at drawn swords for every kind of eventuality, a psychological war that may be created on account of the circumstance of there being in that field of work two principles operating: that which is yours and that which is not yours.

When you go to work in a factory or an office, you will find certain peculiar conditions prevailing which you cannot regard as yours, or as palatable to you. You would like to shunt them off and push them out, show them a stepmotherly treatment, or wish that they would not be there at all. And there are other circumstances in the very same place which you would eagerly like to have, or wish they would continue for as long as possible. But whatever be your wish and your attempt to adjust yourself to these circumstances, you are in a state of tension. You will never find in this world only that which is not yours, nor will you find only things which are yours. They will all be mixed up. Even under your nose just at this moment you will find there are two factors operating: that which you would like to have and that which you would not like to have; something pleases you and something displeases you. So pleasure and pain, love and hatred, like and dislike condition our very existence.

The king uttered these words, perhaps not knowing their implication. He was blind, physically as well as mentally. He could not see things because he was born blind, but he could not understand things properly because he was intellectually ignorant. This question was raised before Sanjaya, the counsellor, the minister of

Dhritarashtra, and this question is raised before every one of us in this world of action, which is the world of righteousness.

The Bhagavadgita in its entirety, in all its eighteen chapters, may be said to be telling you nothing but this much: how you can blend action with the principle of righteousness in a state of harmony. Act you must. You cannot escape from the performance of the deed. Some kind of engagement is always there, and no one can be free from doing something. The Gita will tell you that even when you are apparently doing nothing, you are engaged in that particular action of doing nothing. Therefore, not doing anything is an impossibility.

Now, the question of doing or not doing is not an easy state of affairs. It was not possible even for a wise, very cultured individual such as Arjuna to make a decision as to what is to be done and what is not to be done. He did not know exactly what was before him. Many a time we do things under the impression that those things are expected of us, but the consequences are not always before our eyes. We are blinded, to some extent, as regards the results that follow from our action. It is the expectation of the Gita that your deeds, your expectations, your performances, the works that you do, should be guided by a central principle. What that central principle is will be told to you gradually during the course of the discourse. There is a gradational ascent of the teaching which culminates later on at a point when you will be face to face with the most stimulating fact that nothing can be done unless it is cosmically involved.

This world of righteousness and action, Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra, is the field where the Pandavas and the Kauravas girt up their loins for the Mahabharata war, as it is called. You perhaps know the background of the story of the Mahabharata. There were, in ancient times, certain ruling princes, cousin brothers, usually called the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Dhritarashtra and Pandu were brothers. Because Dhritarashtra was blind, he was not considered fit to rule the kingdom. Pandu was to rule. But as fate would have it, Pandu died prematurely and Dhritarashtra had to be installed as king though he was blind and otherwise unfit. The children of Pandu were called the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra therefore, being the king, found himself practically unable to handle the affairs of the state, and the powers virtually went to the hand of his eldest son, Duryodhana. The eldest of the Pandavas was Yudhishtira, and his brothers were Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva; they were five in number. The sons of Dhritarashtra were one hundred, and he had a daughter also, making one hundred and one.

Right from the beginning of childhood there was a feud between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Kauravas constituted the children of Dhritarashtra; the Pandavas were these five brothers. Right from early childhood there was animosity on the part of the Kauravas, especially Duryodhana, in respect of the Pandavas. They tried their best to see that the Pandavas were annihilated. They poisoned them, tried to burn their house, drove them out, and many such things were done. Somehow or other, the Pandavas did not die; they survived. The Pandavas married

Draupadi, the daughter of King Draupada, and it was at this time that the Kauravas learned that the Pandavas had not died. Though Duryodhana had hatched a plan to burn them alive in their house made of a combustible material, this plan somehow did not succeed. When Dhritarashtra came to know that the Pandavas were still alive, and Bhishma, the moral leader of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas, also came to know of this fact, he ordered the invitation of the Pandavas and saw that they were installed in a proper place and had their own independent estate to rule—a place called Khandavprastha, which later on became known as Indraprastha.

It was in Indraprastha that Yudhishtira, virtually having been installed as an independent king, wished to perform the Rajasuya sacrifice, which means to say that he expected the other rulers nearby to be vassals paying tribute to him, and he would be the emperor par excellence. Due to Yudhishtira's reputation of goodness, virtue and greatness, all the kings participated in this sacrifice and offered tribute to him. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered for this grand sacrifice, gold and silver flowed from all directions, and the wealth of Yudhishtira could not be counted.

This was enough for Duryodhana, who would not tolerate it any more. His heart started burning. "These fellows have come back, and now they are ruling the kingdom with so much pomp and glory." Duryodhana hatched another plan, to play dice. In those days, kings used to play dice. It was a viciousness which crept into the royal palaces, and it was the ruin of even the Pandavas. This dice

play took place twice. Firstly it ended in a tragic instance of the humiliation of the Pandavas and their queen, after which, due to some good sense that arose in the mind of Dhritarashtra, he ordered that all that the Pandavas lost in the game should be handed back to them. "Let the past be past. Forgive and forget. Let the Pandavas go back. I honour them still. Go."

This was again a blow to Duryodhana. "This old man has spoiled the entire thing; otherwise, they would have gone as paupers, having lost everything." He had a second plan to play dice once again. This time it was not possible for Dhritarashtra to intervene in this matter because there was a condition, as a sting attached to this play, that anyone who was defeated in this game of dice would be exiled; for thirteen years they would live in the forest, and then live incognito somewhere for one year—fourteen years out. The idea was that in fourteen years they would perish in the forest and not come back at all.

So again the dice play was organised, and Dhritarashtra could not intervene. All kept quiet. For the second time, Yudhishtira was defeated. According to the stipulation, he had to be exiled; and they all went to the forest, losing everything. They were beggars. For thirteen years they suffered in the forest. But the Mahabharata epic tells us that the gods themselves came to their aid. Indra and Lord Siva bestowed blessings on the Pandavas, and Lord Sri Krishna went to console them and assure them of his support.

When they completed their thirteen years, and even the fourteenth year of incognito was ended, Sri Krishna came from Dvarka with his retinue and held an assembly in

Viratnagar, saying that a messenger should be sent to the Kurus demanding the Pandavas' share. A Brahmin was sent who was, of course, well versed in the art of speaking, but the Kurus humiliated him, shunted him out, and sent back no good message. On the other hand, they sent Sanjaya to vituperously and sarcastically speak to Yudhishtira: "You should not unnecessarily enter into conflict with the Kauravas. Conflict is not good. War is bad. You are going to gain nothing by this battle. Be satisfied with what you have." The messenger was sent back with a counter-bolt by Sri Krishna, and another messenger was to be sent, more efficient than the Brahmin who was not competent enough to achieve anything.

Sri Krishna himself said, "I shall go." Though it was not the pleasure of Yudhishtira that a person like Sri Krishna should go as a messenger, there was no alternative. Sri Krishna went and spoke, but all that he spoke fell on deaf ears. Duryodhana, against all principle of justice and fair play, denied even an inch of land to the Pandavas, and even wanted to hold the ambassador, Sri Krishna, tie him up and imprison him so that he could not go back and do anything good for the Pandavas. This plan also did not succeed. As Sri Krishna represented the cosmic Absolute, he showed his Vishvarupa, which stunned the whole audience; and speaking not a single word afterwards, he returned to the Pandavas saying that his embassy did not succeed, so war was the only alternative.

Now comes the context of the Bhagavadgita, which is on the very first day, when the forces on both sides were arrayed on the field of Kurukshetra. Arjuna, the leader of

the Pandavas, having been placed in the midst of the two forces to survey who were there, saw something in front of him. This is the seed sown for the Bhagavadgita. The dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna was occasioned by this peculiar thing which Arjuna saw before him.

What did he see? He saw exactly what we see when we open our eyes and see the world—a dual, conflict-ridden feeling of love and hatred. He was there to see the end of all the Kurus, for which he had raised his Gandiva bow and arrows. He was not there to take pity on the Kauravas. An army does not enter the field of action to show mercy to the other side. That is not the purpose of engagement in war at all. It is not a place for pity, compassion, tender feelings. They are all abolished completely in a battlefield, and bitterness reigns supreme. “These ill-willed, wretched Kauravas, let me have a look at them!” thought Arjuna, who asked Sri Krishna, his charioteer, to place him in the midst of the army so that he may have a perfect survey of his opponents. But Arjuna did not see merely the opponents. He saw with his eyes the opposing army, but saw with his mind another thing altogether. He began to feel that they were Kurus, and not opposing forces. *Paśyaitān samavetān kurūn* (Gita 1.25), said Sri Krishna himself. I do not know why the word ‘Kuru’ was used by Sri Krishna when he referred to the opposing forces before Arjuna. That word was enough to catch fire.

“Kuru! They are my own people. I am also a member of the family of the Kurus. The great king Kuru was the grand ancestor of us all. The blood of the ancient master, the king Kuru, flows through our veins, the veins of the Pandavas

and the Kauravas. We are blood relations, biologically bound up into a single family. Whom am I seeing in front of me? It is my grandsire, my beloved master, my loved one, the great Bhishma. Who do I see in front of me? My venerable teacher Drona, who has taught me archery; and if I know anything today, it is because of him. Am I against him? Is he against me? Am I to direct an arrow against Bhishma and Drona? What a sin! This is not for me. I put my bow down. Even if I am unarmed and the Kaurava forces attack me and I die, it is good for me. And if the war does not take place and I become a beggar asking for alms from people and live like a poor man, even that is blessedness. I shall not ask for even heaven if that is to be gained by bloodshed.” Saying this, Arjuna threw down his bow and arrow. Here is the entire picture of the First Chapter.

Both Duryodhana and Arjuna had gone to Krishna for help, wanting war to take place. They had been to Dvarka because they knew that Sri Krishna was a powerful person with a large army behind him, and both wanted assistance from this Yadava hero. One got the army, and the other got nothing except Sri Krishna himself alone, a single individual who said, “I shall do nothing. Whoever wants the army called Narayani Sena, which is invincible, can take it; and whoever wants me, unarmed and doing nothing, may take me.” Duryodhana did not want an unarmed individual who was only going to be a liability to him. He said, “I want the army.” Arjuna said, “I want you.” Anyway, the idea of war was in their minds even at the beginning. It is not that Arjuna suddenly changed his mind in the

battlefield. Something psychologically unexpected took place. His emotions were stirred up by feelings connected with certain relationships which should not be the guiding principles in a battlefield.

Here is a briefly stated historical background of the commencement of the Bhagavadgita as located in the Mahabharata context. But it has also a spiritual connotation, and it is meant for each one of us. We take to spiritual life, the way of Yoga, by which we mean that we are after union with reality. What kind of reality? Each one of us has his own or her own concept of it. You leave your house or office, or whatever it is, and go to an ashram or a Yoga centre and say, "I shall learn the art of union with reality—Yoga practice."

Firstly, the notion of reality is not clear in the mind. Whatever your consciousness encounters and believes to be real should be regarded as real for you. It is difficult to define what reality is. That which is subject to transmutation or change is not supposed to be absolutely real, but is perhaps relatively so. But as far as consciousness is concerned, it will certainly cling even to relative realities because though they are relative, for the time being they appear to be real. We see a continuity in the flow of a river, though we are told a thousand times that every minute new water is flowing; so is also the case with the burning of a flame in a lamp. Though everything is transitory and everything is moving and we are today totally different from what we were when we were little children—we have changed completely and are not static entities—yet we cling to our own selves as something which is relatively

perceptible as a workable reality. So anything that consciousness accepts to be worthwhile, of some utility, will be regarded by it as real, and cannot be rejected. The world is unreal in some sense, but it is real in some other sense. Whatever be the sense in which it is real or unreal, that sense is important to us.

Now, we cannot mix up issues when we take to the path of spirituality, or Yoga. Communion with reality is the purpose of Yoga. The Bhagavadgita will try to disillusion the mind of Arjuna as to what is proper for him, because the propriety of a thing depends upon its relatedness to reality. A thing that is connected to unreal things, or phantoms, is not proper. That which is related to reality is proper. But what is reality? This was a confusing issue before Arjuna's mind, and he fell down totally helpless psychologically, asking for redress of his woes: "I am here before you, Krishna, the great Master. I do not know what is good and proper for me."

Thus the disciple approaches the Guru. He moves towards the Guru in a state of distress and confusion of mind, sometimes looking back at the world as being not so bad as he thought, and at other times feeling that the world is worth nothing—that it is a vale of tears. This circumstance caught hold of Arjuna; and with this, the First Chapter of the Gita closes.

Chapter 3

THE TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL

As I mentioned, the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavadgita constitute, in a way, stages of the development of the spirit of man from levels of greater involvement through higher and higher levels of lesser involvement. The worst of involvements is the picture of the war, the scene of the battlefield that is presented in the First Chapter, the Mahabharata context. Nothing can be worse in this world than hatred, and war is the pinnacle of this attitude. You dislike a thing a hundred percent, and more than a hundred percent; then war takes place.

The dislike is the counterpart of what you call 'like' for certain things. It is not possible to have only one side of a coin, as you know. Every coin has two sides. Your dislike does not mean that you dislike everything. There is a like which is counter-correlated to that which you do not like. The reason for the development of this dual policy of the psyche, like and dislike, is the structure of the mind itself. Who created this peculiar structure of the mind that it should think only in a parochial manner, and not in a holistic way? It is not easy to understand merely by application of psychological logic, because logic of the mind, whatever be its precision, is again involved in this dual policy of the dichotomy between the subject and the object, as they are called philosophically.

What does logic do, generally? It assumes a difference between the subject and the predicate. "Rishikesh is a holy place." Grammatically, this sentence has a noun as the

subjective side and a predicate as the objective side. The word 'is', which is called a copula in a grammatical sense, joins the subjective side and the predicate, or the objective side, and then the sentence appears to be a complete picture. It tells you what Rishikesh is: it is a holy place. Okay. But for the purpose of understanding the meaning of this sentence, you have to dovetail these two aspects of the sentence, the subject and the predicate, which is achieved by the action of the verb, the link between the two parts of the sentence; so without a verb, there cannot be a sentence.

Why should there be a necessity to separate two parts and then bring them together into a whole? A thing that is separated is always separated. It cannot be joined together like pieces of broken glass. There is an artificial attempt made by human logic to bring about a reconciliation of the subjective side and the objective side.

I mentioned to you earlier that the world, including all created beings and humanity, stands before us as a large object, and the perceivers, any one of us, stand in the position of a subject. Our perception of anything in this world is an attempt to bring about a cessation of this so-called clash between the subjective and the objective sides. The world does not find it easy to reconcile itself with our views, whims and fancies. We have seen that the world does not always go with us easily, nor do we find it so easy to harmonise ourselves entirely with the ways of the world. We have our own ways, and the world seems to have its own ways, so there is a dual face that is at the back of this very picture of a harmonised perception of the world. Our knowledge of the world, our knowledge of anything that is

external or objective, is this finally futile attempt in bringing about a real harmony between ourselves and the world outside. Two things cannot be harmonised, because they are two things. When we have already assumed that there are two things, bringing them together into a state of absolute harmony or unity is not going to be a successful endeavour.

This is the reason why, in the First Chapter of the Gita, Arjuna found himself in a quandary. He had a subjective attitude and an objective attitude towards the army that was arrayed. He saw the army of his opponents, which is another way of saying that he saw an enemy in the camp. He also saw, at the same time, blood relations in the midst of the army generals, footmen, etc. You like a thing and dislike a thing at the same time. You are at war with your own brother. Because you cannot reconcile yourself with your brother, you are at war with him; but because he is your brother, you also love him. So your relationship with anything in this world is a love and hate complex. Neither do you love a thing really, nor do you hate a thing really. 'Really' is the word that you have to underline. A one hundred percent liking for anything is not possible, because there is a rejection of certain facts and factors in that very act of yours. Nor is it possible to hate a thing one hundred percent, because there is an internal connection of that which you hate with your own self. There is an organismic relation of yourself with the structure of the world; therefore, wholesale hatred is not possible. But because of your organic connection with things in the structure of the

universe, wholesale love is also not possible due to the factor of alienation of the object from yourself.

This is the reason, we may say, why Arjuna found himself in a difficult situation: to do or not to do—or, as Shakespeare put it, to be or not to be, etc. Arjuna found himself in a situation comparable with Hamlet. Some people say that Hamlet represents thought without action, and Othello represents action without thought. Arjuna found himself in this peculiar situation. He was torn to pieces. He went deep enough to find no ground on which to stand. He expresses his tragic condition: “My mind is reeling, my intellect is not functioning, my hairs stand on end, my skin is burning, my *prana* is agitated, I am drooping completely.” This is to say, he was drooping in all the five sheaths of his personality. The five sheaths are called Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijñanamaya and Anandamaya Koshas. The physical body is called the Annamaya Kosha, the vital body is called the Pranamaya Kosha, the mental body is called the Manomaya Kosha, the intellectual body is called the Vijñanamaya Kosha, and the causal body is called the Anandamaya Kosha. All the five sheaths of the spirit of Arjuna were about to crack. They were giving way due to the sorrow in which he found himself. “Therefore, I do not know what my duty is in this predicament.” Though he said that it is not possible to clearly see what his duty is, he had already made a decision within himself not to do anything. Though he was not in a position to decide what to do, he seems to somehow have made an attempt to decide things for himself by saying, “Down with bows and arrows!”: *visrjya saśaram cāpari*

śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ (Gita 1.47). When you cannot understand a thing, you are not supposed to make a decision on it. A confused state of mind is unfit for making decisions of any kind. He knew that he was confused, and therefore he had no right to come to any conclusion whether to do or not to do.

We are facing the world, this universe of the Mahabharata scripture. The confrontation of the subjective individual with the objective universe is the Mahabharata war. The Bhagavadgita is a spiritual gospel. It is not a historical document, a story of what happened some years back. It is clothed in the garb of a story, as it were, and it appears to be a novel message, a didactic poem; but it is deeply spiritual. As I mentioned to you the other day, it is a gospel of eternity. It is an eternal message for all time, for all people, in every condition. Whatever be your mental condition at any time, you will find some verse or the other about your position.

Sri Krishna was there as Arjuna's charioteer. This long harangue of Arjuna was received with dismay by Sri Krishna. "At this hour, when you are face to face with a difficulty, you say that there is no difficulty, and you come to the conclusion that the best thing is not to do anything. But you are a hero, and the problem has to be solved. The Mahabharata is a world problem, and when the problem raises itself before you, you are saying, 'Inasmuch as I cannot understand the meaning of the problem, I will refuse to solve it. I will go by the idea that it does not exist at all.' Is it all right? What do you say?" In one sentence Sri Krishna rebukes Arjuna and says, "How come this mood

has overpowered you in this predicament? Very strange indeed!”

Then Arjuna again speaks, in the beginning of the Second Chapter. “Did I not explain myself properly? My love goes for my own elders on whose lap I sat, and who gave me education and taught me the art of archery. And my own brethren, kinsmen, are arrayed in front of me—the Kurus, whose blood also flows through my veins. What benefit can accrue to me by opposing my own kinsmen, my own well-wishers, my own elders?”

The answer of Sri Krishna is the Second Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, commencing from the eleventh verse. *Aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ prajñāvādāmś ca bhāṣase, gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca nā ’nuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ* (Gita 2.11): “You speak as if you know everything. Very wise words you have spoken before me, while actually these are unwise words. You are grieving over the consequence that may follow from engaging yourself in this vast conflict-ridden field. You are taking your stand on an opinion that you hold on the question of life and death itself—whether it is good to live or to die. You are trying to answer this question by your own parochial logic, your limited understanding.”

Birth and death are the scenes through which everything in the world passes. The process of evolution, so-called, is the process of perpetual dying and perpetually being born. Evolution is the requirement on the part of every entity in this world to cease to be what it is at this moment and be another thing after some time. There is a transmutation and a metempsychosis—a transmigration,

you may say—of the special conditions under which an individual is living; and even when you appear to be whole and single, a solid individual like any one of us, every cell of your body is transmuting itself every moment. Medical men say that every seven years all the cells of the body renew themselves. So there is a complete cellular transformation of your personality three times by the time you reach twenty-one years, and then it is that you are supposed to be mature.

Apart from that, there is a metabolic process going on in the body. Anyone who knows physiology will know what metabolism is. The anabolic and catabolic processes combined are called metabolism. There is a continuous change taking place in this body. On account of the attachment of consciousness to these processes that are taking place from moment to moment, you are unable to know that these changes are occurring in your body. You now have become something else from the condition in which you were many years back as a little baby or a child. There is a difference between your babyhood long ago and your adulthood just now, but you do not perceive this difference because of the continuity of an undivided consciousness which you really are.

An iron rod is made up of little particles of iron. If it is heated until it becomes red hot, the particles cannot be seen; only the radiance, the red heat, is visible. In a similar manner, every limb of the body, from the fingertips to the toes, appears to be a completeness. The whole body feels the touch of a little toe or a little finger, due to the fact that there is a consciousness pervading this entire organism. If

this divisibility of consciousness were not to be there, every part of the body would look disjointed. One hand would not know the existence of the other hand, and one limb would not cooperate with another organ of the body. But every little cell and part of the body, every little limb, goes on working in such system, method and harmony that you feel that you are one integrality, one whole. “I am coming,” you sometimes say. Who is coming? Is the nose coming, are the ears coming, are the legs coming or are the hands coming? Which is coming? It is a consciousness that is actually making this statement: “I am coming.” And the movement of the legs and the seeing of the eyes and other activities of the limbs are effects that follow from the order that is issued by this integral consciousness.

Actually, consciousness cannot die. The concept of the death of consciousness is itself invalid. You can imagine that you are not there, but you cannot imagine that you are not thinking in that fashion. The denial of a thing also implies a consciousness of the denial of that thing. You may abolish the consciousness of anything in this world, but you cannot abolish the consciousness of the fact that you are trying to abolish it. So there is some consciousness at the back of all things.

Sri Krishna starts his gospel by saying the Atman is immortal. *Na tv evā 'haṁ jātu nā 'saṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhīpāḥ* (Gita 2.11): “We were never non-existent at any time—neither you nor I, nor these kinsmen called the Kauravas. They have always existed, and shall ever exist. Non-existence of the basic entity of individuality is unthinkable. The people you refer to, and yourself also, are

actually embodiments of consciousness. Consciousness cannot be perishable; it cannot be temporal; it cannot pass through the process of evolution. That is to say, it cannot be one thing now and another thing afterwards.”

I mentioned that evolution implies the cessation of one condition of a thing and the occurrence of another condition of it, the rebirth into a new form of species, as it were, which is the characteristic of the individuality but not the characteristic of consciousness. If you imagine that consciousness also evolves, there will be a cessation of it sometime and a re-emergence of it afterwards. You cannot have a cessation of consciousness because even when you imagine consciousness has ceased, you are aware that you are aware of the cessation of consciousness. So consciousness never ceases. Inasmuch as it does not cease, it is eternal.

When I speak of consciousness, I am actually referring to the Sanskrit word ‘Atman’ because you may be able to understand the meaning of ‘consciousness’ much better than the implications of Atman. Atman, consciousness, cannot perish, because the idea of consciousness perishing is there at the back and will not permit you to even entertain such a thought. Consciousness has to be there at the back of even the attempt to abolish the idea of consciousness. This is one aspect of the matter. Consciousness cannot perish. It is not temporal. It will not die. It is always there. It transcends time. It is conscious of the process of time. Consciousness is conscious of the process of time; therefore, it transcends time. Consciousness is conscious of the extension of space;

therefore, it transcends space. The conclusion is that consciousness is neither involved in space, nor is it involved in time; therefore, it is neither finite spatially nor finite temporally. It is infinite and eternal. If that is so, there can be only one consciousness. If there are two consciousnesses, there would be a necessity to bring about a rapprochement of the two states of consciousness, which imagines that there are two, three, or many consciousnesses. There would be the necessity to posit someone who is aware of the existence of multiple consciousnesses. Who is it that is saying that there are three consciousnesses or four consciousnesses? That person, that thing which is aware of three consciousnesses must be above the region of the activity of the three consciousnesses, so it should be only one consciousness appearing. You can imagine what the conclusion is, finally. Consciousness is one only. It is universal in its nature, eternal, non-spatial, non-temporal. That alone is, and nothing else can be.

Chapter 4

THE TOTAL PICTURE OF CREATION

Bhagavan Sri Krishna held the opinion that Arjuna was lacking *sankhya*, which means proper understanding, and I endeavoured to tell you that *sankhya* is the knowledge of the placement of a person in this universe. Unless you know where you are placed in this universe, your location in this setup of things, you will not be able to do anything. Work, activity—doing anything whatsoever, and any motion for that purpose—is guided by the circumstances prevailing at that given moment of time. ‘Circumstance’ means the knowledge of the location of the person at a given moment of time.

Now, your location in this universe can be known only by a study of the whole process of creation. Doctrines of creation are adumbrated in schools of thought such as the Sankhya and the Vedanta. I mentioned to you previously in the context of the discussion of the nature of consciousness that the primary principle is the pure ‘I-amness’, Pure Consciousness adapting and adjusting itself to its own Self, as it were. The Sankhya calls this indivisible absolute consciousness Purusha. You may call it by any other name—God, if you like, the Supreme Absolute. It is absolute because it is not related to anything outside. It is a non-related, indivisible omnipresence, conscious of itself alone, and there is no consciousness of anything else. ‘I am what I am’—*aham asmi*. This is the consciousness of the Supreme Purusha.

The process of creation is supposed to start with the emergence of the activity of Prakriti, which is the cosmic impulsion of this Universal Consciousness to delimit itself in a certain fashion for the projection of this cosmos. As I mentioned, this Prakriti, this cosmic impulsive objectivity, is made up of three forces called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—dynamis, stasis and equilibration. Prakriti, so-called, is compared to a rope with strands. You must have seen coir ropes or jute ropes, etc., with three entwined strands. The rope is not different from the strands. You cannot say the strands are the qualities or the properties of the rope. Many times people say *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas* are the qualities of Prakriti. This is an understatement, really speaking, because these three properties constitute the very substance of Prakriti itself, just as the three strands of the rope are the rope itself. The threefold operation of *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas* is itself Prakriti. Therefore, Prakriti may be said to be activity minus the consciousness of Universality, and Purusha is consciousness of Universality without activity.

Sankhya has a humorous analogy to describe how Purusha and Prakriti work together in collaboration because, as I mentioned, Purusha consciousness is universal awareness minus activity or motion, and Prakriti is only motion or activity minus consciousness. So how can these two, inactive consciousness and active unconsciousness, be clubbed together?

The analogy of the Sankhya philosophy describes two persons, one who is blind but can walk, and another who is lame but can see. These two people join together because they both want to move in the same direction. But how is it

possible? Without legs they cannot move, and without eyes they also cannot move. So the lame person sits on the shoulders of the blind person, and now there is a joint action of seeing and moving. The lame person who sits on the shoulders of the blind walking person can see, and directs him where to go, and so it is a very good understanding between them. This is how Sankhya gives you a humorous comparison of the manner in which perhaps Universal Consciousness, which is inactive, operates in conjunction with the activity of Prakriti, which is unconscious. When these two processes are blended together and Purusha and Prakriti jointly act, what happens first is that Prakriti, in its *sattva* aspect, reflects the Universal Consciousness within itself, as light can be reflected in a glass. The glass here, which is *sattva*, is not perfectly clean where the light passes unaffected and undisturbed, but there is a little disturbance and the consciousness, which is universal Purusha, gets delimited to some extent, though in a very insignificant manner.

Sattva is all-pervadingness. The consciousness of omnipresence and all-pervadingness is *sattva*. In Pure Consciousness, there is no such thing as all-pervadingness, and so on. We cannot say that consciousness is all-pervading unless we define it in terms of Prakriti's *sattva guna*, because a thing can be all-pervading only when there is a space to pervade. As space is a part of Prakriti, then Purusha, which is independent of Prakriti, cannot be said to be all-pervading in a strictly logical sense. It is just Being-as-such, Pure I-am, and cannot be called all-pervading. But it appears to be all-pervading on account of its reflection in

the *sattva guna* of Prakriti, which also has other qualities—*rajas* and *tamas*. It does not mean that Prakriti is only pure *sattva*, all-pervadingness. It also has, under its arm, the projective forces or factors known as *rajas* and *tamas*. On account of a subtle apperception of *rajas* and *tamas* also, together with *sattva*, there is a slight limitedness imposed on the reflection of consciousness in the *sattva guna* of Prakriti. And then what happens? After Purusha there is Prakriti, and after Prakriti there is Mahat. Mahat is the third principle—Cosmic-consciousness, the Pure I-am, Being-as-such. The Absolute Existence becomes conscious as all-pervading, omnipresent. This Mahat, or the Great Being Mahat-tattva, is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. This is the God of the universe, you may say if you like.

Pure God, by Himself, creates nothing. He is just All-in-All. Creativity is attributed to God on account of His so-called reflection in the *sattva* omnipresence of Prakriti, and God becomes Mahat-tattva, also known as Hiranyagarbha in Vedanta terminology. The pure potential of consciousness prior to the manifestation of Mahat in terms of Prakriti is called Ishvara, which is something like the cosmos sleeping. Sleeping is not an inactive condition; it is a dormant potential of future activity. So in Ishvara-tattva, which is the potential of Universal Consciousness coming in conjunction with Prakriti as a whole, we have Ishvara-tattva. This is a term which is not in the Sankhya but in the Vedanta doctrine. Mahat may be said to be Hiranyagarbha, the all-knowing creative principle, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent consciousness. When omnipresence becomes conscious of itself—I-am,

omnipresent—it becomes cosmic Ahamkara. So first is Purusha, second is Prakriti, third is Mahat, fourth is Ahamkara. Ahamkara here is to be understood as Cosmic Self-awareness—the whole universe becoming conscious: ‘I am.’ It is not merely omnipresence as such; it is consciousness of one’s being omnipresent.

In the state of Ahamkara, Cosmic I-amness, or consciousness of one’s being omnipresent, a threefold activity is supposed to take place: the threefold division of the supreme Self-consciousness into the subjective perceiver *adhyatma*, the objective universe *adhibhuta*, and a third connecting link *adhidaiva*, about which I mentioned already. The trouble of creation starts at this stage. Until this time, it was all paradise, glory, all-pervading bliss, God roaming alone in the Garden of Eden; there was no Adam and Eve, nothing of the kind. Wonder! This wonder gets clouded when this Cosmic I-amness decides to divide itself into three, and beholds itself as three. For example, your body has a trunk, a right hand and a left hand. The right hand is totally different from the left hand. If you can suppose that the right hand has a consciousness, and with that consciousness it can know the existence of the left hand, this will be *adhyatma* and *adhibhuta*. But it cannot know the existence of the left hand except through the body, of which it is a part. So the entire body is the transcendent connecting link which makes it possible for the *adhyatma* to be aware that there is *adhibhuta*.

Now, I mentioned that there is a threefold division of this universal omnipresence—*adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. The *adhibhuta prapancha*, or the universe of

material existence, we may say, is originally a space-time vibration complex. Even today, physical scientists and philosophers of physical science say that the whole universe is basically space-time. Space, time and motion—this is the beginning of creation. Space means a sudden vacuum, as it were, created before the omnipresence. In order that you may become something other than what you are, you have to cease to be what you are at present. If God has to become the object, He has to cease to be the subject. Now, He cannot cease to be the subject as He is the Pure Subject, so a sudden vacuous condition is created, as perhaps is done by a juggler who creates an illusion. Suddenly a thing which is not there will be projected before you. Your consciousness is interfered with by the juggler's magic or his slight-of-hand. Immediately he creates a vacuous condition of your mind by his action so that you forget what you saw and you begin to see what is not there. God may be playing His magical trick, as it were. God is sometimes called Mahamaya, which means the Great Juggler who can project a thing which is not there. God created the heaven and the Earth, says the Bible. Out of what substance did He create them? Out of his own body, which is something very funny to say. And if there is nothing outside God, out of what substance did He create it? He created it out of a vacuum, a kind of nothingness.

You will find later on, by a deep analysis of the process of creation, that creation is a vacuous projection. It has no substance by itself because substance is God only, and if the universe also had a substance independently, there would be a conflict between the two substances—God and Satan,

as certain theologies posit. There is no Satan; he does not exist outside God. It is only a theological conception of human frailty, I may say, which is unable to locate evil in this world because it does not know where it exists. The Satanic, the evil, the bad, etc., must exist somewhere. It cannot exist in God, and it cannot exist outside God, so where does it exist? This is the theological problem before all religious people. Anyway, we shall not touch that subject now.

God seems to be creating a vacuous situation to create a universe that is also basically a vacuum. Hence, there is non-substantiality in the whole universe. Everyone, everything, including you and I, are basically vacuous. There is no substance in us. The substance is only a jugglery. It is a mix-up of space-time and certain elements which I will mention to you afterwards. Thus, creation might have taken place, or creation might not have taken place. You may say the juggler has really created something because you can see it, and therefore God has created the world because you are seeing it. But the juggler has created nothing; he has only put you under the pressure of an influence. In the same way, God has created no world, but somehow or other some illusion has caught hold of you—this consciousness. You do not know how you are seeing what the juggler is doing, though he has done nothing. In the same way, God has done something like the greatest juggler, and you are seeing a world which is really not there. Finally you will see, if the curtain is lifted, God alone is permeating the whole thing. This so-called world is nothing

but scintillating God. That is what you will realise afterwards, about which you will be told a little later.

So the objective universe, which is *adhibhuta*, starts with space, time and vibration. This vibration is fivefold in its nature. In Sanskrit, these five aspects of vibration are called *shabda*, which means the potential of sound, *sparsa*, the potential of touch, *rupa*, the potential of sight, *rasa*, the potential of taste, and *gandha*, the potential of smell. The whole universe of perception is constituted of these fivefold forces. What do you see in this world? What do you mean by 'the world'? What is called 'world' is nothing but what you hear, touch, see, taste, and smell. Suppose you do not see anything, and you cannot touch or smell or taste; the world vanishes for you. So the world is nothing but a bundle of sensations; it looks like that.

There is a great history behind this question of whether there is a substance behind sensations or whether the world is made up of sensations only. Subjective philosophers in the West, such as Berkeley, concluded that the whole world is nothing but sensations only. If these five sensations are removed from you, there will be no world, and your body will also not be there. But a difficulty arises in the mind due to its very structure because it believes the sensations are sensing something, and if something is not there to be sensed, what are the senses going to sense?

A question was put to Berkeley. "My dear Father," (he was a clergyman) "what are your senses sensing if there is nothing to be sensed?" So he modified his doctrine a little, and his pure subjective idealism of only sensations got transformed into what is called objective idealism. The

senses cannot know that the world exists unless the sensations operate. So inasmuch as the sensations tell you through their media of what may exist outside, you are seeing the world as conditioned by your sensations; the real world is not seen by you. The real world is cast in the mould of your sensations, and so you are not seeing the world as it is. You are seeing only the thing-as-such, as you may call it, but what that thing-as-such is, nobody knows, as it is cast in the mould of the five sensations.

But Berkeley agrees that something should be there in order that the senses may sense. That is God's mind. The universe is God's mind, the Cosmic Mind, which looks like a world in front of you; but you are not actually seeing the Cosmic Mind. You are not seeing God with your eyes; you are only sensing, in a distracted, fivefold manner, this one indivisible thing which is otherwise the Cosmic Mind. You are lodged in the mind of God even now, accepted; but you cannot touch Him, you cannot see Him, because your sensations are diversified. These diversified functions are connected with these potentials, as I mentioned—*shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*. These are forces.

Afterwards, these forces congeal into solidity in a particular permutation and combination process. These congealed forms of the five forces *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha* become space—or sky, as it is called—and air, fire, water, earth. In Sanskrit, sky or space is called *akasha*, air is *vayu*, *agni* is fire, *apas* is water, *prithvi* is earth. So this world of the physical elements of earth, water, fire, air, ether, space and sky—this world which you value so much, on which you are seated, which is attracting you and

repelling you at the same time—is just the last concretisation of these forces *shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, gandha* which are the vibrations of space and time, which is one aspect of this cosmic omnipresence, Ahamkara. Thus, the objective side has been explained.

Now we come to the subjective side, which is *adhyatma*. This is, for all practical purposes, the human individual: ourselves. I have mentioned to you what the world is made of; now I am telling you what you are made of as *adhyatma*. The Universal Consciousness, having objectified itself as the universe outside in the manner mentioned, now subjectifies itself in another manner as the perceiver of the universe. As I mentioned, God created a vacuous situation, as it were, an unconsciousness prior to the act of creation; and an unconsciousness also precedes the creation of the individuality. You are divested of your universal connection with the Almighty before you are born as an individual. You cannot be an individual and God at the same time because God-consciousness and individual consciousness cannot stand together, as individual consciousness is localised and God-consciousness is universal. So in order that you may become individual, you have to be cast out of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve quit the Garden of Eden, and you cannot go back. An angel is standing there with a flaming sword lest you try to enter the Garden of Eden again. You have disobeyed the Universal Consciousness by tasting the forbidden fruit, whatever that fruit be. We shall look into it later on.

So the Universal God casts this potential of individuality outside the Kingdom of God, the Garden of

Eden, heaven, Universality; but you have to become totally oblivious of your having any connection with Universal Consciousness before you are cast to the Earth, so immediately unconsciousness pervades. This is the sleeping condition which represents that state. Whenever you are asleep or in a mood of unconsciousness or sleepiness, you are actually in the potential of that state into which you were thrown at the time of creation, and you revert to it again and again every day for various reasons, which is a different subject.

Now, as God created the objective universe by a vacuous background, individuality is projected by a subjective vacuous background. Sanskrit would call this condition the Anandamaya Kosha, the causal sheath. As the Universal projects itself objectively through the medium of vacuous background and space and time, the Universal Consciousness manifests itself individually through this individual vacuous condition which is the Anandamaya Kosha, the causal body. And this manifestation is called intellect—the *buddhi*, as it is called. So even intellect is not a real safe guide, as it is a distorted reflection of the Universal Consciousness through this muddled background which is the vacuous unconsciousness, the Anandamaya Kosha.

Hence, the greatest learning in this world is only a kind of darkness, finally. It is a distorted knowledge. You are seeing things topsy-turvy. This so-called boasted understanding of yours, this intellect, is wrongly telling you that the world is outside and you are separate from it, while actually you have an organic connection because the subject-object-transcendent connecting link are all part and

parcel of the one Universal Omnipresence. But what makes you feel that the world is outside you? It is this stupid reflection that has completely distorted itself through passing through this vacuous sleep condition and then peeping through this muddled state through the fivefold sense organs and seeing five things, as it were. You are seeing only five things in this world: that which you can hear, see, touch, taste, and smell. If you had twenty different senses, you would see twenty different things in the universe.

The intellect is, therefore, not a very safe guide for us, and so it is said that God-realisation cannot take place merely by the activity of the intellect. It is helpful as a pointer to the limitation of its own region of action. It can tell you “thus far and no further”; but it cannot take you further, so you should not entirely depend upon intellectual ratiocination. There is another, deeper thing in you, which is the spirit that has to be contacted by another means altogether—by the act of meditation. So, individually, subjectively, as *adhyatma*, the Universal manifests itself through this condition of sleep as an intellect, and then it becomes a more delimited means of consciousness, called mind.

Universal Consciousness gets reflected through the Anandamaya Kosha, the Vijñanamaya Kosha or intellect, and the Manomaya Kosha or mind. The mind can think in an indistinct manner but cannot come to logical judgments. Judgments are passed only by the intellect, which is the reason. So there are two different functions performed by intellect and mind. Mind is called *manas*, and intellect is

called *buddhi*. The ratiocinating and logically deciding factor is *buddhi*, or intellect; the pure indeterminate perception is the cognition of the mind. Suppose you see something at a distance, and you feel something is standing there. The mind indistinctly becomes aware: something is there. "I am cognising that something is there, and am aware of something in front of me." But what it is, it cannot say. The intellect decides whether it is a human being or a lamppost. The decision as to the fact of the case is taken by the intellect; indistinct perception is the work of the mind.

Now, the intellect and the mind work in terms of the five senses—hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling. Neither the mind nor the intellect can work independently, totally free from the activities of the sense organs, so the world that you perceive, that which you cognise through the mind or understand through the intellect, is a sense world. Again we come to this contradiction and difficulty created by objective idealism and subjective idealism, as I mentioned in the case of Berkeley, Hegel, etc.

The senses, therefore, are five, as mentioned. They are conjoined with the mental sheath as well as the intellectual sheath. Below these two intellectual and mental sheaths that go together with the five senses, there is the vital sheath, which is the *Pranamaya Kosha*. The vital breath, the breathing process, the energy that you feel in your system, is due to the *prana* that is operating. As there are five sensations, there are also five functions of the *prana*. The *prana* operates when you breathe out. The *apana* operates when you breathe in. When you take a breath inside, it is pulled down. That downward pull is caused by *apana*.

When you breathe out, there is an expulsion taking place; the breath is thrown out. This is done by the *prana*. So you have two functions, *prana* and *apana*, the upward and the downward breath. There is a third, called *vyana*, which circulates throughout the body and causes blood circulation, etc. It is pervasive in its action. *Udana* is in the throat. It works as the deglutition process when you eat food and drink water. The food that you eat cannot go inside unless that *udana* is operating; otherwise, it will stick in your throat. *Udana* performs three functions: firstly, it causes the deglutition of food, the swallowing of your diet; secondly, it takes you to the state of deep sleep every day; thirdly, it takes you to the other world when you cast off this body. It is *udana* that will take you up to the other realm. So we have *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*. The fifth function is *samana*, which works in the gastric region, the naval spot, and causes the digestion of food. *Prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana*, *samana*—these are the five functions of the vital energy, which constitute another sheath altogether, the Pranamaya Kosha, the vital sheath.

Last is the physical sheath. This is made up of the five elements earth, water, fire, air and sky. This bone, flesh, marrow, tendon and the weight that you feel in yourself are the sum and substance of the physical elements. So here you have the description of the subjective universe of human individuality. There are five *koshas*. Anandamaya Kosha is the causal sheath, Vijnanamaya Kosha is the intellectual sheath, Manomaya Kosha is the mental sheath, Pranamaya Kosha is the vital sheath, and Annamaya Kosha, the physical sheath. *Anna* means food. This body is

sustained by the food and drink that you take. Therefore, it is called Annamaya Kosha. It is a purely material conglomeration.

So what are we as human individuals? We are the physical body charged with energy by the vital body, together with the thinking process of the mind, the understanding of the intellect, and confusion at the back of it. We are guided by confusion in the beginning, and all our life in this world is a big mass of blunder, as you will realise later on, because whatever be the appurtenances that you have, they are finally projections of this vacuous muddle, about which the less said the better. You are seeing everything upside-down, the inside as the outside, the outside as the inside, as you see your face in a mirror—right looks like left and left looks like right; or as you stand on the bank of the river, the head, which is the highest, looks lowest, and the feet, which are the lowest, look uppermost. This is what is happening to you in your attempt at perception. All human perception is, therefore, defective perception. You never see a real world. You are seeing an unreal world in front of you. This is a great consolation for you that you are seeing finally an unreal world, and you yourself are an unreal individual. The reality is the cosmic existence, in the Purusha, Prakriti, Mahat and Ahamkara Tattva, Ishvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat. Only when you touch this Universal Being are you safe; and until that time, you are in a fool's paradise. You are in a very great, interesting Disneyland. This is this wonderful world!

Now I have told you everything about creation. This is Sankhya knowledge. Arjuna knows nothing about it. "You

are a foolish man. You are only seeing Kurus in front of you, army generals and Kurukshetra. This is such a limited view, like a man thinking only in terms of his family—his wife and children, and his business. He does not know anything else in the world. Whatever is happening is within his room, in his house, and that is the whole world for him. Arjuna, are you like that? There is a vaster vision before you: Sankhya. You do not know Sankhya; therefore, you also do not know the implementation of this knowledge with this world, which is Yoga.”

The whole of the Second Chapter of the Bhagavadgita is confined to this discussion of Sankhya and Yoga. Actually, the Bhagavadgita, in its original verses, does not go into detail of all these things mentioned just now. Something about it will be told in later chapters, but not in such categorisation, which is knowledge that I have provided to you from other sources.

This is the process of *jnana*, of Sankhya, of knowledge of the whole universe. Now you know where you are standing. Are you in Rishikesh? Where are you sitting now? Your head will start reeling. But if your head reels with this knowledge, it is a blessing to you. Let it reel; no harm. It is reeling because of the giddiness caused by the stupendous knowledge that has taken place within.

I told you that this Ahamkara-tattva has divided itself into a threefold function. There is *adhibhuta prapancha*, the world of objective perception, and *adhyatma*. But the magical trick of the juggler also requires that you must see this jugglery. It is not enough if the jugglery goes on and nobody sees it, because then the drama is not complete. So

a third action is instituted by this wondrous juggler. He himself stands midway. The juggler is standing between the jugglery and yourself, the audience, and he performs his trick. That is the transcendent element. You cannot see the juggler. He suddenly vanishes. When the jugglery is performed, you see only what is performed. The man is absent. You do not know where he has gone.

God absents Himself for the sake of making you feel that He is present in the objective world. The juggler vanishes for the time being so that you may be befooled into the perception of there being something outside the juggler. Here is the world in front of you, and you cannot see the juggler in the middle. Thus, this transcendent consciousness between the subjective side and objective side cannot be seen. I am seeing you, you are seeing me, but you cannot know how you are seeing me and I am seeing you. There is something between us which is more important than you and the world that you see, and unless you touch this transcendent element that is between us, you will be completely confined to a wrong notion of your being somewhere and the world being somewhere else. These two categories of the subjective side and the objective side are linked together by the *adhidaiva*, which is the transcendent principle. Thus the world goes. This is the creation of God, or whoever it is.

On the basis of this knowledge, you have to live in this world. The whole point of the Bhagavadgita is that you have a duty in this world. Where comes the duty? You may ask me, "Why should I have any duty at all? It is all done by God, as you already told me. Let Him do whatever He

likes.” Here is something very interesting for you to know. God has done everything; He has created this peculiar universe in the manner He has done. This may be true, but you also have some part to play in it as an individual. God has not suddenly created you unnecessarily. He is not an unjust ruler. This so-called potential of the Universal Consciousness to become individualised is the reason for the action of what is called karma. Karma is the action potential projected by the desire of the individual to be localised in one place: “I shall be only this. Let me be this much.”

You once desired that you should be John, James, Krishna, Rama, Janaki, Radha, etc. This wish of yours is concretised, cast into a mould of a particular shape into which what is called birth takes place. Birth is the congealment of this desire into a form. Your body, this personality, this whole *adhyatma* that I described is the concrete congealed form of your wish to become only this, and nothing else. And you have assumed the role of a relative individuality in relation to other individuals who are also caught in that relativity. Because you are relative and not absolute, you are restless always. The finitude of your individuality, which is the relative—this relativity of individuality into which the consciousness has entered—can be sustained only by its relative relation to other relations. I can exist only because you are there, and you can exist because I am there. There is a mutual give-and-take policy of cooperation in this cosmos. Totally individually, nobody can exist. You will find you are miserable if you are alone in this universe. You want a

comrade. You want some relationship with something. A related thing can survive only with another related thing. A finite cannot be finite always. It has to assume the role of an imagined non-finite by adding to its finitude accretions of other finites. I become your friend, I have a talk with you, I take assistance from you and you take assistance from me.

I wrongly appear to be expanding my finitude because, actually, the finitude has not expanded merely because I have other friends. Each friend is a finite by himself, and many finites do not make the infinite. So there is another mistake you are committing every day, a double mistake of imagining that an increase in the quantum of relationship will make you a little non-finite. Nothing of the kind—you are finite only. As you came, so you go. You came as a miserable individual, and as a miserable individual you go. But you do not want to be conscious of your miserableness always, so you try to obliterate that thrust of consciousness of finitude by imagining that you are infinite. “I have a lot of land. I have a lot of money. I have friends. I have family. What is wrong with me?” What is wrong with you will be told at the time of your passing from this world. Until that time, you will not know that. Then you will know, my dear friend, what kind of life you have been living.

So this relativity consciousness, which is unable to survive even for a moment unless it is connected to other relativity, lives again in a world of tomfoolery, I should say, and thus we leave this world with restlessness, with anxiety, with no hope of any kind of respite anywhere. But we think and are made to believe that everything is fine in this world by accretions of gold, silver, money, property, friends,

family—all which vanish like dust and ashes when this body is cast off by the mind.

This is the reason why individuality is created, which process is called birth. With these words, I have given you the total picture of creation.

Chapter 5

THE KARMA YOGA PRINCIPLE OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

This universe was considered as the ground on which we based our consciousness of our duty in life. We can know what we ought to do only if we know where we are actually located in this world. Unless we know our circumstances—where we are standing, internally as well as externally, at any given moment of time—we will not be able to take even one step forward in any direction.

So duty as an action incumbent upon people is based on the consciousness of one's own being in relation to the circumstances of existence in this world. That is to say, Karma Yoga is based on Buddhi Yoga, as told in the language of the Bhagavadgita. When karma is based not on *buddhi*, proper understanding, then karma, action, becomes a meandering movement with no proper direction. You can move anywhere, in any direction, and do whatever you like, but that cannot be called right action.

The philosophy of the Bhagavadgita is actually the science of right activity. That which is proper on your part is right action. But what is it that is proper on your part? The propriety of your behaviour and your action depends upon the extent to which you fit in a state of harmony to the atmosphere of creation as a whole. This is the reason why it became necessary for us to go into the details of the cosmological creative process as adumbrated in the Sankhya philosophy.

In what manner are you connected to this world? That is the manner which will decide how you have to act. Are you on the surface of the Earth? Are you on a hilltop? Are you in the desert? Are you on the sea? Are you in the midst of friends, or otherwise? What is also happening to you internally, at the same time?

The internal and external setup of things in the context of the existence of a person or an individual is explained in the cosmology of the Sankhya. We went into great detail about it already so that you will have some idea as to where you are actually sitting at this moment. You are not sitting on any particular isolated location at all. In this great cosmological scheme of which you are one single evolute, you seem to be connected to everything. The entire space-time and the stars, the whole of creation, Prakriti and Purusha, whatever it is, are all strung, as it were, on your own body and, conversely, you are strung on the body of this Universal Being. Hence, you are not an ordinary individual.

“Arjuna, you are not a single body or son of Pandu. You are not sitting on the field of Kurukshetra as a geographical location. You are not facing the Kuru family as people connected with you. There is something else altogether behind the entire situation in which you are placed just now.” Even if you are going to Rishikesh market or the railway station here, it is not a small action that is initiated by you. It is a cosmological incident. The whole world knows what you are doing. Going to purchase a ticket from the station to go to Delhi or some place looks like a silly action, but it is nothing of the kind. The whole world

knows that you are purchasing the ticket—not just the whole world, but the whole creation up to Purusha and Prakriti knows it, just as the tiniest movement of a little finger is known by the whole body. The finger cannot say the body does not know what it is doing, that it is just moving independently. It does not move independently. The entire system of the physical organism is aware of every little scratch, touch or movement.

There is no such thing as private action in this world. All activity, whether done secretly or otherwise, covertly or overtly, visibly or invisibly, is public. Everything that you think, feel and do is recorded in the documents of the skies. The very space-time canvas will spontaneously record whatever you are feeling, thinking and doing. Do not say that you are doing something privately in a corner of the room and nobody knows. There is no such thing as something which nobody knows. Every movement, every activity, every procedure, event, location and historical process is a cosmical movement. Therefore, in the context of the conflict that has arisen between you and the atmosphere outside called the Mahabharata battle—which is also your battle between you and the world outside and the society of people—what is your opinion, finally?

You have a *dharma*, a duty. Svadharmaṃ api cā 'vekṣya na vikampitum arhasi (Gita 2.31). Do not shrink from doing, because doing as an act of obligation in this context of the world is something so incumbent that no one can desist from it.

As I mentioned by way of an analogy, every part of the body is correlated to other parts of the body, every action of

every limb is the action of every other limb, everyone's action is also everyone else's action, and whatever anybody does is also something everybody else does. No independent, individual action is permissible, as is the case with the physical organism. Nobody does anything in this world, even as no limb in the body acts independently. The whole organism acts, and you feel as if some particular limb is working. When I speak, it looks as if the tongue is speaking, but it is not so. My entire setup in all the five *koshas* is working even when I speak, even when I see.

So what is the role that one plays in this world of such a location and such an involvement in the cosmological scheme? Knowing that at least, you should not desist from doing, and do not be a coward, do not be despondent, do not be melancholy, do not say "I will not". The question of "I will" and "I will not" does not arise in this world. No one has the right to say "I will", and no one has the right to say "I will not". You cannot say "I shall do", nor can you say "I shall not do". There is something imposed upon you by the very fact of your connection with things. And what is the connection? That is what you have studied last time—the whole Sankhya doctrine.

Every person is placed in some particular context in this world. The relativity of the finite existence of an individual is conditioned by the relativity of other similar finite things. A wave in the ocean may look like a single upsurge of water, but there is a tremendous movement at the root of this body of water which so adjustably causes the simultaneous rise of several other waves also that you may say that even the movement, size and force of a single wave

is not merely something taking place locally in that particular place; it is connected to the activity of the other waves also because all the waves are surged forth, brought up to the surface by an intention of the body of water at the root.

So, in a way, the relativity of the rise of a particular wave in the ocean—relativity in the sense that it is of a particular character, particular shape, particular size, particular direction, and so on—is due to the particularity of other waves that are equally responsible for this characterisation of a single wave and, vice versa, this particular wave also determines the movement of other waves. If the hand moves, the eyes move or the tongue speaks, they are all so-called differentiated movements, but really they are not differentiated because of the fact that all these actions of the different limbs taking place simultaneously, as it were, are one act of the will of the person. It should be done like that, and it is done in various ways through the different means of the body.

So our duty in this world is like the characterisation of a particular wave in the vast sea, not independently motivated by itself. It has no intention of its own, though it may look that it is independently acting. Nobody acts with particularised intentions. The so-called particularity or individuality that you are assuming in your action is called egoism or *ahamkara*, *krita bhavana*, the feeling that “I am doing”. It is like the wave thinking that it is solely responsible for what it is doing, not knowing the fact that it has been conditioned by other waves also on the basis of the orders issued by the bowels of the ocean. So do not say

you are doing anything. The whole Bhagavadgita clinches its teachings here when it says the word ‘I’ should not be projected in your behaviour in this world. The I is only one in the cosmic sense; the Ahamkara-tattva of the cosmos, the Mahat-tattva, the Purusha and Prakriti to which we made reference can be considered as the I. The other I’s are only fragments, split parts, as it were, of this Cosmic I. Even in the split parts, it is only the Cosmic I that is operating. Even when you appear to be doing something, the Universal I is operating through you. But due to the attachment of this particular consciousness of the individual to the body and to the ego, each one of you feels wrongly that “I am doing it”.

So your duty in this world is not actually doing something, but participation in the cosmic scheme of things. Your duty is to participate in the requirement of the whole cosmic setup, and not to independently do whatever you like from the point of view of your own egoistic personality. *Svadharma* is one’s own duty; *svabhava* is one’s own character or constitution.

Your duty in this world is dependent on what kind of person you are, and how you are fitted to your own self as well as to society outside. Therefore, the duties that are required on the part of any individual cannot be uniform. It is not that everybody should be a businessman, everybody a driver, everybody a professor, everybody a yogi—nothing of the kind. That is not possible because whatever you are expected to be in this world and in what manner you are expected to participate in the scheme of things will depend upon your constitution.

This *svadharma*, this duty on your part, which is based on your own nature, actually means the dependence of your call of duty on the structure of your own individuality, which is made up of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Prakriti operates in everyone right from heaven to earth, in the plant kingdom, in animals and in stones. Na tad asti pṛthivyām vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ, sattvaṁ prakṛtijair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ (Gita 18.40). Right from heaven down to the lowermost creation there is nothing which is not constituted of the three *gunas*, so we are of that character. *Sattva* is purity, equilibrium, transparency, understanding, intelligence, and capacity to decide things in a right manner. *Rajas* is distraction, motivation in the external direction for more and more agitation, and restlessness. *Tamas* is rigidity, fixity and wanting nothing. All these three qualities are operating in us, but they are not operating in an equal proportion. It does not mean thirty-three-and-one-third percent of each quality is present in us always. As there is a larger wave and smaller wave in the ocean, so also there is a wave-like movement of these three *gunas*, the properties of Prakriti, in everything, including our own selves.

These three properties of Prakriti's *gunas*, which are distributed disproportionately in everyone and are never in equilibrium, decide the difference in one's call of duty. If you are predominantly *sattvic* in nature, you will be fitted for one kind of work in this world; one type of participation will be expected from you in the scheme of things. If you are predominantly *rajasic* for some reason or the other, then you will be assigned some job, some work, some duty

according to your particular temperament. But suppose you are basically unfit for other physical reasons, such as the preponderance of *tamas*, etc.; then, you will have to be taken care of in a different way altogether.

Everybody in this world has a duty to perform. You can ask me what this duty is, and why you should do anything. You should not put such questions such as why should you do and why should you not do. Your duty depends upon your automatic involvement in the cosmic setup of things, and so you are not simply saying you shall do or you shall not do. The cosmic setup itself decides in what manner you can be called upon to do your duty. There are degrees and variety in the participation of an individual in the universal scheme, and each person seems to be different from every other person. No two individuals collide or unite to become one individual, though there are similarities. For instance, when we work in a single office, factory or organisation, it may appear we are all doing one uniform type of work, but that is only on the superficial level. Basically there is an independence and a distinction—without difference, we may say—even in a common setup like an office or an organisation, etc. You are all students here. In a way, you are all uniform in your outlook, in your requirement and in your daily duty, but still you have an individuality of your own. One person does not totally merge into another person. Similarly, there is a tremendous variety in the call of duty, and yet it is rooted in a single unity of perspective.

In this call of duty, which is your participation, you should not connect your performance with any fruit or result that may follow from it. Here is a difficulty in

understanding the gospel of the Bhagavadgita. We are always prone to think that everything we do should yield some result: "What shall I get if I do this?" The Bhagavadgita will not permit you to raise such a question. Can the legs ask what they will get by walking? If the hands raise a morsel of food and put it in the mouth, do they ask what they get by doing that? "Somebody is eating, and I lift the food." Would you like to carry somebody's luggage for nothing? And why should the hand lift the food for somebody else's satisfaction? But does the hand put such a question? The spectacles are for the eyes, but the nose bears the burden. Why does the nose bear somebody's luggage? Does the nose refuse? Why does each limb not demand satisfaction for itself and ask what it will get by doing this work? What does the nose get by smelling? The nose does not get anything by smelling. Something else gets it; and something else getting it is equal to the nose getting it, or much more than it expects.

The more you give, the more you receive. This is the philosophy of spirituality. But if you grab, always demand what you want, you will get nothing. The receiver gets nothing; only the giver gets. This is a difficulty in understanding the psychology of spiritual existence. It is not business mathematics, the striking of a balance sheet, or arithmetic of the commercial type. It is a non-commercial, super-mathematical arrangement. The more you give, the more you get. How is it possible? You will not understand such a thing. You never see that by giving more you get more. It looks as if you are losing by giving more and more. The more you give out of the abundance of your own

personality, the less is the attachment that you will have for the personality and the more you will be able to participate in the universal setup.

The giving aspect—I am just digressing a little from the main subject—is emphasised because of the fact that in giving, you are not giving some object; you are giving your own self, giving your satisfaction. The charity is in giving a part of your own joy. If joy is not there in giving, you have given nothing. Suppose you give a useless old coin to a beggar; you have done no charity because even by giving, you have lost nothing. You are still a millionaire. The charity has not been done in the proper proportion.

Joy is shared in giving. Inasmuch as your joys are egoistic in nature, body-conditioned and not actually universally placed, it is good that you share your joy with other people. In sharing the joy, you are also sharing a little part of your ego, because joy and ego go together. The ego it is that is happy, for whatever reason. Let its happiness go a little bit. It pinches. Nobody likes to give anything. You feel sorry that something is going. The ego feels that a bit of it is also going, and feels great grief. Let it feel the grief so that the more you give as a sharing of your own joy, the more also is the ego part that goes with it. The less is the ego, the more is the universal aspect that will enter into you, the more spiritual you become, the more godly you become, and the less human, finite and drab your existence becomes.

So here is a point in the expectation of no result. When you give charity to somebody, do you give it thinking what that man will give back to you? That is like a brother-in-law

giving to a brother-in-law. It is not charity. If a father is educating his son under the impression that he will take care of him in old age, he is not doing any charity. It is some kind of social work or family work. Total joy has not gone. He expects something. If charity is given with the expectation of return, it is not charity. When you arrange a banquet, a large feast, it is said not to invite only your friends because you know they will also invite you to a banquet one day. This is no good. If you give a banquet to your own relatives and invite all your friends and relations, know the motive behind it. Your ego swells more and more on account of the expectation of a very good result. If you arrange for a function in your house and your relatives come and pour gifts upon you, they will also expect you to give the same when they arrange for a feast or a function in their own homes. Otherwise, what will they feel? "This fellow has not given anything." This is not charity; this is not giving. This is not spiritual action at all. Hence, mere giving in a mechanical or commercial way is not to be considered as charity.

Thus, the Bhagavadgita doctrine of duty, giving, participation, is minus expectation of a recompense that will follow. You may be very worried as to what kind of work you are being asked to do, and do not want to simply drudge for no purpose. I have already given you the knowledge of the organism of the body. The participation of the limbs of the body to the body's requirement also provides their own necessity, as the body sustains the legs, the eyes, the hands, and the nose, etc. If the stomach eats food, the legs and fingers also get strength, the eyes will

shine, and the cheeks will bloom. Why should the cheeks say they have no connection with your eating? If this universal principle is maintained behind your every act, the Universal Being will protect you. How it will protect you will come in the later chapters of the Gita. The introduction is laid here, in the Second Chapter. Your duty is to be the motive, and say not anything else; and in this participation of yourself in the scheme of things, which is your *dharma* based on your *svabhava* or your inner constitution, you will lose nothing and will gain everything. Ne'hā 'bhikramanāśo 'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate (Gita 2.40): In doing duty one loses nothing. One only gains.

You will not easily understand how you will gain a thing by expecting nothing from your work. It requires a new type of education to appreciate how it is possible that you can be happy and secure while you get nothing out of your work. It is not actually the work that is the source of your satisfaction; it is the connection of this work with the consciousness of your identity with the whole cosmos. That is why I am again repeating that karma is based on *buddhi*. It is not merely the work that brings results; it is the consciousness of your participation in the setup of the whole thing.

For instance, even an ordinary fitter in a factory may not be divested of the consciousness of his organic relation with the whole setup. He is not merely doing something independently, unconscious of why he is doing it. A consciousness of unity of purpose is there even in an organisation such as a factory, a government, etc. If that consciousness of unity of purpose is not there, it is a

mechanical action that is being done, and he will be suffering, crying and cursing everybody, “How long will I work?” But if he knows the output will sustain him also, he will joyously work in a family, in an organisation.

In this great world of duty, no one is exempt from action. Na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt (Gita 3.5); karmaṇy evā ‘dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana (Gita 2.47). Your duty is to act, and not to expect the fruit of an action. Here is the essence of the whole matter. Karmaṇy evā ‘dhikāras te: you have the right to work. You have duties, but no privileges. You will be shocked to hear this because you feel, “Why should I work? I will get what I want at the end of the month.” People sit outside factories, banks and offices: “I will get my salary whether I work or not.” This attitude arises on account of not understanding the connection of your very existence in this world with the atmosphere around. Do not go for visible satisfactions. The Gita will tell you that immediate, visible satisfaction will be the source of sorrow afterwards. In the beginning, life looks very hard. It pricks like a thorn, but it will give you fruit. All good things look bitter in the beginning but they will yield the sweetness of honey later on, whereas all things that bind you will look like honey poured into the mouth, but later on they will strike, and you will repent for it.

The philosophy of the Bhagavadgita is not merely work, but participation in the production of a value that is transcendent to the action itself. When a large machine is working, every little part works and contributes to the machine’s output, the output being transcendent to the machine itself. The machine is an instrument, and the parts

are also participants. Something is automatically produced as a transcendent result by the participation of the parts in the work of this large machinery of the world.

What follows from all this? You cannot sit quiet, nor can you motivate action by your own self independently. You are wound up inextricably, warp and woof, as in the fabric of a cloth, in the arrangement of things in this universe. Again to repeat, every individual is a cosmic representation, a little *avatara*, an incarnation, as it were, of God Almighty Himself. Remember the cosmic scheme which we described previously—Purusha, Prakriti, Mahat, Ahamkara. These *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*, *adhyatma*, etc., are all simultaneously working in you now at this very moment. Just now, under the roof of this building, near the desk at which you are sitting and the way in which you are positioned, the whole cosmos is working through you. And so you will feel secure in this world. You will not feel dejected: “What is there? Nobody talks to me. I get nothing in this world.” Do not say that. You have everything in this world. Your feeling that you have nothing is your sorrow. When you are vitally connected with the life of the whole universe and are joyously participating in its requirement, how would you say you have nothing? You can touch the source of the world, and it will fall to you. The abundance of the universe will be in your hand. The world will be at your beck and call. You need not cringe before the world; the world will cringe before you. It will fall at your feet. Why should you fall at the feet of other people? There are no other people in this world. You are connected to everything else.

The mind is so tricky that it will not allow you to think like this. The moment this session is over, you will get up with a feeling as if nothing has happened. You have heard nothing. It is all gone, as water poured on a rock. This should not be. It should sink into your feeling. These discourses, this teaching, this academy is not a diversion from your daily duties or routine; it is a transmuting process of your very personality itself. It is intended to make you a new person altogether. When you return from this place, you will not be the same person that you were. You are a super person, a higher person, a slightly transcendent person, you may say. You have enlarged your being itself.

Therefore, the Bhagavadgita gospel of duty hinges upon two factors: In the universal setup of things everybody has to participate in some way or the other according to their proclivity, due to the predominance of the *gunas* of Prakriti in one's nature; and this participation should be based on the nature of one's consciousness of one's unity with the cosmos—*dharma* based on *buddhi*, karma based on *jnana*, in a state of equilibrium, or poised attitude of the mind. You will never be disturbed afterwards. Nothing can shake your will. Nobody can cause you sorrow, and nothing will cause you unhappiness. Is the body not maintaining a balance? It is always in the state of harmony. The world will, in a state of harmony, see that you are also placed in that harmony.

Samatvaṁ yoga ucyate (Gita 2.48): Equilibrium is Yoga, harmony is Yoga, adjustment is Yoga, adaptability is Yoga, unity is Yoga, the blending of the subject and the

object in harmony is Yoga. In everything that you do, you must be in a state of harmony. You should not come in conflict with anybody—neither with nature nor with people. The moment you set up an atmosphere of conflict and you are not able to adjust your personality with the object, the *adhibhuta*, there you have failed in Yoga. *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam* (Gita 2.50) is another great dictum. Yoga is harmony, and it is also expertness in action. Expertness means the ability to see unity in everything that you do, and in every position in which you are placed.

Here is a brief outline of the Karma Yoga principle of the Bhagavadgita. Therefore, Arjuna is asked to take a particular step under the prevailing circumstances, out of which he could not extricate himself. He is bound to do whatever is expected of him. Even if you think you will not do, you will actually be ruminating over that, and your ‘not doing’ is also a kind of action. Do not be attached to doing, and do not be attached to not doing. When you are doing some work, you may feel you are getting attached to it, and so you may desist from action under the impression that you are not going to be attached. But you are going to be attached to the other, negative aspect of it, namely, cessation from action. Your consciousness of action may be attachment, but your consciousness of non-action is also attachment. *Mā karmaphalahetur bhūr mā te saṅgo ‘stv akarmaṇi* (Gita 2.47): Do not cling to your duties and works as if it is your performance. It is not yours; it is a universal action. Also, do not cling to non-action. You are caught from both sides. Neither can you have the so-called

independent privilege of doing what you like, nor the option of not doing, under some circumstances.

But how will you adjust yourself to this condition? This is exactly the difficulty. It was not easy for even Bishma to decide what was proper under the given conditions. Even Drona, the great master, slipped under conditions which were very critical. Arjuna was a lesser man. His mind was reeling in a state of confusion.

No saint can be a saint all the time. There are a few moments when he comes down; he has difficulties and is unable to decide what is to be done. It is difficult to maintain God-consciousness all twenty-four hours of the day. Not even the greatest of saints can do that. Sometimes they act like human beings; but they rise up to God-consciousness afterwards, of course. Incarnations also do not always behave in a universal, uniform manner. There are ups and downs in their behaviour, whatever the reason be.

So with spiritual freedom, *moksha*, being the ultimate aim of existence, it becomes necessary on your part to be cautious. Yoga is not merely harmony, *samattva*, and it is not merely expertness in action. It is also caution. Vigilant is the Yogi. *Apramattas tadā bhavati* (Katha 2.3.2), says the Katha Upanishad. Heedfulness is the watchword of the Yoga student. If you are heedless and not able to catch the situation that is presented before you, you become mistaken in your attitude. Caution is the watchword. What is the caution? You must never forget that your particular behaviour and action that you perform is not disconnected from the consciousness of unity of purpose. This is the

caution. You have to be vigilant to see that your behaviour and action at any given moment of time is not out of context with the unity of purpose that is to be at the back of it. Otherwise, it will be a drab, desultory work which will please nobody—neither you, nor anyone else.

So in this outlook of life you will find there is no such thing as secularity or spirituality isolated from one another. Nowadays people talk of secular existence, political existence, social existence, and spiritual existence. There is nothing of the kind. These are all unnecessary departments that we are creating psychologically in a single, seamless arrangement of life. That which is predominantly extrovert looks secular, but that which is predominantly extrovert is also not spiritual; nor is it an introverted action, or merely a political administration—all which, of course, are capable of being blended into a great Yoga of existence. A person can be a great statesman and politician, and also be a great Yogi. Lord Krishna himself is an example. He was a master statesman, master warrior, master Yogi, master politician, master *sannyasin*, master householder, and master incarnation of God. He blended together every aspect.

Thus, you can be a very good servant in any walk of life, and there is no such thing as menial labour or better work, a white-collar job. They do not exist. Every work is dignified because of the fact that every work is connected to a spiritual connection of your life with the whole godly arrangement of things. So ‘spirituality’, ‘secularity’ and so on are words that have to be used in the proper sense. There is only one action, all divine in its being; and only one person acts—it is the supreme Purusha and Prakriti.

There is one purpose, the unity of existence, the blending of *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* in which you are involved.

It is all joy. You seem to be in a kingdom of heaven even when you think of all these things. You are not living in hell. You are actually living in the heaven of God even now. The illusion of hell is only a temporary makeshift or a trickery of the mind, as in the end of the Mahabharata, Yudhishtira was made to see a kind of hell which was really not there; it was heaven itself. His perspective, his vision was distorted for some reason, and he began to see hell even in heaven. But the hell vanished, and heaven started shining before him.

In this very world, at this very place, in this very context, you will see all trouble vanishing in one second as if you have woken up from sleep, from a phantasm of dream, and you see a new world altogether. The awakening of the spirit, which is the intention behind the teaching of the Bhagavadgita, is instantaneous action of rising from hell to heaven, from mortality to immortality, from finitude to infinitude.

Chapter 6

SANKHYA—THE WISDOM OF COSMIC EXISTENCE

From the point of view of the values of life based on our ordinary perception of things, it would appear that there is very little chance of the cosmical view entering into the normal modes of perception. We never look at things from a cosmical point of view. Everything seems to be at some place only, and perhaps for some time. Something is here, something is somewhere else, and there is apparently, from the perceptual point of view, no vital connection among things. We seem to be living in a world of values based on our sense perceptions which cannot embody anything that we can consider as universal or cosmic. There is nothing to prove in our daily life that cosmicality operates in us consciously. Every act of ours, every thought and every engagement or conscious relationship is sensorily bound, physically related and socially conditioned. Where is the cosmicality behind our daily life?

The contrast that seems to be there between the fact of life—which is universal inclusiveness—and the way of life we are living through the sense organs is brought about in an interesting verse towards the end of the Second Chapter of the Gita: *yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgati saṁyamī, yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ* (Gita 2.69). For us, this world of sense perception looks like bright daylight with every kind of clarity before it, and all things seem to be very well with us; but actually, we are in darkness in view of the fact that the truth of the universe is

not as it is presented to us through the sense organs. The daylight of the sense organs is the darkness of the spirit. The true spirit, which is universal, is sleeping, as it were, while the senses are awake and are active in the daylight of their activity.

The cosmic vision sees our sensory world as a kind of darkness, while we, living in a sensory world, consider the cosmic world as darkness. The Universal is completely obliterated from our vision, as if it does not exist at all. It is pure darkness before us. But the world of sense perception is obliterated from the vision of the cosmic saint and sage, to whom this world is darkness. While we are awake in the world of the senses, the spirit is sleeping. When the spirit awakes to its own universal inclusiveness, the senses will sleep. Sri Krishna was born in the midnight of the sense organs. All the guards were sleeping. It is in that pitch darkness of the sense world that the light of the spirit awakens itself.

So the daylight of clarity of perception, so-called, to us, is really a mass of ignorance that is before us—darkness to the spirit. And to us who rejoice in the perception of things through the sense organs, God Himself does not seem to exist. Who is conscious of the existence of God? He is non-existent to the sense organs; and to God, the sense organs do not exist. This is a contrast, an interesting difference, a distinction drawn between spiritual universal existence and diversified sensory existence. *Yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgati saṁyamī, yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ.*

How would you, then, make yourself fit for the universal vision if you are rejoicing in the world of the sense organs? Another verse gives a little clue in this matter. *Āpūryamāṇam acalapraṭiṣṭhaṁ samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat, tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti na kāmakāmī* (Gita 2.70): A person filled with desires cannot have any vision of the Universal Spirit. If it could be possible, by way of intense austerity and restraint of sense organs, to withdraw the forces of the senses into your own self; if all the desires can merge into your universality as rivers merge in the ocean or as waves subside in the ocean; if the multifarious longings of the senses can melt down into the universal background of your own existence; if you are satisfied with what you are, and do not ask for what you do not have; if you do not go for things outside but are happy with your own self; if your loneliness is what you want and not the diversity of things outside—that is to say, if all your desires melt down in Pure Being, which is your essence—then the senses will not distract you in the way they do in ordinary life. You are basically universal in nature, and yet you perceive diversity in the world. There is contradiction between your daily perceptions and your spiritual longings.

So here is a clue given in this verse of the Bhagavadgita. If you are stable like the majestic ocean which is never disturbed by any kind of tumult on its surface; if you can stand mightily like an elephant before the howling jackals of the senses; if you can be satisfied with what you are and not merely with what you have; if these desires which are wrongly oriented on account of the pressure of the sense

organs can revert back to your own self, then you will expand the dimension of your existence instead of looking like a finite individual. When so, desires enter into you and they do not proceed out in the direction of objects, and you attain peace: *sa śāntim āpnoti*.

Peace cannot be had by possession of things. You cannot have peace of mind by contact with external objects or any kind of external relation. Peace is the outcome of unity of vision, integratedness of personality. The five *koshas*—Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya, Anandamaya—which are the finitising sheaths of your personality, should again melt down into the spirit from where they have arisen. Then you have peace. This is the greatest achievement that you can conceive. If this could be possible, you can be sure that you are established in the Absolute.

Eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ (Gita 2.72): This is the Absolute state. This is the state of Brahman. Which is the state of Brahman? It is where desires trouble you not, where you want nothing except your own Self because of the fact you are cosmically connected to creation as a whole. If you can establish your consciousness in this state even for a few minutes, you should consider yourself as blessed.

Nai 'nām prāpya vimuhyati (Gita 2.72): Having attained this state, nobody is confounded afterwards. Once you have awakened, you will not be sleeping once again. Having established yourself in the consciousness of this absoluteness of your existence, you will never get confused. No doubt will arise in your mind.

Sthitvā 'syām antakāle 'pi brahmanirvāṇam ṛcchati (Gita 2.72): Even if at the time of passing from this world—for a moment at least—you are established in this state, you will not be reborn into this world. If you can be blessed with this vision, this perception of the universe, even at the last moment when you are quitting this world, that would be blessedness. You will enter into the Absolute. The quantity or the length of life that you have wrongly lived in this world will not affect that quality of perception, even if it comes to you at the end of life. This is the great blessing, this is the great achievement, this is the greatest attainment, and this is the aim, the purpose, the whole of life. With this verse, the Second Chapter concludes.

Arjuna, the student, hearing all this, was not able to grasp much of the profundities of this teaching because the Second Chapter of the Gita is packed with verses which become the seed of the exposition of the subsequent chapters. One or the other verse of the Second Chapter is the seed for the exposition of one or the other succeeding chapters. So it is a condensed teaching, also called Sankhya Yoga. It is a chapter of knowledge. But it was too much for Arjuna. "What is this that you are telling me, my Lord? You are emphasising on the one hand the wisdom aspect of life which makes out that I have to be established in the universal perception of things and withdraw myself from all kinds of sensory activity, and be what I am. On the other hand, you say 'Why are you throwing down your bow and arrows like a coward, not doing your duty? Get up! Do your work.' I cannot understand what you are speaking. On the one hand, it is universal vision, and on the other hand,

duty, do work. I am confused by what you say. Please clarify your point.”

The answer to this question of Arjuna is the commencement of the Third Chapter of the Gita. “There are two ways of approach to things,” says the great Master, once again repeating, in more detail, what he said earlier. Sankhya and Yoga are the two ways of approach, but they are actually not different from each other. Whatever one can achieve through Sankhya, one can achieve through Yoga also. Contemplation and action, wisdom and work, are not differentiated vitally, basically. You cannot do anything without establishing that *modus operandi* of action on a perception which is Sankhya, or knowledge; and knowledge, which is Sankhya, or wisdom, is also meant to be applied in your daily relative existence.

The Bhagavadgita teaching is an expert handling of the inner harmony that exists between God and creation, the universal and the particular, that which is Sankhya and that which is Yoga. What is the relationship between God and His creation? What is the relationship between subject and object? What is the relationship between consciousness and matter? What is the relationship between contemplation and action? All these questions amount to only one question, finally—namely, the absolute and the relative, the inner and the outer or, rather, the universal and the external.

Sri Krishna’s point of view is that it is not possible to emphasise or stick to only one side of the matter. We are, as human beings, phenomenal as well as noumenal at the same time. We are immortal, and also seized with death.

Something in us will not die, and something in us dies. We speak of ourselves in two ways: We are bound to die one day, and we are imperishable. The imperishability of our nature has to be reconciled with our perishable nature. The phenomenal aspect of our personality is the relative aspect of it, which is bound to transform itself continuously in the process of time, and this process is called birth and death. But metaphysically, noumenally, we are imperishable.

The fear of death itself is the proof of the immortality of our soul. If we are really death-bound, we will not fear death. If our essential nature is transiency, we will not be afraid of transiency. If poverty is the only thing that exists and there is no such thing as freedom from it, nobody will be afraid of poverty. There is something other than what we are; therefore, we are afraid of what we are. The perishability of our nature, which is the fear of death that may come tomorrow, while it frightens us on the one hand, also explains why we are frightened. The fright is due to the fact that we are really not going to die. Essentially we cannot die. Because of the fact that essentially we are not going to die, the fact of impending death on the other side frightens that aspect which is not going to die.

The deathless immortality of ours is the reason why we are afraid of anything contrary to it, which is the phenomenal extinction of our personality. We are involved in space, time and causation, and materiality, which is the embodiment of our personality. Inasmuch as space, time and motion, and materiality and causation are in the process of time-bound evolution, then we, being involved in this process, also undergo this same transformation from

moment to moment. So phenomenally, we cannot escape death. That is to say, the phenomenal aspect of our personality cannot escape death.

These five *koshas* mentioned—Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijñanamaya, Anandamaya—this body, this social relation, this matter, this possession, this wealth, this whatever you have, they are all extraneous to your immortal essence, and therefore they are bound to leave you. Bereavement is the law of phenomenal existence. There is a verse towards the end of the Mahabharata which says that all accumulation will one day end in dispersion. All rising will end in fall. All accumulation will end in extinction. Life ends in death, and it is a fool who has occasions of joy and sorrow several times in a day. Sometimes you are elated, sometimes you are grief-stricken. There should be no occasion for you either to exult or to be grief-stricken, considering that these waves of joy and sorrow frequently dashing on you are caused by the process of time. Your duty is to follow *dharma*.

So one aspect of your personality, which is phenomenal, talks in this strain, and the other aspect tells you that you are going to achieve infinite existence. God-realisation, *moksha*, is your aim. This is what your spirit will tell you again and again. Your aspirations are endless. Unending is the asking of the soul. Nothing in the world can satisfy you; not all the grain, not all the gold, not all the silver, not all the domain in the world can satisfy even one person. Not even one person can be satisfied by the wealth of the whole world. Such are the desires of man, like the flaming march of a conflagration in a forest.

As there are two aspects of a human being, there are also two approaches to the problems of life. One approach is Sankhya, another is Yoga, but they are not connected by an 'and'. They are two phases, two wings of a single bird that is flying—simultaneously, indivisibly, as it were. Yoga is defined as action. *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam* (Gita 2.50): Expertness in action is Yoga. But what kind of action? What is meant by 'action'?

Here, in the beginning of the Third Chapter, a clue is given to us as to how action can bind or not bind. If the mind is not connected to the actions that you perform, you cannot call it real action. It will become like an automaton moving, a mechanical activity. If the body is moving and the mind is not thinking, it cannot be called real action. So while a person sits quiet without doing any action, we may imagine he is doing nothing; but he does something when the mind is conscious that he is not doing anything. If the mind is roaming over various questions of life or even entertaining desires as a daydream, but the sense organs are not active—neither you eat, nor you see, nor you smell, nor you talk, though you have a desire to eat and a desire to see, a desire to come in contact with people, but you are not allowing the desires to fulfil themselves by restraining the activity of the operative organs—this is real action. Even if you are physically doing nothing but are mentally doing something, you are an active person from the point of view of the psychology of your personality. But if your mind wants nothing, it has no desires of any kind, it contemplates not anything in this world but physically you are engaged in work, then that action cannot be called action. Mind,

intention, purposiveness, causation, impulse—these are the actions. So physical activity, whatever be its nature, cannot be regarded as action of any kind if the mind is detached from it.

So there is a danger, especially in the case of a spiritual seeker, when one is prone to imagine that sitting quiet is a state of inaction, and freedom from the bondage of action. Action binds because of the thought involved in it. Action by itself does not bind, because consciousness is not connected with it. The binding factor is the charging of consciousness. When consciousness vitalises action, it becomes a specific action. When there is a devitalisation of the action process by the withdrawal of consciousness or mentality in it, it ceases to be meaningful action. Knowing this, one has to try to reconcile in one's finite existence here the two aspects of one's nature, the phenomenal and the noumenal.

The verse of the Third Chapter says when God created this world and the individuals of various species, He ordained that there is a binding factor perpetually operating between the individuals and the cosmic process. Sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ, anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vōstv iṣṭakāmadhuk (Gita 3.10). At the beginning of creation, Prajapati, the Creator, willed, as it were, that all created evolutes are to be bound back to the universal perspective through some bond, which is known as sacrifice. *Yajna* is the clue to the way in which we have to conduct ourselves in this world. Life is considered as a sacrifice. I mentioned to you briefly that sacrifice is something like charity, the giving away of one's own being

in some extent. That is, you share the finitude of your personality for the welfare and survival of other such finitudes with which you are all internally connected. By this process you diminish your own finitude and, simultaneously, you produce an alternate effect of increasing the dimension of your personality. You gradually become more and more non-finite by charity.

‘*Yajna*’ is a word which is well known. *Yajna*, sacrifice, is generally understood in the popular sense to mean some offering in a sacred fire, somebody performing a *yajna* somewhere. When you are told this, you understand that some sacred fire is lit and oblations are offered for the satisfaction of the gods. This is one way to understand *yajna* because as a sacrifice, *yajna* may be external or internal. It can also be universal. This threefold aspect of *yajna* will be dealt with when we come to the Eighteenth Chapter of the Gita.

So, externally *yajna* would mean offering oblations in a sacred fire. This *yajna*, which is offered externally by ritualistic chanting of mantras, etc., is also one kind of sacrifice. You offer something in the sacred fire for the satisfaction of a divinity as you have observed priests, pundits offering oblations. The *yajamana*, or the conductor of the sacrifice, is asked to repeat the word ‘*namama*’. *Indraya svaha indraya idam namama*: May this be to the satisfaction of Indra, not for me. *Namama*: I am not doing this *yajna* for my satisfaction. It is for the satisfaction of the god. Who is this god? These Indras, Varunas, Angis, etc., in the Veda mantras are actually the *adhidaivas*. The *adhyatma* is the performer of the sacrifice, the *adhidaiva* is

the deity to whom the offer is made for his satisfaction. So even in external sacrifice, *yajna* is very valuable, provided it is done with a pure spirit of understanding of the offering, the *adhidaiva*, and the *adhyatma yajamana*. The *kunda*, the actual altar, is the *adhibhuta* preparation. The sacred altar that is prepared for the performance of this sacrifice, ritual performance or *yajna*, is part of the *adhibhuta-prapancha* because it is made of bricks, mortar, etc. On the basis of this *adhibhuta* preparation of the altar, the *adhyatma*, which is the individual concerned, offers a symbolic gift, as it were, to that invisible, internal connecting link of divinity, the *adhidaiva*. So you understand to some extent the meaning of these external *homas*, *yajnas*, sacrifices, etc.

This intricate process of a *yajna* is not merely offering something mechanically for no purpose, but is an inwardly oriented vital action of the inward relationship between the *adhyatma*, the *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. So even in an external ritualistic *homa* or *yajna*, a universal setup is produced by the contemplation of the *yajnamana*, or the performer. In a passage of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the question is raised by a member of the audience in the court of Janaka who addresses Yajnavalkya: “Any offering that is made is perishable. All actions lead to results which will cease one day or the other. So all sacrifice ends in a perishable result. How would the performer of sacrifice attain immortality through sacrifice? Answer this question, Yajnavalkya.”

Yajnavalkya says, “What you say is correct because the offering is a limited, finite substance. It may be some charu, some ghee, or some preparation like porridge; it is a

perishable unit indeed. The altar is also a limited substance. Where is the unlimitedness there? How would heavenly enjoyment or immortality accrue to the performer if perishable objects are offered at a perishable altar? The perishable nature vanishes and the imperishability implied in the performance of the *yajna* manifests itself, provided the *yajnamana* at the same time contemplates the divinity that is between the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta*. If the *yajna* or action, or whatever it is, is performed minus the consciousness of the *adhidaiva*, then it becomes a perishable deed.”

So *yajna*, even done ritualistically, is a great thing, and you can offer material substance, as is done usually in sacrifices, as symbols of your gesture of offering to the divinity; or *yajnas* can be performed only mentally. Agastya, as is told to us in the Mahabharata, seems to have performed a great *yajna* without any material whatsoever—no alter, no vessels, no ghee, no charu, no porridge, no *yajamana*, no priest, nothing was there. He was sitting there contemplating the whole process, and it produced the result. Mental action is more powerful than physical action, but physical action can also assume meaning if the mind is connected with it. So *yajnas* can be outward or inward, and in the Fourth Chapter it will be mentioned how varieties of *yajnas* are possible—*dravya yajna*, *yoga yajna*, and so on.

The point is that this *yajna* principle which was apparently instituted by God Himself at the time of creation, as is mentioned in this verse, implies that you are bound by a bond of sacrifice to the universal Whole right from the birth of your personality. That is, you are duty-

bound. This is an emphasis further laid on what is already said in the Second Chapter. You cannot be free from the obligation of duty because the gods sustain you, and you are supposed to be grateful to them. The *adhidaiva* is sustaining the *adhibhuta* and the *adhyatma* connection. If the divinity *adhidaiva surya prapancha*, or the power of the solar existence in the sky—which is controlling the process of visual perception—is not to act, you will not see anything in the world. The world is not jumping into the eyes; the eyes also do not contact the objects outside. Both are physical in their nature, but there is conscious perception taking place when we open our eyes and see things. This conscious perception is made possible by the action of a principle between the object outside and our own sensory organs. In the case of vision, it is supposed to be *surya*. The solar existence is the reason behind our vision, and many other divinities are connected with other organs.

So whoever consumes things for himself, without being grateful to the gods who are responsible for his very existence, is a thief. The benefits that accrue to you in this world are the gifts of the gods. It will be so if you appreciate that the *adhidaiva* is controlling you, even when you breathe. The connection between you and the world, which is what you call life in this world, is actually caused by the action of something which is neither you nor the world outside. Should you not be grateful for that? Gratitude is the greatest virtue. If you are not even conscious of the gifts that you receive from the higher sources and imagine that you are the doer and the enjoyer, while you are neither the doer nor the enjoyer because it is the *adhidaiva* that is

actually pushing you and making you an instrument of action in the world, you are considered as a grabber, as a thief.

This is a little commentary on the principle of action in this world. Act you must; work is your duty. It is so because of the fact you are involved phenomenally in this body, in space, time and causation. You cannot wrench yourself from the relativity in which you are involved just because of the fact that Universality is your existence.

So the Bhagavadgita brings about a beautiful blend between the relative and the Absolute. It does not go to the extreme of emphasising only the earthly existence of political and social relations, nor does it sever the relationship of your relative existence with the cosmic existence. God and man walk together in the principle of the Bhagavadgita. They shake hands, as it were, as friends. Krishna and Arjuna are considered as eternal comrades. The God of the universe and the relativity of the individual are not to be segregated. Nara and Narayana are the symbols divinely portrayed of man and God. The relationship between man and God, the world and the cosmic, the relative and the Absolute, is the relationship between Arjuna and Krishna. Two birds perched on the same tree, living together, one eating not the fruit of the tree and the other engaged in the enjoyment of the fruit, is another analogy that we have in the Rigveda mantra and also in the Upanishads, the two birds being God and man.

This body, this world, this creation, is itself the tree on which two birds are perching. One bird is God; the other bird is myself, yourself. You are engaged in eating the fruit

in this world, which is so delicious, and are not even conscious of the other bird sitting near you, unconcerned and merely gazing. Where is the freedom? This is perhaps the fruit which you should not eat. What you require is the vision of that which is sitting quietly inside you, the unconcerned spectator of the universe. This spectator of the universe is God, Ishvara, who is your friend, Narayana. He sits quiet in the chariot of Arjuna, doing nothing. Arjuna is very busy every moment. The intense activity of Arjuna and the so-called calm, quiet seatedness of Krishna are great contradictions indeed. The Bhagavadgita wants to bring a blend between these. "Act! Do not be a coward. Rush forward!" says the one who does nothing Himself. And the last verse of the Bhagavadgita will also be a further exposition of the necessity of the blend of Krishna and Arjuna, Narayana and Nara, God and man, the Absolute and the relative.

Sankhya and Yoga therefore, while they appear to be two ways of approach to things, are two ways of a single approach only, in the end. The singleness of this approach arises from the fact that we are simultaneously phenomenal and noumenal. We are not today phenomenal and tomorrow noumenal. We are in God and in this world—you may say, in heaven and in hell—at the same time. So it is necessary for us to be cautious in the sense that we are able to be an expert manager of our own person in this world of an apparent division or a contradiction between the universal and the particular. Expertness in this performance is necessary, cosmically as well as individually; else, there will be a rift in our personality. We will be a

psychological derelict. There will be non-alignment of our inner psyche.

There is a gradational necessity to integrate the personality from the lowest of our levels to the highest. Physically also we must be integrated; otherwise, we will be sick bodies. The maintenance of the body in its anabolic and catabolic processes should be a blend of action taking place every day. Neither not eating nor eating too much; neither sleeping too much nor not sleeping at all, etc., will be told to you later on. So is the case with your senses. Neither indulge them nor starve them. So is the case with the mind. It has two desires—to ask for the endlessness of things and to satisfy its own craving through the desire.

A very careful handling of the situation is necessary, as it was necessary for Arjuna to handle the Mahabharata context with the guidance of Krishna that was coming to him perpetually. Thus, you have to be healthy in body, restrained in the sense organs, calm and quiet in your mind, logical in your intellect, and happy within. This is how you can integrate your personality. Then there should be integration of society. You should not create conflict between yourself and people outside. The *yamas* of Patanjali's Yoga tell you that you should be in harmony with society. So integration starts with your own personality first, and then it extends to society—you are a friend of your own self and a friend of everybody else also. Then you become a friend of nature and the Cosmic Being. This is how the apparent conflict between the objective side and the subjective side can be brought together into a state of harmony.

Sankhya is the knowledge of cosmic existence; Yoga is the art of performance of duty in this world. They are not two different things. You have to be conscious of your cosmic existence and, at the same time, perform duty in this world as a phenomenally bound individual. You have to be always with Krishna, though you yourself are an Arjuna only.

These few verses at the commencement of the Third Chapter highlighting work on the basis of the relationship between Sankhya and Yoga and *yajna* mention what our duty is. Therefore, duty of the human being, in the context of the teaching of the Bhagavadgita, is a divine living from moment to moment. We are not living like beasts, animals. We are not instinct driven, as the cattle in the forest. We are logically conscious of the pros and cons of our actions. The past determines the present, and the present determines the future to some extent in our case because of the connection of our consciousness with the past, present and future. It is only at the human level that we are able to make decisions and be logical in our approach. When we approach this human level, attain this state of humanity, we suddenly become conscious of the higher and the lower at the same time. The animals, the plants and the trees and the stones and the atom are not supposed to be conscious of what is beyond them. They are limited to their own existence, bound by instinct, and there is no reason operating in them; they have only instinct. The lower mind operates, but not the logical reason. The logical reason, the pure rationality, manifests itself only in the human being—

the pure reason, as we call it, the higher *buddhi*, which tells us where our limit is, and what is beyond.

We have a sense of duty in this world, and also a longing for that which is not in this world. These two aspects operate in us continuously. We always long for something that is more than this world, and yet we are bound to this world, of which we are very conscious. Our consciousness of our being in this world as an individual bound to duty and obligation to people goes simultaneously with our consciousness of a longing that is above this world. Therefore, we are transcendent and immanent socially, personally, in every way, at the same time.

The Bhagavadgita gospel is a guide for us in every walk of life, in every crucial moment, to solve every kind of problem because here, in this gospel of the Gita, we have a presentation before us of the total setup of things, bringing together the visible and the invisible, the world and the eternal, time and timelessness, that which is and that which ought to be.

Chapter 7

THE ENTRY OF THE ABSOLUTE INTO THE RELATIVE

The involvement of everyone in the principle of sacrifice is stated briefly when the Gita tells us: *sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ, anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vōstv iṣṭakāmadhuk* (Gita 3.10). When Prajapati, the Creator, manifested this universe and projected individuals like us, he also ordained, at the same time, that the life of an individual is inextricably involved in the process of the whole of creation through the bond of the principle of sacrifice.

We live on account of the result that spontaneously follows from the act of the sacrifice that we perform in this world. We will wither away into airy nothing and will not be able to even survive for three days if some sort of sacrifice is not done by way of our participation in the work of cosmic creation. Our interconnection with all things in the world is the reason why we require to be conscious always of this need to participate by way of sacrifice. We are not totally independent individuals. Our independence is only a grant, a special permit issued to us, as it were, for the time being, like the permission given to a cow to move freely within the distance of the rope with which it is tied. If a cow is tied to a peg with a long rope, to the extent of the length of the rope there is freedom for the cow to roam about wherever it wants, and it feels totally independent. It may feel a great freedom to move anywhere, but only to the extent of the length of the rope. The moment it reaches the

terminus of the rope, it is pulled back and it cannot go further. So our individuality, which appears to be a kind of freedom that we enjoy in our own so-called personality, is limited by the necessity to participate in a cosmic purpose, and we are free only to the extent our sacrifice is complete as ordained.

Inasmuch as the freedom of individuality is not real finally, as is apparent in the context of our assertion of personality through egoism, the point of sacrifice assumes great importance, and we seem to be living more for things beyond ourselves than for our own selves. The need that you feel for social service, for cooperation with people outside, to work for the betterment of anyone in the world—this need that you feel as an urge from inside you is not a whim or fancy; it is an upsurge of a necessity that is emanating from the root of your personality itself. Your very soul calls for this activity on your part, saying inwardly in its own voice that you cannot exist by yourself. You exist also for something more than yourself.

The existence that you enjoy in this world is not conditioned by external factors, as you imagine that the service that you do to people is a service that you do to somebody other than you. It is not so. The service that you render to people, to humanity, is not something that you do for the good of that which is outside you, but that which is above you. You have to make a distinction between that which is above you and that which is outside you. The social context it is that is compelling you to do service in this world. Society, which is a big subject of sociological science, is not merely a group of people. A million people

sitting together do not constitute society because they will be like bricks thrown higgledy-piggledy somewhere, and the bricks do not constitute an edifice. Society is a conceptual organisational feature that transcends the multitude of parts, which are the individuals. The organisational feature that is involved in what you call society is the transcendent feature which is immanent in all individuals so that every individual feels a sense of belonging to the society and, at the same time, no individual can be regarded as the whole of society because there is a transcendent element in the very consciousness of society. It is a society of principle, and not a multitude of people.

So your service, your sense of belonging, your compulsion to act for the welfare of people is actually not motivated by your consciousness of the otherness of people, which is an empirical concept that you are wrongly introducing into yourself, but a transcendent aspect—that is, a Selfhood, an Atman, a consciousness, a reality which is above your personality, and above the personality of everybody else also, so that there is a little bit of divinity, a consciousness of a godhood involved even in social service. Otherwise, who will do work merely for the sake of other people? The very consciousness of otherness frees you from having any interest in people. You will not like to have love for anything that is other than you; but still, you love something. Why do you love? It is not because of the otherness of the object, because if it is ‘other’, the matter is closed. You have already severed yourself from the other man. The very word ‘other’ is anathema because it cuts you

off from your vital connection with that thing which you call the other.

But there is something else in you that you miss in ordinary sense perception. The love that you feel for anything in the world is a call that comes from that which is between you and the other thing—the *adhidaiva prapancha*. Again I bring that point to you. There is an *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. The thing that you love is *adhibhuta*. The persons, the society, or whatever you call it is the *adhibhuta*, as it were, but only as it were—not really—because your connection with the *adhibhuta prapancha*, the world as a whole, nature, society, whatever it is, is invalidated immediately if the *adhidaiva* is not there connecting you and transcending you both. The *adhidaiva* transcends you as well as the object outside. That inclusive personality of a transcendent consciousness, *adhidaiva*, is the reason why you are impelled to have any interest in things in this world. That is why you feel like doing some work. The *adhidaiva* compels you because it is in that which you want to work for, and in you also, which is the cause of the impulsion. This is a big philosophical cosmic significance that is involved in this little injunction of Prajapati: *sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā purovāca prajāpatiḥ, anena prasaviṣyadhvam eṣa vōstv iṣṭakāmadhuk*.

Now, the Third Chapter of the Bhagavadgita is long, and I am briefly mentioning the essence of it: that you have to live in this world like a Super-man, but a Super-man in the sense that you are motivated by the consciousness of the *adhidaiva* only. You are a transcendent person always; you are not one in the multitude. A person who is rooted in the

adhidaiva consciousness does not belong to himself. You are not yourself. You are not another. What are you, then? The Super-man's character is a transcendent element which intervenes in between the so-called yourself and the other thing, which apparently conditions you as society.

A Super-man is not a man in the ordinary sense. He is not a human being at all. You should not call him a man. 'Super-person', or some such thing with a capital, may be the designation applied to this principle of self-transcendence, for want of better words in language. A Super-person is not a person, because that person has risen above himself in the consciousness of that which is between himself and the other, so that he is ranging in the world as a master, and not as a slave or a servant.

When you become a Super-person, you do not belong to yourself. You have already sacrificed your personality for the sake of that thing which is above you, and you have sacrificed yourself for the other thing also; both you and the other thing are transcended by this interconnection, namely, the *adhidaiva*.

The whole world runs, therefore, by the operation of God. It is not working because of its own self. Neither nature nor society nor yourself are independent individuals. Nothing works independent of that universal interconnecting link, which is God operating through all His media of interconnection.

There are endless connections of this type. The relationship of *adhyatma* and *adhibhuta* is involved in an infinite variety of degrees of ascent and descent. This imperative of the presence of a consciousness between

adhyatma and *adhibhuta* in various degrees is the reason why you sometimes feel there are many gods. Sometimes the question arises: Are there many gods, or only one God? There is only one God, the Absolute, but inasmuch as it manifests itself as an interconnecting link between subject and object through millions of degrees of ascent and descent, it looks as there are millions of gods. It is as if there are millions of governments merely because there are millions of officials in a centrality of administration. There is only one central government which connects everyone together into a cohesive whole, though it works through degrees of provincial, district and many other operations through individuals who look like individuals. They are actually connected to the Centre, and therefore look like little gods. Each official is a government in itself, yet it is simply a modicum, a miniature degree of a centrality of operation which has many degrees below it, and also many degrees above it. So if you can say that many officials in the government are many governments, then you can say there are many gods also. But if you say they are not governments, then gods also do not exist. It depends upon your viewpoint.

These degrees of the manifestation of reality through the relationship of subjects and objects, endless in number, ascending and descending in series, is the structure of the cosmos; and a Super-person, Super-man, is one who is conscious of this fact of his involvement in a transcendent degree, whatever that degree be. Perhaps even Super-men have degrees. There are various degrees of the reality involved in Super-people also. It does not mean what we

call all Super-men are equal and uniform in power and knowledge everywhere. All the *avatars* of God, as they are called, incarnations, are also manifestations of Super-men, you may say, but there are degrees. One has a lesser percentage of divinity, one has a higher percentage of divinity in the hierarchy of power that is granted by the Supreme Centre that is the Absolute.

Hence, a person who is a Super-person, a Super-individual, a God-man, you may call him, lives freely in this world. He is free because he is controlled, operated by, supported by the Central Power. But if you assert your individuality and cut yourself off from that link which is connecting you to everything in the world, you are done for. Then you will suffer in this world. You will say that nobody helps you, that you have nothing. Actually, you have everything with you. The Cosmic Purpose, which is all abundance and power, manifests itself every moment of time, which is called the *avatara*, a subject which will come in the Fourth Chapter of the Gita.

When you live in this world as a master, your behaviour with people should be like a good psychologist and a very good teacher. The Bhagavadgita is also a very good psychologist. Your 'Super-hood', your Super-personality should not parade itself as a kind of superior boss over people in the world. Na buddhibhedam janayed ajñānām karmasaṁginām (Gita 3.26). People who are inferior to you in knowledge and comprehension should not be interfered with. You should not say, "You are on the wrong path, you are a fool, your knowledge is inadequate, you don't understand anything." A psychologist or schoolteacher

does not talk like that. He understands the inadequacy of comprehension of the student, and from the level the student is, the teacher slowly raises the consciousness of the student.

A good teacher is also a good psychologist. The teacher descends from his high pedestal to the level of a particular student and communes himself with the mentality, feeling and difficulty of the student, as a good doctor descends into the condition of a patient who is suffering. Not only does he understand his physical suffering, but also his mind and feelings, and the causes of his illness which may be psychological, or anything. So he is a parent. A good doctor or teacher is a father and mother, and a Super-man is also a father and mother, as the Lord will tell you in his message.

Na buddhibhedam janayed: Do not go on telling, “You are wrong.” Nobody is wrong. They are all in one category, one degree, and you are also in one condition. They are like a baby crawling, and why should you condemn that crawling baby as if you are now superior to it? Everybody is on a level of evolution, and every level of evolution is a compulsory stage; therefore, nobody is superior, nobody is inferior, and no work is bad, no work is good. There is dignity in every work, and every relationship is divine in its meaning.

Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ, ahaṁkāravimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate (Gita 3.27). Ignorant people become ignorant of the fact that Prakṛiti’s *gunas* operate among Prakṛiti’s *gunas* in the form of objects outside. You are involved in the perception of the world and do not understand what is actually taking place when

you perceive the world. When you perceive the world, when you become conscious of the object outside, what the Gita is telling you is that Prakriti is impinging on Prakriti.

Now, the cosmological evolutionary theory, which I mentioned to you sometime back, the entire Purusha-Prakriti arrangement, would have enlightened you to the fact that the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—are the constituents of your own individuality also. You are made up of only these *gunas* in all your sheaths—*Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijnanamaya*, *Ananadamaya*. The very same *gunas* are also the constituents of objects outside. The only thing is that in your case there is a mind, there is an intellect, there is a *prana* and other things involved in this *kosha* arrangement, whereas in the object, which is the *adhibhuta prapancha*, there is a predominance of *tamas*. There is predominance of *tamas* in the objective world, predominance of *rajas* in the subjective individuality, and predominance of *sattva* in the *adhidaiva*, which is the divinity.

Because of the fact of everything being constituted only of the three *gunas* of Prakriti, you will be able to appreciate what actually happens when you come in contact with an object of perception through the sense organs. The *gunas* of Prakriti, which are the constituents of your sense organs and even the mind, collide, as it were, and come in contact with the very same properties present in a different percentage of combination and permutation in the form of objects. It is, as it were, one wave clashing against another wave in the very same ocean in all acts of perception.

So, who is seeing the world? “I am seeing the world”—don’t say that. Prakriti is seeing itself. Prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni: All actions are done by Prakriti only. But not knowing this, ahaṁkāravimūḍhātmā: A person is working through the ego only, centring himself in the consciousness of himself excessively. Kartāham iti manyate: I am doing. Neither are you doing anything, nor are you perceiving anything. Your consciousness of being an agent in action is due to the ego that is predominant in you, and your feeling that you are perceiving an external world is due to the operation of the *gunas* of Prakriti, both subjectively and objectively.

Therefore, caution is the watchword of a spiritual seeker. It is difficult to live in this world which is so complicated before you. The complication arises on account of your not knowing how you are placed in this world. In the beginning itself I told you, you cannot do anything worthwhile in this world unless you know your placement in the context of the world—where you are standing, where you are sitting, what is around you. If you know the context and the environment around you, you will also know what to do in that context. For that purpose it is that I have given you a large detail of the cosmic evolutionary process, and you know where you are standing. Hence, you will never assert your ego. You will not feel that you are existing at all. You will melt into the menstruum of the world outside. You will be a well-wisher of everybody, a friend of all—a friend, philosopher and guide, a master.

Atha kena prayuktoyaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ (Gita 3.36). Arjuna asks a question: “Wonderful is this teaching, Master, but why is it that we are not able to live like this? We commit sins, as it were, errors every day. We commit blunders. Knowing this, what is the matter?”

Sri Krishna gives a reply. *Kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ, mahāśano mahāpāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam* (Gita 3.37): The predominance of *rajas* in your personality engenders the work of *kama* and *krodha*, desire and anger. Somehow or other, with this knowledge, you also simultaneously seem to have inside you the roots and the seeds of potential longing and anger. You love God, but you also love Mammon at the same time. You love the objects of the senses together with your love for being a God-man and a Super-man. There is a clash between your noble aspirations and your pull of the sense organs—a very difficult situation.

Arjuna says, “I understand what you say.” Insatiable is this fire of longing for objects of sense. It will consume you. The more you pamper it, the more it asks. Fire cannot be satisfied by any amount of fuel. It asks for more and more fuel so that it may enlarge itself and burn everything. Desire wants to consume you completely so that you may not be here at all. And if your desire is obstructed by an event, you are angry. You want to destroy that cause which is apparently obstructing the fulfilment of your desire. So anger is only another form of longing. It is the longing to perpetuate your longing which, obstructed, manifests itself as the obverse of what you call a desire, and you call it anger. Actually, this one impulse that is rising in you on

one side looks like longing, desire, passion, lust; on the other side it looks like irascibility and anger.

Arjuna knows what this means. “Now, what is the use of hearing all these things? How am I to overcome this wondrous malady, *kama* and *krodha*, if they are predominantly present in individuals as *rajasic* properties working havoc in everyone? How would we live this cosmic life which you have so gloriously described?”

The method of meditation is very briefly discussed towards the end of the Third Chapter in two verses, but it is the essence of the whole matter: it is possible to overcome longing, desire for objects of sense, only by intense meditation through a gradational process. This is also described in detail in the Sixth Chapter. *Indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manah, manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ* (Gita 3.42); *evam buddheḥ param buddhvā samstabhyātmānam ātmanā, jahi śatrum mahābāho kāmārūpaṁ durāsadam* (Gita 3.43). This is a brief statement of a longer, more detailed enunciation of the very same thing in the Katha Upanishad. *Indriyas*, sense organs, are very powerful. Impetuous are the sense organs. Like a wild tornado, they will dash the ship of your life.

But the mind is superior to the sense organs. The mind has the capacity to know that the *indriyas*, or the senses, are impetuous in their nature. This is the superiority of the mind. The senses do not know that they are impetuous. They are just impetuous. They are wild movement. This wild movement of the senses is identical with the senses themselves. They cannot know that they are wild. If you are angry, you do not know that you are angry. Anger

consumes you to such an extent that an angry person does not know that he is angry. If you know that you are angry, it will not be real anger. So the mind has the capacity to subdue the impetuosity of the senses by a little bit of deliberation. The mind knows that the senses have to be restrained, but the mind cannot easily take a decision. The mind has an indeterminate perceptual capacity of knowing the difficulty produced by the sense organs, but the decision has to be taken: this must be done. The senses have to be subdued.

It is *buddhi*, reason, that tells you of the higher aspirations that are embedded in you. The ambassador of God, as it were, is working through the reason of your personality. An ambassador is a link between two governments. He communicates the messages of his government to the other government that he is connected with. He brings about a rapprochement and a kind of harmonious relationship between two governments. That is the reason why embassies are established in the world. Reason is a kind of ambassador between God and the world of creation. Because of the position it occupies as an ambassador of God, the reason also tells you that you are above this world and cannot be satisfied with anything in this world. The reason says it is incumbent on you to control the sense organs so that you may become a Super-person and not be under the subjection of the sense organs. But it is also situated in a world of sensation and mentation. It is a relationship with two governments, as I mentioned to you—the world of senses and the world of divinity. So while the mind is conscious of the impetuosity of the sense

organs, the reason gives you the additional strength to actually work on this consciousness of it being necessary to control the sense organs, because while it is aware of the *modus operandi* that you have used in the control of the sense organs, it also has the power descending on it from the higher order of things. With the power of divinity which is scintillating in it, it can charge upon the sense organs through the mind and bring their strength down to a mellowed condition.

Yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ: There is something above the intellect or the reason, which is the central universality of power. And because of it being possible for you to connect your reason with the universal centrality, you will be able to succeed in your spiritual practice. If reason is absent, you will be like an animal with a merely instinctive mind controlled by the sense organs. Yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ: The Atma-shakti, which is above the *buddhi*, or the intellect, should guide you here. You will be asking, “How it is done? The Atman-consciousness is not in me, my intellect is oscillating, my mind is very indecisive, and my senses are very powerful. What is the process?”

The details will be told to you in the Sixth Chapter. You have to find some time to think over these issues. It is a serious matter that is before you. Every day in your life you have to be seated alone for some time, and then close your eyes. “What is it that I have gathered, after all?” Then collect your thoughts. Stop the breathing for a second and work upon this concept of your involvement in the whole cosmos, in this sacrificial participation of your personality in the context of God’s creation, as mentioned—in your not

being a person but a Super-person, really speaking. “I am foolhardy to think that I am an individual by myself. Every moment of time I am controlled by something which is above me. My breath is moving, my limbs are operating, my mind is thinking and I am living in this world because of the operation of something which is not me, but which is above me. I am something more than what I am.”

Let this consciousness be driven into you. You are something much more than what you look like, much more than what you are, and much more than what you see with your eyes outside in the world. You are not what you are, and you are not what you see with the eyes. You are something above both what you see and what you are. Let this be the object of your meditation.

Evam buddheḥ param buddhvā: Thus, knowing that which is above your reason; samstabhyātmānam ātmanā: restraining yourself by yourself, restraining your lower self by the higher self of the *adhidaiva* consciousness, restraining your so-called ego individuality from its usual sensory operations by the action upon it by the *adhidaiva*, which you are really. This is the meaning of samstabhyātmānam ātmanā: restraining yourself by yourself. There are two yourselves: the lower yourself and the higher yourself. The lower yourself is what you look like, this Mr., this Mrs. But the higher yourself is the *adhidaiva*, which is really what you are, and not what you appear to be. Jahi śatruṁ: this enemy which is impeding your progress, which is desire and anger. Kāmarūpaṁ: Oh powerful hero, destroy this desire. Who is the evil in this world? If there is evil at all, where is this evil? There is no

other evil in this world. "Thus, compose yourself and be blessed, O Arjuna," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna towards the end of this Third Chapter.

The more you study, the more you hear, the more difficulties will arise in the mind. Still you have doubts: "All that you have said is wonderful. We will try our best to do this, but we are weaklings. We do not know if we will really succeed in achieving this goal in this life." Doubts are our traitors, says the poet. If there is a traitor in this world, doubt is the traitor. You always condemn yourself and say, "I am useless. I am not for it." Who told you that you are not for it? How does this idea that you are unfit arise in your mind? Perhaps you are fit. Why are you saying you have difficulties? You have studied well, everything is clear to you, all things are ready at your fingertips. You will stand first. Even if there is a chance you will stand second, why should you, in the beginning itself, assume you are unfit? Nobody is inferior in this world. Even a mouse can save a lion under special circumstances. You are not as poor as you look. Still you have doubts. Again and again these dacoits of the sense organs will attack you and tell you, "Useless fellow, get up!"

It was Buddha who had the same experiences of this kind. The great master was meditating on the possibility of attaining nirvana, and something came and told him, "Get up from this work." All kinds of things were told to him: "This world is not so bad as you are imagining. What is wrong with this world? You have a beautiful palace. Have you not lived cosily? Your subjects are pleading to have your grace. All the gold and silver is with you. Also, you

have a long life, which is a blessing. Here is the beauty, here is the grandeur, here is the taste. Do you think the world is bitter always? There is also honey. Don't you think the world is beautiful and it can grant you what you want? Is it so bad? Read human history. Great masters worked for erecting empires. How gloriously they lived! If you don't listen to this advice, beware! I will thrash you and break your head."

And something else came and told Buddha, "Useless man, get up." There was a hailstorm and big demon-like faces arose and told him, "Now you are on the last day of your life. Useless man, get up from this place. What are you thinking? All this world is wonderful. You have a wrong notion. You have an illusory perception that there is something beyond this. There is no 'beyond'. This is everything. You are a foolish man. Get up!" Buddha would not listen to that advice either. Then it said, "You are a master already. You have already attained what you want to attain. Get up! Work for the world." There are people who sometimes think they have already attained the goal, and the only thing left is to serve and uplift humanity, and bring heaven to the earth. This is also a temptation.

All these stages one has to pass through. Difficulties of this kind will harass you and you will say, "I don't know. I can't understand all these things. I am drooping. Twenty years of meditation have brought nothing."

The Fourth Chapter begins with a great consolation to you. God is not so blind as not to understand your predicament. Your complaints are known to Him. Omniscience is the nature of God. Everything is known.

Even the movement of a cat in a the jungle, God knows. If a leaf moves, God is aware of it. Does He not know your difficulties? He incarnates Himself as a redemptive God at every crucial moment, if only your heart is for Him.

Again the point comes: to the extent you are united with this *adhidaiva prapancha*, or the Supreme Transcendant Principle, if you cling to it honestly, the *adhidaiva* is your support. Go on surrendering yourself to it, and it will communicate your message to the higher cause. Instantaneous action will take place. God incarnating Himself is actually the descent of a higher measure of force of divinity to the level in which you are, to the level in which the crisis has arisen; and timeless being the nature of God, instantaneous also is His action. God does not come tomorrow, because there is no time for God. He does not take time to travel because He is not in space. Infinite power from a spaceless existence will act timelessly, instantaneously, at every crucial moment.

Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata, abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham (Gita 4.7); paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām, dharmasamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge (Gita 4.8). These two verses are a glorious, consoling message coming from God Himself to frail man who is crying from moment to moment in the wilderness of his mortal existence. You are always under the protection of an all-seeing eye. That you are suffering and nobody knows that you are suffering is not a fact. That you are not wanting to take advantage of the fact that somebody is looking to you and is willing to support you is your difficulty. The

assertion of your individuality by means of egoism takes possession of you again and again in the form of a doubt whether God will come or not. "I have never seen God, and He has never come and helped anybody up to this time. I have never seen Him helping, so how do I know that he will help me? After fifteen days of crying, He has not come. How do I know that on the sixteenth day he will come?" These doubts will harass you.

He may sometimes take sixteen days to come on account of the inner obstructions created by your own *tamasic* karmas that may perhaps be working, but even *tamasic* karmas can be destroyed by the power of God. He can destroy even karmas. He can dissolve the parliament of the cosmos if He does not want any government. He doesn't always have to stick to a parliamentary ordinance. Though He does that mostly, He can also dissolve it in one second. If your love of God is so intense, He can directly catch hold of you and protect you, but not through parliamentary or legal operations. If this faith, which is *bhakti*, knowledge and devotion combined, is predominant in you, there is a powerful *sattva* action. Immediate action will take place.

But our attachment to this body and our consideration of an external relationship with human affairs, our mortal entanglements, are so intense that often this kind of faith cannot arise in us. Only when we are sinking in the sea, sometimes this faith arises. "I have lost everything. I am not able to stand. Even the ground is shaking." When everything is gone and nothing will come, if that threat of

even a moment's survival takes possession of you, you will feel God, the real God.

Otherwise, in ordinary circumstances, this faith is shaken by the fact that you seem to be involved in certain realities of life. The realities of life should desert you completely. Nobody should want you. You are an unwanted person in the world, crucified. At that time, God will come. "Oh, you want to crucify me? I am not wanted in this world." All your love for things vanishes in one second. All your consideration for that which is externally oriented goes. Neither your family wants you, nor the world wants you. Such conditions are not uncommon in the history of humanity. Read human history. Who wants you, finally? Your adjustment with the whims and fancies of other people somehow or other makes you feel that you are wanted by others. Do not make that adjustment, and see what happens to you. You will be thrown into the ocean in one second. This is the world. Humankind is made in this way; everything is made in this way.

But why do you invite such conditions that you should be crucified by humanity? Doctors need not fall sick in order to understand the sickness of a patient. Their wisdom will tell them what kind of predicament it is. So you need not be turned out of this world by force. Honourably you can go from this world by understanding what the world is made of. "It is good to quit while the quitting is good," as they say. Why should you be thrown out?

This circumstance of your being basically involved in the higher purpose of life will bring the faith that is necessary for invoking God's presence in you, and God

shall manifest Himself. Infinite are the *avatars* of God, as infinite as the rays of the Sun. Numberless are the occasions when God manifests Himself, and in numberless ways and methods of action. It does not mean that always the same kind of form will be sent. It is not that He will come always as Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Christ, etc. God can manifest Himself as a remedial force under conditions which are historically, geographically, socially, psychologically specific. When it is necessary, God can come as an incarnation of whirlwind, tornado, epidemic, war, cataclysm. Or He may come as a blessing of heightened power in particular nations. He may bring a redeeming force and help to a personality. He can make you even materially wealthy. Everything is possible for Him.

As critical conditions in life are manifold in their nature, it is not that everyone has the same kind of problem. It does not mean throughout history we have only one kind of difficulty in humanity. Manifold and endless are the peculiarities of the problems of existence, and endless also are the ways of His incarnation. Any form, any way, any method can be adopted by this Supreme Being, according to the circumstance of the case. What is the nature of the difficulty? The counterpart of it will be the nature of the incarnation.

Whenever a difficult situation arises between the subject and the object, we may say—the world and the individual have a critical clash of purposes and it is difficult to solve it humanly—a superhuman force descends. Actually, human problems cannot be solved by mere human beings. No man can solve another man's problem

because, after all, he is also a man like the other person. The possibility of solving human problems arises only if there is a person or a group of people who are not simply human beings, but somebody more than that. You require a Super-leader to render real help to people. All great leaders were Super-persons. It is not just a Tom, Dick and Harry saying, "I will come and save humanity." No Tom can do that, because every Tom is like every other Tom. Great masters, leaders, geniuses, statesmen who have worked wonders in the nations of the world were not ordinary human individuals. They were Super-individuals to some extent.

This Super-personality is the way in which God manifests Himself in political conditions, in social circumstances, in educational fields, even in spiritual life—visions which are very consoling and satisfying, and experiences which will thrill you. In deep meditation you can also be regarded as a kind of incarnation of God.

Thus, these two verses which say something briefly about the manner of the coming of God into the world of people is an explanation of the entry of the Absolute into the relative, the Universal acting in the particulars, the cosmic in action every moment of time, just as the whole organism of the body acts if there is a little ache in the toe. Wherever there is an ache or pain or difficulty felt in the limbs of the body, the whole anabolic activity, the constructive forces, act suddenly; there is a war taking place, as it were, between these intruding monsters who create pain in the body and the powers that are constructive and cause its survival. In a similar manner, instantaneous action is taking place in all things in the world because the

whole universe is a single organism animated by a single intelligence.

Chapter 8

THE STAGES OF YOGA

We have almost entirely covered the fundamentals of the Gita teaching. Whatever follows is in the form of an exposition in greater detail of what has already been very pithily and briefly stated in the preceding chapters.

I already mentioned to you that many of the commentators of the Gita believe that the Second Chapter is the seed of the whole of the Gita. Every chapter from the Third onwards till the end is an exposition of one or two of the verses already occurring in the Second Chapter. Especially Madhusudhana Saraswati, in his classic commentary, explicitly states this, and whenever he starts commenting on a particular chapter, he quotes the relevant seed *sloka* of the Second Chapter, showing thereby that the root of the entire gospel is in the Second Chapter itself, which is Sankhya and Yoga combined; and in our expositions, which have been in sufficient detail, we have covered a wide area of knowledge, perhaps omitting nothing important.

The name of God does not occur until the Fourth Chapter commences. There is a peculiar situation which is wholly *artharthi*, wholly worldly, in the First Chapter, and the commencement of the direct teaching in the Second, and an implementation of this teaching in a more profound manner in the Third. The emphasis up to the Third Chapter has been the duty of the individual, the work that

is incumbent upon every person, but the name of God has not been taken.

The operations of God as incarnations have been touched upon for the first time in the commencement of the Fourth Chapter. Previously we noticed the circumstances under which God takes incarnations, *avatars*, to which I need not revert now. We can proceed further to know what other things we can gather from the coming chapters. I have taken a lot of time to take you to the conclusion of the Third Chapter, but as we have not much time at our disposal in the course of this Academy session, I have to go more rapidly over the themes that follow; otherwise, it will take another three months to go to the end of the Eighteenth Chapter with this extent of detail.

Apart from the brief statement of the nature of the incarnation of God in the beginning of the Fourth Chapter, this chapter also touches upon certain other themes which are not relevant to the *avatara* of God or the very concept of God, but to actual Yoga practice and the understanding of the nature of work or action which, pertinently, is the theme of the Third Chapter.

Karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ, sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt (Gita 4.18). It was told to us that work we must. Silent we cannot be. Na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt (Gita 3.5): Not a moment can pass without your being active in some way or the other. Karmaṇy evā 'dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana (Gita 2.47). It was also added that your duty is to engage yourself in such action as can be regarded as a participation in the cosmic process, but you cannot

expect the fruit of that action because the expectation of a fruit of a particular engagement is to consider the value of your work in a future context. If the value of what you do in the future has no value in the present, then you cannot take sufficient interest in your work. The present is a means to what you are expecting in the future, and so your eye will be on what will be expected in the future and you will have no interest in what you are doing. "Whatever I am doing, that is a different matter. It must bring that result." And you will adjust and adapt your *modus operandi* of work now in such a manner as, in your opinion, is productive of that result in your mind. There will be some kind of selfishness creeping into your so-called duty because this duty that you perform is done for the sake of something which is other than duty.

What emanates from you is sacrifice; but the fruit that you expect is not something that emanates from you, so the sacrifice is spoiled to some extent. You throw cold water, as it were, on the *yajna* when you perform your duty with the expectation of a result that has to follow. Every duty is a sacrifice, a kind of sharing of your personality to some extent. But what kind of sharing is there when you are expecting something from it? "I should get whatever I have given, and perhaps I should get more than what I have given." This is the attitude that may subtly enter into your mind when you work and perform your so-called duty with a creative interest for the fruit of what you do.

As we are living in a world of causes and effects which are separated from each other, the cause produces the effect; therefore, the effect is a future event that follows

from the present context of the cause. We are bound by this causal relation in a whirl of space and time, and we cannot understand what duty for duty's sake can be. You may go on scratching your head one thousand times to understand how it is possible for you to work only for the sake of work, expecting nothing from it. Your mind will be telling you again and again that you are a foolish person. Who will do work for no purpose? Purposeless action is meaningless action. The moment you introduce a purpose into it, somehow or other you bring into it the futurity of its purposiveness. You distinguish between the present and the future, and you are not in the place where you are working—you are in some other place which is yet to be—and your work does not become a cosmic participation; it becomes an expectation of what is not yet present.

This is the difficulty that we face in understanding this pithy statement that your duty is to do duty only: *karmaṇy evā 'dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana. Mā karmaphalahetur bhūr*. Do not be attached to the fruit of your action. *Mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi*. Then you may say, "Why this problem? I don't want to do anything at all, because if I do something you cause trouble to me by saying that 'You are not working properly. You have some eye to the fruit'; and so I will do nothing."

Attachment to the fruit of action and attachment to non-action are equally bad. Do not have an eye on what is to follow from your action and the fruit thereof, and do not sit quiet because you are afraid of being entangled in some mistake that you may commit in the performance of duty. Fear of mistake in the performance of duty is not to be

regarded as inaction. It is also an action. Fear should not be the ground for your attitude toward anything. Right action is not what you do out of your own agency consciousness, but out of your expanded feeling of a sense of belonging to the cosmic whole. Tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara, asakto hy ācaran karma param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ (Gita 3.19): Unattached, therefore, do your work.

The sense of being unattached is also to be understood properly. You are told again and again: be not attached. From what are you going to be detached? You are going to be detached from your concept of the nature of work itself. Work is a mental operation, basically; it is not a physical action. That has been told in the Third Chapter. The movement of the body cannot be regarded as work. The association of the mind to the work of the body is actually work. Therefore, participation in the cosmic process being the real nature of unselfish action, this has to be hammered into your mind again and again. Finally, you will realise that you cannot do anything worthwhile in this world without entertaining in yourself an element of God-consciousness. That is why until the Vishvarupa-darshan was shown in the Eleventh Chapter, Arjuna had doubts and more doubts, endlessly. The doubts ceased only when the Visvarupa was shown. Unless cosmic consciousness enters into you, you will never be able to understand what actually is happening to you.

So there is a gradational ascent of the teaching of the Gita right up to the Eleventh Chapter, which is the apotheosis of the teaching. Yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇaṁ jñānasam-chinnasaṁśayam, ātmavantaṁ na karmāṇi

nibadhnanti dhanamjaya (Gita 4.41).

Yogasamnyastakarmāṇaṁ: having renounced attachment to the fruit of the action by the Yoga of the consciousness of universal participation. Yoga is the consciousness of your participation in the universal process. Having entertained this consciousness, having established yourself in this consciousness of your being only an instrument or a participant in the cosmic process, renounce any kind of isolation of your work from the fruit that may follow.

Actually, no fruit can follow from the work that you do, because the work that you appear to be doing is only a necessary sharing of your personality with the Cosmic Person. You are not working, actually speaking, when you seem to be working. You are only sharing. It is a dialogue between man and God—a constant Nara-Narayana Samvada, Sri Krishna-Arjuna Samvada taking place in your demeanour. Every moment of time you are having a concourse with God in your approach to things, in your attitude, generally speaking, and in anything that you do. In everything you do, you are contacting God. You have a dialogue with the Absolute, with nature, with all things.

So with this Yoga, in which you have to get established, you have to renounce all the particularities, isolations, externalities and space-time involvements. Isolation of any kind of factor from actual performance of your work separates you from the integratedness that is essential in your participation. The moment you think of a fruit that is outside the work that you do, you have sundered your personality from the environment to which you should actually belong, but to which you do not want to belong.

The environment of the process which seems to be producing the fruit, so-called, of the action, is a part of your larger personality; therefore, the fruit cannot be regarded as something isolated from the work, and in a way you may say the work itself is the fruit. Duty automatically brings privileges, and you should not say, "What privilege will accrue to me if I do this work? How much salary will come?" There is no salary in this world.

The Gita's concept of work is not the concept of social welfare work as politicians and social welfare workers think. It is not social welfare work, it is not commerce, it is not business, it is not political administration; it is a different thing altogether. It is a divinity that is expected to dominate every nook and corner of your involvement in life. That meaning is involved in this one word which comes towards the end of the Fourth Chapter: *yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇaṁ*.

Doubts may arise: "What are you saying? I can't understand." With the wisdom of the analysis and synthesis of the processes of creation, which you have been through in the study of the earlier chapters, rend asunder all doubts from your mind: *jñānasaṁchinnaśaṁsayam*. A very pithy, very meaningful verse is this. *Yogasaṁnyastakarmāṇaṁ jñānasaṁchinnaśaṁsayam*: Having thus breached the gulf that appears to be there between you and the so-called fruit of action by establishment in this Yoga of the consciousness of the participation of yourself in the cosmic process, integrating that atmosphere of fruit in your own self, and removing all the doubts by the wisdom of this scripture, *ātmavantaṁ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti*: you become the true

Self at that time. It is only when you understand what duty is in the sense of participation that you become the true Self that you are. You have a larger and wider Self apart from the little self that you seem to be in the integration that you are effecting by clubbing together the entire atmosphere with your own self. You widen your consciousness, widen yourself, and you become the Self that you are really, and not the self that you appear to be.

As a little self you seem to be working even in the dream state, but you are a larger self in the waking state. The so-called distractions and diversification, and the varieties of the dream world, get absorbed into a larger self of your waking consciousness. In this Yoga that is briefly stated here, you raise your lower self to the higher Self that you are, and you become *atmavan*—true possessor of your own Self. You have lost yourself now by the wrong notion that things are outside you; therefore, you have to possess them or reject them. The desire to possess and reject arises on account of the wrong notion that the things that you want to possess or reject are outside you, not knowing that they are organically connected to your higher self, which is your true Self.

If, with this consciousness, you perform work in this world as a cosmic participation—*na karmāṇi nibadhnanti*—action cannot bind you. The karma theory will break, and no result will follow as a binding factor through the work that you perform. The wind blows; it is not bound by what it does. The sun shines; it is not bound by its shining. A river flows to the ocean that is there before it. They are not bound because they do not have self-

consciousness. When you work thus with super-consciousness of your larger individuality, wider selfhood, you are free from the so-called bondage of work.

Asmād ajñānasañbhūtaṁ hṛtsthaṁ jñānāsinātmanaḥ: Therefore Arjuna, rend asunder, break this darkness of ignorance that is veiling your consciousness. You have to rend asunder this veil by the effort of your own mind. Here is a very concentrated statement on what Yoga practice is. More details will be told in the Sixth Chapter. By Yoga, by *jnana*, by attainment of true Selfhood, you pierce through the veil of ignorance which makes you feel always that you are a finite individual, not knowing the fact that there is an infinitude that is around you in the form of this very vast space-time cosmos. This space-time cosmos itself is your larger self. Your true being is as wide as this vast space. Can you imagine that you are as wide as space?

The consciousness that you are finite is also involved in the consciousness of there being something above the finite. How would you know that the finite is actually finite? How do you know that you are bound, unless there is a consciousness of it being possible not to be bound? You have already assumed the presence of an infinitude of yourself in the very consciousness of your being finite. A finite thing really cannot know that it is finite. As a larger involvement of it is already there beyond the boundary of finitude, it vaguely feels that it has to break through this finitude. Unless you are immortal in your nature, you will not fear death. A thing that is really bound to death cannot fear death. The fear of extinction of personality, which is death, is due to the immortality of your essence. You are

really undying in nature; therefore, you would not like to know that death will take place. And you are restless in your finitude because you unconsciously feel inside that there is something more in you than the finitude that is harassing you. Unless you become as large as space itself, your finitude will not diminish. As wide as space and enduring as time has to be yourself. Infinity and eternity should blend together in one single experience, which is God-experience. Until this is reached, you will never have peace here. Even the heaven of the gods is not adequate for your longing.

Brahmārpaṇam brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam, brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma-karma-samādhinā (Gita 4.24) is a little higher teaching that comes afterwards. The consciousness of the Universal should decide and determine your every thought, feeling and action. Whatever you do should be in the light of the Universal, of which the so-called particular is a part and parcel. The consequence that is in your mind when you perform an action should be considered as integrally connected with the action itself. It is not something that will take place in the future. Then all action becomes a little bit of the Universal, and it is not a little work that you do from your own initiative. All that you do is an offering to the Absolute. This is the greatest *yajna*, or sacrifice, that can be conceived.

A sacrament which is dedicated to the Supreme Being is brahmārpaṇam. What you offer to the Supreme Absolute cannot be something that is external to you. That which is external to you does not really belong to you, so it cannot

be offered. How will you give a gift of something which is not your property? What is really yours can be offered; then it becomes charity, a gift. That which is totally outside you is not your property, because of the fact it is outside. So any amount of material gift is no gift unless you yourself are also there as a part of the gift. Something of you has to go.

What you have to offer to the Supreme Absolute is Atman, and not anything material. Atman is offered to the Paramatman. The *jiva* consciousness is dedicated to the Universal Consciousness. *You* are offered, nobody else. You offer yourself in the altar of the great *yajna* of Universal Consciousness—*brahmārpaṇam*. This is the greatest dedication that you can give to God. If God asks you, “What will you give me?” you cannot offer God some bananas or sweets because they are not your possessions. Only you are your possession. You have no right over anything in this world except your own self. Not even one needle can be your property, so the offering that you have to make to the Universal Being is only yourself. This is *jnana yajna*, the wisdom sacrifice, as it is so called. Into the flame of the wisdom of the all-pervading nature of God, you offer yourself in the consciousness of a practical annihilation of your individual existence.

When you offer something into the holy fire in a *yajna* or a sacrifice, you seem to be offering some substance—some material of ghee or rice, etc. But here in this wisdom sacrifice, what you offer is not some article from the world outside. It is a part of yourself. A little of yourself goes gradually with every little sense of belonging to the whole. This is *brahma havir*. *Brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam*: You

offer yourself into the flame or the fire of God so that you get burnt into the ashes of a non-entity altogether.

Who is offering this? You are offering. Who are you? Now another difficulty is placed before you. The offering is not made by you; it is made by itself, to which you are making the offering. It is offering itself to itself. The war of the Mahabharata is waged by the Universal Virat. It is not engaged upon by Arjuna, Bhima, the Kauravas. "I have come to engage upon this great work." Kālosmi lokakṣayakṛt pravṛddha (Gita 11.32). The Viratsvarupa, the Cosmic Form, speaks in the Eleventh Chapter. The great war is the universal war. It is motivated by the Universal Being for its universal purpose, and the Universal is offering itself in the sacrifice of the *yajna* of the Mahabharata war. You cannot lift even a finger unless the central Universal Will operates, even as without the order issued by the total muscular setup of your personality, your fingers cannot lift, your eyelids cannot move; so is anything that you think or seem to be doing in this world. Even this so-called *yajna* that you are trying to perform is a motivation that comes from the Universal Being. The Universal offers itself to the Universal. God knows God. God contemplates God. God offers Himself to God: brahmaṇā hutam.

Brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ: The aim, the purpose, the destination of this kind of cosmic sacrifice is the attainment of God only. God, through the performance which is also God, reaches God through the sacrifice, which is also a movement of God within Himself. This is the drama of God in this world which is Himself, where He is the

director and the actor, the arena and the light, the audience and the performance. This is the cosmic drama that God seems to be playing for His own pleasure, and not for your pleasure, because you cannot have any pleasure unless this pleasure is there behind you, animating your existence.

Brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma-karma-samādhinā. This kind of sacrifice as mentioned is a kind of communion that you establish with God. *Brahma-karma-samadhi* is the inner communion cosmically attempted by your so-called individuality. *Samadhi* is communion, equilibration of consciousness, an establishment of total harmony between the subjective and objective universe so that no one knows who is seeing what—whether the world is seeing you or you are seeing the world. They coalesce into a single existence. That is called *samadhi*. And in this consciousness of the sacrifice of yourself in God-consciousness, you are entering into a veritable *samadhi* condition while you are actually working in the world. *Sahaja samadhi* is also the name given to this kind of experience. Varieties of *samadhi*, or divine communion, are described. In one state of *samadhi* there is an obliteration of your existence, a consciousness of a flood inundating you from all sides, and an experience of Being as such; in the other state of *samadhi* you see the variety of the world, and yet you are in the state of the Infinite.

Are you not seeing the variety of the limbs of your body? So many fingers, so many toes, so many limbs, so many kinds of operation in the alimentary canal, in the respiratory system, in the blood circulation; but are you different things? You are one single, indivisible entity in

spite of the multifarious activities that seem to be taking place in your organism. The unity consciousness is pervading the diversity of activity even in the physical organism. So is the experience that you will have in one kind of communion where you will see the whole world lit with the light of God. Trees will be scintillating with radiance, mountains will be shining like diamonds, the sun will pour forth rays of nectar, the moon will be inundating you with beauty, and you will not actually know whether you are in hell or in which place. This is the penultimate *samadhi*, as some people call it. Some of the Upanishads go into great details about this. The Yoga Vasishtha, the great mystical text, is very expanded in its exposition in these matters of the gradational consciousness of the seeker in communions which come one after the other, which are all designated by different words.

There will be a flash of consciousness in the beginning. You will see lightning flashing. As if lightning strikes in the sky, your mind will experience a kind of delightful lightning flash. It will come and go. Yoga does not come always, all twenty-four hours of the day. There will be a flash, as if you are seeing something which is not of this world. A vision, a sound, a taste, an odour, some music or a touch which is celestial in its nature will be your casual experience occasionally. This is the effect of one kind of communion which your mind establishes with the higher levels.

After some time the communion will intensify itself, and you will feel a sense of belonging to this light that is in front of you. You will not merely see or hear or touch or smell these experiences as if they come from outside, as if

they are the music of the spheres; you will feel that you are somehow connected to these operations and you are a part of this orchestra of this celestial being. You are not merely the listener of the music; you are participating in it in some way or the other, and you will feel an ecstasy, as if you want to dance. This will be another communion that will intensify itself a little further on.

The Yoga Vasishtha says the experience will intensity itself further, and you will see lightning flashes everywhere in the sky—not only one strip in one place. It will be a floodlit sky, and you will also be a part of that experience. You will see radiance in your own personality, and one flame will not be able to distinguish itself from the larger flame which is like a conflagration in the whole sky. Then the light alone will be there. These are the communions. *Brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam, brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahmakarmasamādhinā.*

All this experience should not be expected to come like a windfall, though sometimes it can be a windfall. There are miracles possible in this world. Sudden experiences are also practicable due to the maturity of some of the karmas of your past lives, but usually it is an exercise that is expected on your part through the Yoga process, as is very systematically described for instance in the Sutras of Patanjali—Ashtanga Yoga, the eight stages.

The process of this practice of Yoga is again briefly described in the Fifth Chapter, which is the cue, as it were, to the further exposition in the Sixth Chapter. *Sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ,*

prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantaracāriṇau (Gita 5.27); yatendriyamanobuddhirmunir mokṣaparāyaṇaḥ, vigatecchābhayakrodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ (Gita 5.28). Two verses will tell you briefly what Yoga is. First of all, you have to shut out all the entry of external consciousness into your meditational mood. This is done by what is called *pratyahara* technique. The contacts of the senses with externality have to gradually be diminished in their intensity, which you should do by diligent practice.

The objects of the senses have such an impact upon the senses that whenever you see something desirable or abhorrent, you are disturbed in your mind; therefore, in the initial stages of Yoga practice, the student is advised to place himself or herself in an atmosphere in which there will not be temptations. Do not be in a supermarket or a cinema hall or a theatre. These are not places for meditation. As far as possible, also isolate yourself physically from atmospheres of temptation and distraction, disturbance, agitation, and feelings of sorrow. Physical isolation is important—otherwise, why do people come to an ashram, Uttarkashi, Gangotri, and other places?

And then, when you have succeeded to some extent in weaning yourself from the consciousness of the desirables and the undesirables, you have to chalk out a process of the concentration of the mind on the objective that is before you—what it is that you are aiming at in your Yoga. So the verse says, sparśān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāmś: externalising them totally, not allowing the mind to come in vital contact with anything that is an object of desire.

Cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ: not actually opening the eyes entirely nor closing entirely. Semi-closing of the eyes is prescribed here. Commentators tell you that this prescription is specifically because of the fact that if you open the eyes entirely, you will go on seeing things and there will be some kind of distraction. If you close the eyes entirely, you may fall asleep. So the position of the eyelids is supposed to be as if you are looking at the tip of the nose. Some say you may actually concentrate on the tip of the nose, but the actual significance of the prescription seems to be, it should be as if you are looking at the tip of the nose. You are conscious, and yet not externally conscious.

This consciousness of something which is not actually an external consciousness is also the reason why often people prescribe early morning hours for meditation. In sleep there is total unconsciousness, and in waking there is external consciousness. Neither of these states is suitable for actual meditation. So early morning, Brahma-murta, just before sunrise or somewhat at that time, your consciousness seems to be just awakening to a perception of the world outside but it has not actually perceived the world outside, nor are you sleeping. So there is a semi-consciousness. It is a consciousness, not unconsciousness, not outside consciousness—a consciousness, pure and simple. This is the reason, they say, for the instruction that the early morning hours would be good for meditation.

Similarly is the case with the instruction that before you go to bed would also be a suitable time because you are slowly absorbing all your activities at the end of the day. The mind becomes calm; the senses become less active. A

similar state as in Brahma-murta will follow to some extent before you go to bed in the evening, so both in the morning and in the evening you may try to practice Yoga.

Sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ: concentrating your mind in this manner. Sometimes it is said that you can concentrate on the centre of the eyebrows. This verse also refers to that. Cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ: The middle of the eyebrows can be regarded as the point of concentration. It is not that everyone should concentrate only in this way. This is one way among many other possible ways. One of the reasons for the efficacy of concentration in this manner on the centre of the eyebrows is psychologically, mystically, from an occult point of view, it is said that the point between the eyebrows is the centre of the mind in waking consciousness. The mind is supposed to be working through the particular spot here, through the brain which acts through the centre of the eyebrows, the Ajna Chakra as it is called in occult science. In dream the mind is supposed to be operating in the throat, and in sleep it goes to the heart. So as the mind is already there in the waking state spontaneously occupying its own seat in the point between the eyebrows, it will be comfortable for the mind to concentrate there itself. You just make it work in the very place where it is sitting. That is perhaps the reason why this instruction is given that you can concentrate on the point between the two eyebrows: cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ.

Prāṇāpānu samau kṛtvā: When you breathe in and breathe out, the mind also oscillates like a pendulum. The more intense is the heaving process of breathing, the more

is the agitation that the mind feels. And so the seatedness of yourself in a calm and quiet posture will also eliminate the intensity of the activity of the *prana*. The inner breath and the outer breath will slow down to some extent, as if they merge together. It is *prana* and *apana*—*prana* is the exterior breath, and *apana* is the interior breath. You breathe out, the *prana* is operating; you breathe in, the *apana* is there. Both will join together, as it were, when the mind is calm and quiet: *prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā*.

Nāsābhyantaracāriṇau: You will not know whether you are breathing through the right nostril or the left nostril. It is just a little breathing in a harmonious manner.

Yatendriyamanobuddhi: restraining the five senses, the mind and the intellect in the manner described in the earlier chapters, and in the light of what we have studied already, to which process a little reference was made towards the end of the Third Chapter of how we can control the *kama* and *krodha*, desire and anger, restraining thus the senses, the mind and the intellect. *Muni*: Silent, calm and quiet, non-interfering, minding one's own business—such a person is *muni*, or you may call him a saint if you like, wanting nothing but liberation of the self. What do you want? “Liberation, Universal Existence, and everything conducive to that, which is my duty. I am not interested in anything else.” Wanting only that, he is a *mumukshu*, wanting God: *mokṣaparāyaṇaḥ*.

Vigatecchābhayakrodha: free from every kind of binding mortal desire, having no fear because God is in front of you. He is at the back, He is on the right side, He is on the left. He is guarding you, so what fear do you have?

Therefore, vigatecchābhayakrodha: without desire, without fear, without anger; yaḥ: whoever is in this condition; sadā mukta eva saḥ: that person should be considered to be already liberated.

Chapter 9

THE YOGA OF MEDITATION

The Yoga of meditation is the subject of the Sixth Chapter of the Gita. At the very beginning, the Lord tells us that the art of Yoga is a system of raising oneself by oneself. In meditation you qualitatively improve yourself and do not merely carry on a quantitative process for a long time. Many days, several months, are occupied with the act of meditation, but it is not just that you have been doing something for a long time. Also you have improved yourself; you have become a better person through meditation. The betterment is the qualitative aspect of it.

We have a Self; everybody has a Self, usually called the Atman. “My self has been engaged in the work of meditation.” This is what you generally say. This self of yours is one kind of self. It is one layer of a possible long series of different layers of the same self. These layers of self are the determining factors of the quality of your being. What sort of person you are as far as your quality of existence is concerned will be decided by the level of selfhood that you are rooted in.

There is, for instance, the instinctive self, the sensory self, the physical self, the involved self, the social self, and so on, all which mean that the self of the person—the you, the I, or whatever it is—is not existing for itself independently but is conditioned by certain associations such as sensation, instinctive desire, social relation, and the like. Mr. so-and-so is a particular kind of self. That self is decided upon

qualitatively by the kind of social relation that the self is maintaining, and you know what the social relation is.

You are something in human society—something important, something unimportant, something responsible, something not responsible, something recognised, something unrecognised. The society has something to say about you, and that depends upon what kind of position you occupy in the social setup. Your social position very much influences what you are. When you think about yourself, you will also think—and perhaps only think—in the sense of your involvement in society. Suppose you are an official in the government; you will be thinking only that you are a magistrate. You will not think that you are the son of your mother. Though you are perhaps that, you will never forget that you are a magistrate self. The magistrate self has become so much involved in your being that you are only that. This is an example of the social self, which everyone is, in some way or the other. Your involvement in external society in any manner whatsoever will condition you and make you a social self.

That is to say, you are not independent because you always define yourself in terms of something with which you are associated. You feel you are rich, you are poor, you are male, you are female, etc. These definitions that you unwittingly foist upon yourself tell you that you are not independent, and cannot be regarded as free. To the extent you are dependent on feelings, instincts, social contexts and relations, to that extent you are a bound soul.

But meditation is the art of the achievement of freedom. Perhaps it expects you to achieve the highest kind of

freedom—untrammelled not only by external relations, but by conditions given by space and time. Such kind of absolute freedom is your expectation through spiritual meditation. So a seeker of this highest freedom in the spiritual self will analyse and assess the category of selfhood in which he is, or to which he belongs. How do you define yourself?

The Bhagavadgita says, in one or two verses, that you have to raise your lower self by the power of the higher Self. You should not be always a physical self, an instinctive self, a desire-filled self, a sensory self or a social self. The Self cannot be so described as something conditioned by other things. The very meaning of Self is unconditionality, indivisibility and self-sufficiency. If the self of yours is inadequate in some way, you cling to certain associations outside, as I mentioned, so that you look like an adequate self. But the Self cannot be made adequate or self-sufficient by any accumulation of external factors. Society, objects of sense, or even the satisfaction of the physical body cannot make the Self a better Self because the Self cannot be associated with anything other than its own Self.

The meaning of Self is non-objectivity. It cannot be externalised in any manner whatsoever, and it cannot be related to anything. The Self cannot be a relation of somebody else, and somebody cannot be a relation of the Self. As long as you feel that you are related to something—to property, to selfhood, to family relation, to position in society, whatever it is—your self is not unconditioned. It is a grieving self, limited self, finite self, dependent self, a slavish self. This is the lower self. The Gita instruction is

that this lower self has to be purified and raised to the level of the higher Self. Uddhared ātmanātmānam (Gita 6.5): By the higher Self you raise the lower self.

As we have studied earlier, the higher Self is the *adhidaiva*, the conscious transcendent principle of divinity ranging above yourself as an individual, as well as above the outside thing with which you are related.

Now, the higher Self, this *adhidaiva*, also has various degrees of manifestation, and these degrees depend upon the kind of relation that you have between yourself and the world outside. There are layers of creation; there are realms of being, degrees of reality. This earth plane—this physical space-time complex—is one degree of the manifestation of reality, and in this particular material field, we establish one kind of relationship with the objects outside. Therefore, this transcendent *adhidaiva* will operate in a particular manner, taking into consideration the physicality and the nature of the type of world in which we are living.

But there are higher worlds. There are *prapanchas*—Bhuloka, Bhuvārloka, Svarloka, Mahārloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka, as they say. Seven realms of being are described in the scriptures. As you rise higher and higher from one realm to another realm, the *adhidaiva* also becomes more and more transparent, more expanded and wider in dimension, so that the distance between you and the object outside gets diminished.

Now the object is very far away from you; the world does not seem to have any kind of living connection with you. One person has no relation to another person; each person is standing outside like a planet in the sky,

apparently not having anything to do with another. That I have no connection with you, that the subject has no relation to the object, that the world is totally outside, is apparent. In this physical world, there seems to be a total disconnection of the subject and the object. Things can be lost, there can be bereavement, and it is difficult to possess anything.

But as you rise higher and higher in the qualitative fields of the upper realms, the relationship between you and the world outside becomes more and more intelligible, and not material as it is now. Less and less material it will become, and the distance that you feel between yourself and the world outside will also get narrowed down until you reach the highest realm where the object merges into the Self, the subject enters into the object, and the divinity engulfs both the subjective side and the objective side so that there is Universal Experience. This is what the Bhagavadgita would like you to understand when it says that the higher Self should raise the lower self: *uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ*.

But never be despondent and melancholy in your mood. Do not say, "This is not for me! I am an involved." Everybody is involved in something, but everybody also has a prospect in the future. Everybody has some kind of understanding of what is happening and how to extricate oneself from the entanglement, so-called, of this social and material world. *Nātmānam avasādayet*: Never condemn the Self as involved, as a sinner, as bad. There is a divinity even in the lowest of selves, but it is buried, and it thinks in terms of senses, bodily associations and social conditions.

Ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanah. Who is your friend in this world? The higher Self is your friend, not somebody sitting outside you. That outside person can also become a friend only insofar as that person who is apparently outside can be associated livingly, vitally, with the *adhidaiva* consciousness. Otherwise, that outside person is an outside person only. You cannot have any real friendship with anybody in the world because of the independence that each one is maintaining. If the independence is slowly mellowed down by its association with the higher divinity with which it is connected as the *adhidaiva*, the friendship can be forged.

The friend of the Self is the self, and also it is the enemy of the self. The higher Self is your friend, to the extent your lower self is surrendering itself to the higher Self's demands. The higher Self is an enemy—God Himself is the opponent, and He will see everything is set at naught with all your effort—if this highest Self, which is God Almighty, is not put in the proper context of our relation with Him. God-consciousness, divinity-consciousness, *adhidaiva*-consciousness, higher Self-consciousness mean one and the same thing, so you may take it in any sense you like.

Furthermore, the higher Self is something that is immediately above us, which can be experienced as becoming the controller of the lower self only if we are able to live according to the dictates and the requirements of the higher Self. What are the requirements of the higher Self? The higher Self is less in need of the senses to acquire any kind of satisfaction. The higher Self is less in need of association with physical pleasures and social contact. The

more you feel satisfied with your own self and feel happy when you are alone in your room, you may be said to be moving in the direction of the true higher Self. But if when you are alone you feel miserable and immediately want to get out and meet a friend in the marketplace or speak to anybody on the way, you are a distracted person.

Each one can judge one's own self as far as the progress that is made in his spirituality. There are many tests. This is one test: Be alone to yourself. For how long can you be alone to yourself—for hours and hours, or for some days? If you can be alone the whole day, from morning until evening—if you do not want to see anybody, and you are the happiest man in the world even if you do not look at anything—if that is the case, it is a great touchstone of your progress. But if you feel miserable after half an hour—the legs are aching, the back is not able to straighten itself, and the mind says to go out and chat with someone—if this is the case, the lower self is controlling you. You are in the lower self only, and the higher Self has not taken possession of you.

The higher Self is an integrated consciousness; the lower self is dissipated, distracted, conditioned. The higher Self is an unconditioned reality; the lower self is a conditioned reality. The Self, as I mentioned, is essentially consciousness in its nature, and therefore it cannot be connected to any object outside. So to the extent the Self, which is consciousness, wants to be connected with something outside which is not consciousness—objects and materials—to that extent the self is not really the Self. It is a

conditioned, materialised self, contaminated by *tamas* and the *gunas* of Prakriti.

Hence, the Gita's instruction is to raise your lower self with the power of the higher Self, aspiring for a larger inclusiveness of your personality. Do you not think if your dimension of personality increases, you will be happier? If you can find yourself in a larger atmosphere, you will see that the atmosphere somehow also gets adjusted to you. To the extent it is not possible—you seem to be facing a difficulty of adjustment of yourself with the outer atmosphere—problems will sometimes harass to such an extent that they do not seem to be tolerable at all. You do not seem to be having any kind of solution to your difficulties. Everywhere there are problems, one after the other. This is because the lower self is somehow or other struggling to get out of its difficulties by its own instruments and appurtenances, without resorting to the power of the higher Self.

You should never be despondent and regard yourself as incapable. One of the conditions of success in meditation is confidence in oneself, not diffidence. You should never sit for meditation with the feeling that perhaps nothing will come. If you have already decided that, then really nothing will come. What you think you are, you really are. Why should you be despondent? You should not go to the examination hall with the feeling that you are not going to succeed. What is the good of going, then? You are going to succeed. That is why you take the exam.

In a similar way, sit for meditation with the feeling that tomorrow all shall be well, and all requirements of

meditation should be at your fingertips. If there is any frustration in the mind, emotional disturbance, sorrow that is gnawing into your vitals, you should not sit for meditation at that time. The lower self, of course, is raised by the higher Self, it is true; but if the lower self is in agony, if it is sick or diseased, at that time you cannot bring the force of impact of the higher Self upon it. The disease has to be cured, first of all, as a patient has to follow a certain regimentation when treated in a hospital. You do not thrust medicine into his body immediately, it is given later on; and so the lower self has to be treated.

Everyone has to judge oneself. A check-up of personality is to be maintained with a spiritual diary. It is necessary to check up: "How far have I progressed? Are there any obstacles which are emotionally disturbing me, or am I intellectually in a state of doubt?" Intellectual restlessness and emotional tension is instinctive if there are frustrations of any kind. Do you want something that you cannot get, or are you getting something that you do not want? These are the causes of difficulties.

Many of the difficulties of a spiritual seeker will not be visible in the beginning. You may look as though everything is all right, that nothing is wrong. You sit for meditation. But if you continue to do it for some two or three months, you will see that it is not as simple as it appeared in the beginning. You will find it very hard. You do not know what problems will arise. Nine kinds of obstacles are mentioned in Patanjali's Sutras, and there may be more also.

A sincere, honest and realistic spiritual seeker should have a spiritual guide, because after two or three months you will find a dark wall in front of you. You cannot pierce through it, as it is like a kind of iron curtain. In the beginning everything looks fine, but afterwards you will find emotions arise, and your physical ailments will slowly start showing their heads in all kinds of ways. You are unable to eat anything, or you start sneezing, or have neck pain. You will say, "It is very difficult. I cannot carry on the practice." This is a symptom which is very expertly enunciated in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which also gives suggestions of how to overcome them gradually.

So have confidence in yourself, but do not overestimate yourself. Do not think that everything is fine with you, because you may have some difficulty which is very minor, but that minor thing will become like a big mountain when it is ignored—like a disease which looks like a very small ache but afterwards it will expand itself into agony. That should not be allowed. Illness should be nipped in the bud, like all problems.

Hence, the spiritual seeker should, first of all, check up his personality, and then see that there are no other desires, hankerings or frustrated feelings of any kind. "It would have been very good if I had some money in my hand. I am a pauper." If you have this kind of feeling, it is good that you have some money. Do not be unnecessarily dejected with this sorrow, thinking, "God will give me everything." Maybe God will give you everything, but at the same time you have a feeling that you are a pauper. You have double feelings, and that should not be. If you want something that

is permissible, well, have it, but abnormal desires may have to be transmuted by the power of suggestions that you receive from your Guru.

Thus, here is something interesting for you in a single verse of the Gita: Uddhared ātmanātmānam: raise the self by the Self; nātmānam avasādayet: never deprecate yourself; ātmaiva hy ātmano bandhur: the Self is the friend of the self; ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ: the Self is also the enemy of the self. The Self is the friend of the self because the lower self has surrendered itself completely to the requirements of the higher Self. It will certainly take care of you. God never ignores any person, provided there is real surrender. Otherwise, it will look as if the higher Self is not cooperating with you. How will it cooperate with you when your self is conditioned by so many physical and social associations? Therefore, be brave—*vira*, as the Upanishad puts it.

Bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ, anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat (Gita 6.6). These two verses in the beginning of the Sixth Chapter are crucial in their meaning. Bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ: The Self is the friend of the self of that person who has overcome the lower self by the higher Self. The Self is the enemy of the self of that person who has not been able to overcome the lower self by the higher. Here is a concentrated, very valuable instruction for spiritual seekers in the art of meditation, put in a little capsule.

The Gita goes further into the art of practical meditation, telling you that you are to be seated in a

particular posture. Śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiram āsanam ātmanaḥ, nātyucchritaṁ nātinīcam cailājīnakuśottaram (Gita 6.11), etc. These are all in the scriptures. It is not that you should go away somewhere for the purpose of meditation. You can be in your room if that is convenient. Otherwise, for atmospheres of this kind you can sit in a forest, under a tree where it is cool, not in the hot sun, etc. Wherever it is, as is convenient, well ventilated by a breeze and not suffocating, be seated calmly and read these verses of the Gita, and see to what extent you can raise yourself to a higher consciousness.

The philosophy of the Sankhya evolution that you have studied earlier will, to some extent, help you in transferring your lower consciousness to a higher one, which is the transcendent *adhidaiva*. You will find it difficult, no doubt. That is, you have to be something other than yourself in meditation. You cannot continue to be what you are, and then be successful in meditating. There is a little bit of otherness of yourself in a transcendent sense. If you are looking at some object, transfer your consciousness to that state which is neither you nor that object. This is also suggested in a single *sūtra* of Patanjali where he says you become *maha videha*, or the larger self, by transferring your consciousness to another which is not yourself. The suggestion is that if you meditate on a tree, for instance, it is not enough if you consider the tree as something outside you and are looking at it with your sense organs. That is sensory perception. It cannot be regarded as meditation on the tree. Your consciousness has to get transferred to the very existence of that object; you have to think, as it were,

as the tree thinks; and, much more than that, you have to think in terms of that which is between you and the tree, so that there is a simultaneous consciousness of what you are and what the object outside is. This is suggested in the doctrine of the evolution of the universe in terms of the *adhidaiva* connecting subject and object, and also in the *sutra* of Patanjali.

The Gita's instruction in regard to meditation is that you may be seated on some *asana* which is neither on the ground, nor too high from the ground: *nātyucchritaṁ nātinīcaṁ*. Perhaps the reason is that on the ground itself some insects may crawl and trouble you. If it is too high, you may fall off the seat—so, neither too high nor too low. Something which is supposed to be a non-conductor of electricity is spread on the ground. In earlier days, we used to have a tiger skin or deerskin, but you can have grass—*kusa* grass, a grass mat. It is generally used for meditation. On that you have a soft cloth: *cailājīnakuśottaram*. *Caila* is a cloth. Over that you sit.

That is, all the preparations should be such that they do not cause any kind of difficulty for you. They should not be painful or distressing in any way. Certain positions that you assume in *asana*, such as *padmasana*, etc., may be painful. You should not struggle to maintain it if you cannot sit in that pose for a long time. Whatever is convenient, that is the proper pose. *Yathābhīmata dhyānāt vā* (Y.S. 1.39), as the Patanjali *sutra* tells us: As is convenient to you, so is the posture that you have. The only thing is, the position that you maintain in meditation, though comfortable of course,

should not cause sleepiness or any kind of pain in the joints, etc.; then use any other convenient posture.

What will you contemplate? What will you think? How will the mind operate in this effort at meditation? Usually, in the strictly religious sense, it will commence with a prayer to God, a prayer to the universe, the Great Father, the Supreme Being—whatever be your concept of the Supreme Being or the Almighty. In your own language, in your own style, offer prayers to this great master of creation. “This universe must have been created by something; so large is this universe, incomparably vast is this creation. How vast the Creator should be! He is everywhere in this universe, and also above this universe. What glory, what power, what knowledge! Oh, such a Being is looking at me, because omniscient is the eye of God. That which is immanent in all things, that which is all-pervading, is also all-knowing. I am blessed because I am in the presence of this all-knowing, powerful Being.”

In the beginning, feel that energy is flowing through you from this Great Lord of the universe. When you sit in the Sun, the energy of the Sun enters into you. So is the impression that you have to create in your mind. “I am slowly drawing strength and energy and *prana* from the cosmos. The cosmic *prana* is entering into me. Through the nostrils it is entering, through every pore of the body it is entering. As a magnet pulls things that are near, this Great Being is attracting me and pulling me towards it. I am inundated by the power that is flowing into me from that Great Being. I am stronger today, healthier now, better in every way. I have no difficulty, because I am in the presence

of this all-compassionate, all-powerful, all-knowing God.” This is one way in which you can offer your prayers in Sanskrit, English, Latin, or in any language. And then place yourself mentally, psychologically in the presence of this Great Being.

But you should not think that this is only a kind of concoction of your thought. It is not so. This is not an imagination; it is a factual and actual operation that is taking place. You are not as disconnected from the world as you imagine. You are also not as far away from God as you may think. There is no distance between you and God, no distance at all. The idea of distance arises because of the conception of space and time. They are illusions, finally. Remove this idea of externality. Your prayers to God will certainly reach Him if you believe that God is not even one inch distant from you. Thus, picture before yourself your concept of God in whatever way your religion, your understanding, prescribes it.

In the earlier stages, it is very hard to even carry on this concept of concentration. Have a concrete picture of God before you. There are people who keep a picture of Christ, Mohammed, Lord Krishna, Devi or Durga, Narayana, Vishnu, or Siva. There are people who meditate on the Cosmic Being as represented in these forms because there is no way to adjust the mind to a total abstraction in the beginning itself. Hence, there is a portrait of this Great Master. Here is the Great Being portrayed in a particular form as an incarnation at least, though not in that Absolute form. That incarnation is the pathway for you to enter into that which is above the incarnation.

You will find it difficult even to think it for a long time. Even a picture of Krishna, Siva, Devi—how long will you go on thinking it? The mind jumps here and there, thinking twenty things. So the suggestion is that you have a *puja* room, an altar of worship, and a portrait in front of you. Why not open your eyes, gaze at this majestic portrait which is painted in such a way that it will please you aesthetically, and give you great satisfaction? How beautiful it is, how majestic, how powerful, how complete, how satisfying! I am one with it, so I become fully satisfied. I become completely perfect. I become beautiful. I become everything, as that on which I am concentrating is everything. Go on looking at it, and at the same time keep these ideas of self-fulfilment in the mind. After gazing for a few minutes, close the eyes and feel the presence of this portrait, this form, in your mind only, without opening the eyes. If you feel tired of contemplating like this, open your eyes once again and look at the picture. If you feel pain in the legs because you have already sat for half an hour, straighten your legs or just walk about for a few minutes. Then take a deep breath, wash your face with cold water, and sit again. The pain will go.

So this process, this practice of meditating with open eyes on a portrait—a form that is concretely there as an image such as a statue, a sculptured piece, or a painted picture—and then contemplating the same thing with closed eyes, may continue. Let it continue like this for one, two or three months; then you will find that you no longer require any portrait. No picture is necessary. You can close your eyes and feel its presence anywhere you want.

Wherever you sit, you can see that it is this form. Contemplate it. The power of your concentration will charge this form to such an extent that, after some years of practice, perhaps, you will feel the presence of this divinity everywhere, as if the whole world is filled with it. If you gaze at the sun for a long time and then look this way and that way, you will see the sun everywhere because of the power of the sun on your eyes; everywhere you will see the orb of the sun. In the same way, you will begin to see the form of this divinity everywhere on account of the concentration which you have been practicing for a long time on this particular form.

As I mentioned sometime back, you must be careful to note that this meditation is satisfying, and it should not be unsatisfying in any manner. The god whom you have chosen for your meditation is all-complete, and you do not want anything else in this world. "This god that I am meditating upon is all things, and everything will come to me from that god." Faith is necessary. Do not doubt. If there is mere concentration through the will with lack of faith—with doubt that it may come or it may not come—then no, nothing will happen. Let this faith be there that it will certainly come.

The world is a single organic completeness and living whole, and therefore everything is touching you everywhere. God is touching you. You are on the lap of God, as it were. Faith is very important; without it, nothing will work. Mere intellectual study is no good because there are doubts, eventually. But if the faith says it will work, let the intellect say whatever it likes, but it will certainly work.

There is nothing, no wonder that faith cannot work. It is a miracle worker. Such is faith.

With this kind of practice for a long time, you will see the divinity present everywhere. You will feel divine energy flowing into you from all sides, and an immense satisfaction that you cannot feel otherwise by the possession of anything in this world.

The Bhagavadgita gives a brief instruction on how you can conduct meditation; in a few verses, it says incomparable bliss will arise from your own self. *Yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate* (Gita 6.22): In that condition established, rooted in that satisfaction, that joy, that arises from one's own self by non-contamination with external things, even the heaviest sorrow of the world cannot shake a person. The heaviest sorrow of things will not touch you because of the incomparable joy that you feel from yourself on account of the release of the tensions of the self and the uncontaminated Self rising to the surface of its action and flooding you so that you become the whole Self, as if the whole body has become the Self.

Now the Self looks like it is something inside the body, inside the mind, inside the intellect, inside what you are, but it will be everything afterwards. There will be scintillating light everywhere. Everything will shine. Materiality will assume spirituality, objectivity will become subjectivity, and both the subject and the object will assume a sense of universality.

Great difficulty is there. Arjuna, hearing all this great instruction, said, "Lord, it is wonderful! Is it possible to achieve this state in this life? Life is short, time is fleeting;

how long are we going to live in this world? Maybe for a few years. In these few years, will I be able to attain to this supreme state of bliss that you have been describing as the consequence of this meditation on the Self?" Suppose the person dies in the middle, before achieving anything palpable in meditation. What is the state of that person in the next birth?

No problem! Great consolation comes from the Master. Even a little good effort in this world in the right direction will pay its dividend. Even a minute of thought of God correctly, properly, with faith, from the bottom of your heart, will not be a waste. You should not say it is only one minute. Let it be only one minute; that minute will come to your aid one day or the other. There is no loss of effort in this practice of Yoga. Every little thing that you do is a virtue because even a half step that you take in the direction of the achievement of this great goal is a great credit for your life.

Therefore, do not be under the impression that in case the body drops in the middle of Yoga nothing will come, that everything is gone. No. This practice will be ushered forward by the very force and the impulse and the momentum of the practice that you have carried on in your previous life. Very early in age you will suddenly rise up into the memory of the need to practice Yoga. Are there not children who, at the very early age of four or five years, are religious and good-natured? From where does this idea of goodness and religiousness arise in small children? It is the *samskara* of their previous performances, some karmas of good deeds they did, etc.

Hence, a Yogi who is not in a position to achieve the highest goal and departs from this world in the middle of the practice will be reborn in such conditions where it will be possible to continue the practice from the point where he left it in the previous birth. So there is no loss of effort. You may be born as the progeny of some great master, a great Yogi's son, or you may be born with such affluence, such facility and such comfort and freedom from difficulty that you will be able to carry on your practice there without any kind of hindrance from outside. Either you will be able to carry on the practice by yourself because you have automatically been placed under suitable conditions by the fact of your birth, or you will be the son or the daughter of a great master. That is a great blessedness, very difficult to achieve: *labhate paurvadehikam, yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ* (Gita 6.43). Do not expect to be a child of a great master so easily like that. You must be a most blessed soul to have such a birth in the next realm. But there is no loss.

So even if the body is dropped and death takes place in the middle of the practice, there is nothing to grieve. Be happy under any circumstance. All is well in this world which is created by God. "All is well. Everything is fine, and I shall attain the goal." With this faith, carry on the practice. God bless you.

Chapter 10

THE HIDDEN MEANING OF THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE GITA

The first six chapters of the Bhagavadgita stand by themselves as unique teachings on the integration of the human personality, which process was described gradually right from the First Chapter. The Gita, as a very good psychologist and a master teacher to students, takes its stand on the level of the student, and endeavours to gradually raise the mind of the student from that pedestal on which the student stands. Though the student is Arjuna in this particular context, the student is every one of us, humanity in general.

Arjuna finds himself in a highly non-aligned and disturbed circumstance of conflict of every kind, with difficulties galore. This is described in the First Chapter; and you know how the mind was gradually raised to higher and higher levels by the theoretical teaching of the Sankhya cosmological doctrine and by the practical teaching of the implementation of this Sankhya doctrine in the actual performance in life, called Yoga. A further confidence was infused into the mind of the student-disciple in the Fourth Chapter when it is told that God Himself incarnates as the rectifying medium whenever any critical situation arises; and in the Sixth Chapter we were told how it is possible to align the layers of our personality in an integrated act of meditation.

So up to this time, until the end of the Sixth Chapter, the emphasis is on the human individual, the perfection of

man, the bringing together of all the forces that constitute individuality, as a soldier is worked up into perfection and order for the action that he has to embark upon in a field of battle. In every way he has to be prepared. He girds up his loins, as they say, but not in an unprepared manner. In every way he is prepared. At one whistle or one stroke, he is ready to strike with all his might and main. But on what will he strike? This is another subject altogether which will take us to the chapters from the Seventh onwards, right up to the Eleventh—which form another unit, with which we can club the Twelfth Chapter also as an appendix thereof.

While the human individuality is to be perfected by integration, alignment of layers through the constituents of the meditational process, the human individual is also to be aligned to a cosmic setup—a macrocosmic integration, as it is called. The microcosmic endeavour of the human personality has to be set in perfect tune with the macrocosmic order, law and system, so that gaining individual perfection is only a preparatory process for its perfect alignment with the cosmic perfection. So there is an element of cosmology and macrocosmic operation even in the act of meditation, and it is not an isolated individual effort.

Therefore, it is now clear that when you sit for meditation, you are preparing for some onslaught, and it is not an end in itself. Meditation, *dhyana*, leads to *samadhi*, communion with reality. The nature of reality has not been properly touched upon in the chapters that we have covered up to this time. There was excessive emphasis on the nature of the psychological individual, but the

metaphysical cosmos has not been explained in sufficient detail, except here and there by way of vague reference.

When we were discussing the Sankhya doctrine of the Second Chapter, we had occasion to digress into the details of Sankhya cosmology. This detail is not to be found in the Second Chapter; only the word 'Sankhya' is used, and it is said that Sankhya is essential. Arjuna was lacking knowledge of Sankhya, on account of which he could not be an expert in the Yoga of action. But it is good to have at least some idea of the outline of the entire process of cosmic creation, which you remember as it has been told to you.

Now the Gita takes up this very subject in the Seventh and Eighth Chapters, etc.—the cosmic evolutionary process, the structure of the universe. The description of this reality of the universe becomes necessary for the purpose of enlightening the individual already perfected through the first six chapters for direct communion with the cosmic whole.

Bhūmir āponalo vāyuh kham mano buddhir eva ca, ahamkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā (Gita 7.4). In our description of the Sankhya cosmology, we noted there is Purusha, Prakriti, Mahat, Ahamkara, and a threefold distribution of force into the *adhyatma*, the *adhibhuta*, and the *adhidaiva* which is between; the *adhibhuta* was constituted of the elements, or *tanmatras*, called *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*, and the elements *prithvi*, *jala*, *tejo*, *vayu*, *akash*—earth, water, fire, air and ether.

This verse of the Gita says: bhūmir āponalo vāyuh kham. *Bhumi* is the earth, *apa* is water, *anala* is fire, *vayu* is air, *kham* is *akasha*. These five elements are mentioned

here as evolves from the Supreme Being. Then added to it is *mano buddhi ahamkara*. They refer to or correspond to *ahamkara* through the Sankhya system, as mentioned to you, and there is the Mahat, there is the Mulaprakriti. They are almost similar to these three principles *mano buddhi ahamkara*, which are above the five elements. These are the eight principles. Bhūmir āponalo vāyuḥ khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca, ahaṁkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā: This is My eightfold manipulative power, Prakriti, the operative force.

But there is something above them. That is the Supreme Purusha. Apareyam itas tvanyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām, jīvabhūtāṁ mahābāho yayedam dhāryate jagat (Gita 7.5). This eightfold Prakriti mentioned is like a roster. Right from Prakriti downwards—through the series of Mahat, *ahamkara*, the five *tanmatras* and the five *mahabhutas*—may be considered as lower categories of creation, but the vitality, the force, the *prana*, the energy, the life, the consciousness that is behind these elements is something different, which is the life principle operating in all, which is God Himself. Jīvabhūtāṁ: There is life, purposiveness, longing, desire, restlessness, aspiration in everything. In dead matter you cannot find all these activities.

Etadyonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇīty upadhāraya (Gita 7.6). The whole creation is only this much: this operative principle which is consciousness, *jiva*, and the other eightfold categorisations of Prakriti. Ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā (Gita 7.6). Here Sri Krishna sums up all his teaching by saying, “I am

everything.” This statement has not been made in the Gita up to this time. “I am the beginning and the end of all things.” Who is saying this? Only whoever is the beginning and the end of all things can say that. No individual, no particular manifestation can speak in this extreme. *Kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas:* I am the beginning, the middle and the end—all the universe, in its entirety. That is to say, this peculiar ‘I’ which is making this statement is immanent, is hidden as the soul of all things throughout the process of creation. There are innumerable evolutes, but through every process of evolution, and in every evolute that is so manifested, the life principle continuously is present as there is a single consciousness continuously operating in the three states of our life—waking, dream and sleep. Waking is different from dream, dream is different from sleep. They are totally different in their character. When you are dreaming, you cannot know that there is any such thing as the waking condition; when you are awake, you do not think of the dream condition at all; and when you are asleep, the other two conditions vanish. It is not possible to distinguish these three states unless there is a continuous consciousness permeating all three. Therefore, you know, “I am awake, I had a dream, and I slept.” It is one ‘I’ that is speaking, knowing at the same time that all the three states are of one particular entity only.

In a similar manner, the whole of creation is ‘I’, says the Universal Consciousness. Here we may identify this great ‘I’ with the Purusha of the Sankhya—infinite in its nature. Only the Infinite can say, “I am everything.” This

identification of the Supreme I in the process of creation and all the evolutes causes various difficulties in understanding from the point of view of an ordinary individual. We cannot actually understand in what manner God pervades the world and in what way creation is effected. We have to take it for granted that it is exactly as it has been described in the scriptures. If you wrack your head too much, you will find no answer because the action of the macrocosm, the workings of the Infinite, cannot be comprehended by the faculties available to the individual.

There is a story associated with St. Augustine, a theologian and a mystic of the Middle Ages, a very famous doctrinaire of Christian theology. It appears he was sitting on the shore of the ocean, trying to find out how creation arose. He had to write a thesis, a big book on theology, which should also mention the process of how God actually manufactured this universe. From what material did He create this? How did He think? How did His will operate when creation took place? He was deeply brooding over it. The story goes that a boy suddenly appeared near him, and was bailing out water from the ocean and throwing it on the sand. The pot was full of holes and the water ran out the holes, but still he was trying to empty the ocean, as it were. St. Augustine said, "My dear boy, what are you doing?" "I am emptying the ocean." "What kind of person are you? You cannot empty the ocean with this pot, especially as it has holes."

The boy replied, "If you can get an answer to what you are thinking in your mind, I can empty the ocean." It means to say, you can never get an answer to this question.

Every answer is tentative. It is satisfying so far as our understanding of the cosmos is concerned, but our understanding is our understanding; that's all. It has to be locked up in our cabin; it cannot go outside. It helps us to some extent as a walking stick, but the walking stick cannot walk. It only helps us.

So all our knowledge is a kind of walking stick. It has the power to give us some assistance like a torch when we are walking in darkness, but it cannot suffice in the end. Nobody can understand the great mystery of this form that we have seen just now. No *tapas*, no austerity, no effort of any kind even in the spiritual field can make us fit to behold this form. This is what that Cosmic Form spoke to Arjuna in the Eleventh Chapter. Our efforts are of no avail. A superior, different kind of effort may be necessary to behold that Form—not through the physical eyes, but through an eye which is different altogether.

Ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā. Briefly, the cosmological statement is here in these three verses. It will be touched upon again in two verses in the Third Chapter. But the point is that it is an affirmation of the same detail covered earlier, that the Supreme Absolute, God Almighty—you may call Him Parabrahman, Purusha, Purushottama—is everything. This is the doctrine of the Vedanta which distinguishes itself from the Sankhya to some extent, especially from what is called the graphical Sankhya. According to the Sankhya, the Purusha and the Prakriti are totally different entities; both are realities by themselves. Though the Sankhya says that the Purusha does not pervade Prakriti, yet it says that Purusha is all-in-all and

infinite. Infinite are the Purushas, numberless are they, and yet each one is infinite. This is a peculiar logic of the Sankhya which has been transcended by the universal philosophy of the Vedanta where Prakriti does not stand as a contradiction to Purusha; it is not an object of consciousness, it is a manifestation of the Infinite itself. Otherwise, Purusha cannot make the statement “I am all”, because the Purusha of the Sankhya is all in the sense of its being infinite, but it is not all in the sense that there is a Prakriti in front of it always.

Hence, the Vedanta doctrine is adumbrated here, in addition to the acceptance of the principles of the Sankhya. The Vedanta takes the whole philosophy of the Sankhya with a pinch of salt, and accepts it with some reservation. The evolutionary process described by the Sankhya is perfectly all right; the Vedanta accepts it. Yet there is a ‘but’ before it, that the Purusha is not infinite in number. There is only one Purusha possible because there cannot be two infinities. Infinity is one only. Even if you try to pile up infinities over infinities, you will have one infinity only.

Therefore, there can be only one ‘I’ behind the cosmos, not many I’s. Many I’s cannot say, “We are the creators of the cosmos and we are all things,” because two things cannot be all things. So here is the supremacy of the Godhood that speaks in this strain as ‘I’: “I am.” That is all. You cannot say anything more. You can only say, “it is.” *Astīti bruvato’nyatra katham tad upalabhyate* (Katha 12), as the Upanishad says. You can know God as Existence. It *is*, that’s all. You should not say anything more about God except that He is. What He is, you should not say, because

there is no quality, no attribute that can be associated with Him, inasmuch as He is the All. If He is the All, there can be no external attribute. *Ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ tathā*: I am all things.

It is incumbent on the part of the spiritual seeker, as mentioned, to commune himself with this great Reality which is the beginning and the end of all things. The Universal should engulf, as it were, the individual. The waves should subside in the ocean. The little I of the finite individual should get merged in the Infinite One I.

The feeling of the seeker of Truth at the time of his attempt to commune himself with the Almighty is called *bhakti* or devotion in the language of the Gita. Whoever is devoted to God is also a Yogi. In all practices there is an element of devotion, a longing for something higher than one's own self. You are a devotee of the higher Self. You are a devotee of God. You are a devotee of the infinite Purusha. You are devoted to it in the sense that you want it. Whenever you want something, you become a devotee of that thing.

The Gita tells us that there are varieties of devotees. Your devotion to God is not a uniform attitude commonly discoverable in everybody at the same time. You are placed in a different context on account of your karmas and the nature of your personality. Even when you love or hate a thing, you differ from another person who has a love and hate for different things. The quality or intensity of love and hatred varies in different individuals according to the nature of the object as they conceive it or according to their own psychological circumstance.

Caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukr̥tinorjuna, āto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha (Gita 7.16). The Bhagavadgita distinguishes four kinds of devotees. Many people run to God, offer prayers to God every day, but for what is this prayer? What do you want from God? There are people who want something from God. If you want nothing, you will not approach anything. People are distressed in life. There is great sorrow, poverty, ignorance, disease, tension, conflict, and what not. They cry, “God, come and help me.” These devotees who cry for help from God because they are in a state of distress are called *arthas*, distressed devotees. They want nothing else from God except freedom from distress. Sorrow and pain must be removed; that is all they expect from God. Inasmuch as the expectation is so small, it may even look silly to ask God Almighty for that. But yet, many devotees are of that type, and the Almighty incarnated as Bhagavan Sri Krishna says, “They are also beloved. They are devoted to me.”

But there are other devotees who do not seek this kind of blessing. They say, “Give me wisdom, knowledge, enlightenment.” For instance, Panini did meditation on Lord Siva for wisdom, and Lord Siva appeared before him, and with the sound of his *damaru* gave him knowledge of all Sanskrit literature. The scriptures contain many examples of these kinds of devotees. “I am ignorant. I understand nothing. Please bless me with knowledge.” These are a higher kind of devotees—*jijnasu*, they are called. One who wants to know is a *jijnasu*. One who wants to be free from distress is an *artha*. So *artha* and *jijnasu* are the first two categories.

Artharthi is the third type—one who wants material prosperity. “I would like to be materially rich, socially highly placed. I would like to be even a king, if God is so pleased. Lord, condescend to make me an emperor of this world.” And God will make you an emperor. If not in this world, in the next birth at least you will be born as the son of an emperor. You may be a ruler of a large kingdom. God is not unable to grant even this wish.

This is one interpretation of the word ‘*artha*’ according to certain commentators of the Gita. *Artha* is material, an object, prosperity which is visible, tangible, connected with this world, this earth. But certain other commentators say it is not necessary for us to confine the meaning of this word *artha* only to material prosperity. There may be some other meaning also, inasmuch as there seems to be a gradation of ascent in the order of renunciation of the devotees, finally consummating in *jnani*, or the highest devotee. If the *jijnasu*, or the disciple of knowledge, is to be considered superior to the one who asks only for freedom from distress, and you are actually being taken to the highest level of the *jnani* state, the third type should not be something less than the second because the one who asks for material gains cannot be regarded as superior to the one who asks for knowledge. So perhaps the intention of the Lord may be a little different from the meaning that we are trying to associate with the word *artha*. Maybe it is prosperity; there is nothing wrong with it. Perhaps it is *purushartha*. *Purushartha* means the aims of existence.

The objectives of life are fourfold in number—*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*, as they are called. One who is asking

for perfection in the acquisition of these great values of life should be considered as superior even to the one who asks for knowledge in a general sense. Material, emotional and ethical values consummating in the wisdom of the Supreme Being constitute the four aims of life. They are called *purushartha*. So *artha* here may also mean *purushartha*; in that sense, the gradation of ascent is maintained. Thus, the third category of devotees is this, the *artharthi*. The first is *artha*, the second is *jijnasu*, the third is *artharthi*. But the highest, according to the Lord, is *jnana*. All these three just mentioned expect something from God. The whole point is this. But what does the *jnani* expect? He expects only God. He wants nothing from God. The giver of the gift is certainly greater than the gift. Why should you not ask for the one who gives the gift, instead of only the gift? Would that not be wisdom on your part? I want you only, and not anything that you give, because whatever you can give is inside you, included in you. It is part and parcel of your being.

In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana and Arjuna went to Dvarka to seek help from Sri Krishna in the war that was to ensue, and asked for assistance from this master, Sri Krishna. Krishna asked, "What do you want from me? There are only two things with me: I myself, a single individual; and I have a large army. Now you can choose. Either you choose the large army which is almost invincible, or you choose me. But I am an individual, a single person. The army can fight, but I am not going to fight. I have decided not to take up arms. I will only be sitting with you and talking to you as a friend. If you like,

you can keep me there with you, but you can expect nothing from me. If you want me sitting there idle, doing nothing, take me; otherwise, if you want the army, take the army.”

Duryodhana was a wise man. Why should he take the idle man? He took the army. Wonderful! He went home and declared to his cousins, his brothers and kinsmen, “We have already won the war even before it has taken place. I have an invincible army which Lord Krishna has given me.”

After he departed, Arjuna was standing there still, and Krishna said, “Foolish man! What made you choose me when I can do nothing for you?” Arjuna, with tears in his eyes, said, “Thou shalt not speak thus. Don’t say this to me. I know you are everything. Even your presence is sufficient for me. You need not do anything. You just be. I shall be blessed.”

Arjuna knew the power of Sri Krishna and his ability, which did not consist in his actions, but consisted in his being. The sun does not act with hands and feet; the very existence of the sun is the activity of the sun. The very existence of God is the activity of God. The millions of soldiers that Duryodhana took were like drops, though they were millions in number. But Sri Krishna was an ocean which can swallow all the drops, though it was one. Numerical computation does not work here because the one is greater than the millions.

So the *jnani* expects nothing from God. “I want to be free from distress; I want to be relieved of pain; I want knowledge; give me this, give me that – no! I want you,” as Arjuna said. Udārāṇ sarva evaite (Gita 7.18): I am pleased

with all these devotees. The greatness of God also consists in His kindness, mercy, motherly feeling. The Almighty is not merely a judiciary in the cosmos. He will not smile before a client. But here is a mother and a tender caretaker of the littlest of babies. “Even a crawling, insect-like devotee is dear to Me because he wants Me. Let him want Me in his own way.”

It is said in the Ramayana—it is not in written books, but the story is told—that when Rama built a bridge, big monkeys were lifting huge loads of stones and throwing them on the bridge to complete it quickly, and there was a squirrel that also wanted to be of assistance to Rama. What could the squirrel do? It could not carry stones. It was so devoted and thrilled with the prospect of being of some service to this great master, it rolled on the sand and shook whatever sand that stuck to its fur onto the bridge, with the sincere feeling that it was also adding some material, some sand particles, towards the bridge’s construction.

Now, service is actually not what you give, but how you give it. Charity is not the material that is offered but the manner in which it is offered—the intention and feeling behind it. Your heart is what is charitable, not your external faculties. Your tenderness of feeling when you give something, even if it is a hard thing to do, is a charity; but if you give millions in a disgruntled manner, it is not charity. Rama, it seems, was so thrilled with this little squirrel, much more than he was with Hanuman and the monkeys, that he caught hold of it and passed his fingers over its back in great compassion. People say that the three white lines that you see on the back of a squirrel are due to the three

fingers that Rama passed on its back. This is the belief of devotees.

Udārāḥ sarva evaite: All are dear to Me; there is no partiality on My side. Yet, he adds one proviso. Jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam: All the devotees are dear to Me, but I cannot say the *jnani* is dear to Me; he is Me. Here is the difference between a *jnani* and a devotee, though the *jnani* can also be regarded as a devotee in the highest order in the sense that he wants that which can give everything.

Udārāḥ sarva evaite jñānī tv ātmaiva me matam, āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā mām evānuttamām gatim (Gita 7.18). Why do I consider the *jnani* as the highest of beings? Because he does not exist at all apart from Me. The other devotees exist as recipients of the bounties and abundances that they expect from Me. The *jnani* does not exist at all. He has vanished into thin air and become Me, so he stands as the I of the Supreme Lord.

With this description of the devotees and the nature of the *jnani*, Bhagavan Sri Krishna gives the secret of how you have to adapt yourself to God's outlook of life. The reason why the Supreme Form, the Universal Form, said that nobody can behold this except under special conditions is because of the fact the outlook of that Almighty is not always possible for anybody else to adopt. If you can think like God, feel like God, work like God, and have attitudes to things as perhaps God has, that would be a fitness on your part. But who on earth can think like God? We do not even know how He will think and what He expects us to think. The difficulty in envisioning the very structure of God's consciousness makes it hard for us to become really fit for

that vision unless, with His mercy and compassion, He thrusts His own outlook on our head, as perhaps He did in the case of Arjuna. Arjuna had to be perforce made a good disciple by *shakti pada*, as it is called, a forceful entry of the Guru, the Lord Himself, into the mind of the disciple.

Jarāmaraṇamokṣāya mām āśritya yatanti ye, te brahma tad viduḥkṛtsnam adhyātmaṁkarma cākhilam (Gita 7.29); sādhibhūtādhidaivaṁ mām sādhiyajñam ca ye viduḥ, prayāṇakālepi ca māmte vidur yuktacetasaḥ (Gita 7.30). Who is a *jnani*? He who contemplates the Almighty as identical with his own self. As I mentioned, there cannot be two selves, or so many Purushas. The Atman cannot be manifold because if there are many Atmans, there will be a contradiction of one subject having an attitude of any kind with another subject because the other subject will become an object, so another subject cannot be there. There can be only one subject. That subjectness of a universal nature is the object so-called of the contemplation of the *jnani*. Even at the time of passing from this world—even when you are dying—if you can manage to centre your consciousness in this great concept, you shall not be reborn. There will be no rebirth. You shall attain salvation, and enter into God.

Jarāmaraṇamokṣāya: for the sake of freedom from old age and the sufferings of life; mām āśritya yatanti ye: whoever resorts to me for this purpose. Te brahma tad iduḥkṛtsnam: They know the Absolute in its integrality, and also its manifestations as *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*. Te brahma tad viduḥkṛtsnam adhyātmaṁkarma cākhilam: all things.

Sādhībhūtādhīdaivam mām sādhiyajñam ca ye viduḥ, prayānakālepi ca mārṁte: The compassion of God is infinite. You would certainly expect to be devoted to Him throughout your life, not treating Him only as a second-hand or third-hand item which you can think of sometime later at leisure. But even then, it is good. “Even if you forget Me throughout your life but at least remember Me when you are dying, I shall be pleased with you.” This is great kindness indeed! You have forgotten your friend for your whole life, and only for one moment when you want something from him you are calling him and saying, “Hello, how are you?” Such a friend you cannot find in this world. He will say, “You never thought of me. Now you want me to come and help.” But God is not a man. He is not selfish. He does not expect anything from you. He does not love you because you love Him; He loves you because He is you. So even at the time of passing if you can maintain this consciousness of the divinity, of the *adhyatma*, *adhīdaiva*, *adhibhūta* and the Supreme Absolute Brahma as operative in this universe of activity which is called *adhiyajña*, then *yuktacetasaḥ*: such united beings know Reality in fact.

Very great is the hidden meaning of this Seventh Chapter. I have gone through it very rapidly, giving you only the essence of it in different places. The cosmological, theological and spiritual secrets of the Gita you will find in a seed form in the Seventh Chapter. With this, we now proceed to the Eighth Chapter for a different view altogether of what has already been said.

Chapter 11

BEHOLDING GOD AS HE BEHOLDS HIMSELF

So the Eighth Chapter is quintessentially an answer which the Lord gives to the questions of Arjuna, which briefly I placed before you, that you can read in greater detail in commentaries of the Bhagavadgita. Highly elevated expressions of the religious consciousness are found in the Ninth Chapter. From the Seventh Chapter onwards, as I mentioned, the religious consciousness becomes more and more intensified until it reaches the pinnacle or the apotheosis in the Eleventh Chapter. In the earlier stages, say from the Seventh Chapter onwards until we come to the Ninth, God is always placed on a pedestal of superiority in the heavenly world, as it were. God is a transcendent being, and He seems to be very far from us. He is the creator of the cosmos; therefore, He is above creation, and above us also. So we can imagine the distance between ourselves and God: God is so far, He may take time to reach us. These ideas may also enter our minds because of the psychological distance created by us due to the conception of God being the creator of the cosmos and the cosmos being so vast.

Here in the Eighth Chapter, during the enunciation of the possibility of the soul attaining God after death, the point is that you will reach God only after death, and not when you are alive. This also keeps God at a distance, especially in your practical life. But it is in the Ninth Chapter that God comes down to your level. There is a diminution of the distance between God and man as the

Gita proceeds higher and higher, from the Seventh Chapter onwards. God is a transcendent creative principle, the judge of the cosmos, very far from you; you cannot see Him. This idea may enter into you when you reach the Seventh Chapter, where it briefly touches upon the creative process. Even this idea of liberation being possible only after death, and that nothing is possible in this life, may enter into you when you reach the Eighth Chapter.

But in the Ninth Chapter it says God is your friend. You cannot expect a friend to be millions of light-years away. He is very near you. He is a comrade and a well-wisher. He is your bosom friend, alter ego, and He is at your service, as it were, whenever you need Him. In a pendent verse of the Ninth Chapter, a masterstroke is struck in enunciating the meaning of the religious consciousness when it is told that God provides every need of the human being. *Ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate, teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām yogakṣemaṁ vahāmy aham* (Gita 9.22). The great promise is made by God: “Whoever contemplates Me undividedly without any other thought in the mind, absorbing the mind in the thought of God only, such a person will lack nothing.” Everything is at your fingertips. All commodities will be thrown at you.

I heard an interesting story about this. There was a Brahmin priest who was very fond of this verse. He said, “Oh, I have no problem now. I am a devotee of God. God has promised. See the promise: ‘Whenever you think of Me undividedly, I shall be at your service, and all your needs will be supplied to you.’ When the demand comes, the supply also comes.” He was a poor fellow. He was living on

alms, begging, and every day he would go from house to house and collect a little rice and some grains, and maintain his wife and children. Yet he was satisfied. "After all, God is kind to me. He has given me all that I want. What do I want, except a little food that He has given me in the form of alms?" Even with that wretched life, he was satisfied. He attributed it to the grace of God.

But one day it so happened, alms would not come. He went all places; nobody gave anything. He came back in the evening and said, "I have got nothing." His children were crying. They were starving. They said, "Papa, give us some food." But what food? There was no food. The mother also said, "Okay, all right." The next day also this happened. It was terrible. He came back with nothing in the evening of the third day also, and they were dying, that's all. Starvation. He got annoyed. "This promise is not a real promise! I thought God is kind and He would keep His promise, but He has not." In those days, scriptures were written on palm leaves. In anger he took a nail and struck that verse, tearing it. "We are dying in spite of our prayer to God." He threw it down, and ran from the house. He did not want to sit there and hear the cry of his little children, who were almost dying.

After a few minutes of the departure of this old man in wrath, some boy suddenly came with a big bag on his back, threw it on the veranda of the house and yelled to the mother, "Here are the rations for you." She came out. He was bleeding from the tongue. She asked, "What is the matter?" "Your husband has sent all these grains." "Why are you bleeding?" "Oh, I came a little late. He was so angry

with me, he cut my tongue,” he said. “Oh what an idiot! He is so bad. How can he tear your tongue like that? Poor boy!” She cursed her husband. The boy vanished.

After some time the Brahmin came home, and she said, “Are you a fool? Have you no sense? You sent some grains, rice and dahl, etc., with a boy, and you tore his tongue because he was a little late.” He was flabbergasted. He said, “I have not sent any grain. I have not seen any boy. I have not torn the tongue of any person.” “But I saw him. Here are the grains,” said the mother. The old man closed his eyes for a few minutes and understood what it could be. He wept. And it appears he actually touched the feet of his wife, saying, “You are more blessed than I because you had *darshan* of God Himself.” Well, this is the story of this great verse: *ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate, teṣāṁ nityā-bhiyuktānām yogakṣemaṁ vahāmy aham*. God is at your beck and call, as it were.

In certain instances of the lives of saints, in Maharashtra especially, we have anecdotes of someone suddenly coming in the nick of time and working as a servant boy of the particular saint. The Divine Will itself manifested in the case of Eknath or Namdev in the form of a little working boy called Sri Kandiya. All the miracles of this world are the workings of God only. If you have the blessing of a cup of tea in the morning, you must remember that God has willed it; otherwise, you would not get it. You would not get even a cup of milk or tea if God has not willed it. You should not imagine that you have money in your pocket, and therefore you purchased it. You will not have any money in the pocket, and you cannot purchase

anything like that; you cannot even lift your finger unless the Central Will operates, let alone anything else.

Such consoling message of the nearness of God, friendship of God, readiness of God to be of assistance to you at any moment is delineated in the Ninth Chapter, whose details we cannot entertain just now due to the paucity of time. I am moving rapidly, as I mentioned to you, to complete the whole Gita, and you can read commentaries to know what the substance of the Ninth Chapter is.

In the Tenth Chapter, God comes nearer. He is not merely ready to come to you whenever you want; He is already there all around you in some form or the other, in excellences of all types. *Yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā, tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṁ mama tejoṁśasaṁbhavam* (Gita 10.41). Whenever you find excellence of any kind—it may be even a whirlwind, a tornado, a heavy downpour or a flood, anything that is extraordinary—you must consider that the finger of God is operating there. If you find tremendous power, great strength, agility, knowledge, goodness of an extremely lofty type anywhere, you must see the divinity there. “Even in a lion I am present,” He says. The king of the jungle has an element of divinity, and so he rules. Even a supreme administrator of a country is supposed to be imbibed with some element of God; otherwise, he cannot control the nation. That element of super-individuality, which is actually the meaning of divinity, is present in all administrators, kings, rulers, presidents, or whatever they are called. So is the case with anything in this world.

Wherever there is excellence of any kind—great scholarship, great oration, great capacity to write, great poetry, great art, great painting, great music, great power, great authority, great ability of any kind—God is operating.

Various instances of this super-excellence are enumerated in the Tenth Chapter. God is here itself. You can see God in front of you in the beauty of the tender leaves of the tree, in the mellifluous flow of the Ganga, in the majesty of the Himalayas, in the brilliance of the Sun, in the blueness of the sky; everywhere you can see God. The very earth that supports you is God manifest. The very breath that you breathe is His blessing.

With these consoling messages, the Gita comes nearer and nearer to us in its message of divinity and Godliness. It is in the Eleventh Chapter that God becomes only God, and there is nothing but God. Up to this time you have heard so many things, and you know what these things are. So much instruction—do this, don't do that; this must be done, this must not be done; God has created the world; there is *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*; there are individuals, psychological function, society, and things in objective nature. So many things you have heard. Now everything is brought to a close, as it were. The Director of the drama winds up His play, and absorbs everything into Himself.

Arjuna poses a question at the beginning of the Eleventh Chapter. "Wondrous is this teaching, my Lord. You have made me immensely happy when you said *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiṁcid asti* (Gita 7.7): 'Nothing outside me can exist.' The absoluteness of God does not permit anything external to Him. Externality delimits God's

existence, and He would become a finite person if there were external things. The superiority and absoluteness, the infinitude, the spacelessness and timelessness of God precludes any kind of outsideness in God's existence. This is what I have heard from you. Is it possible to have a vision of this Great Being? Am I blessed to behold this great Universal Reality with my eyes?" This is a queer question for a mortal to put before the Almighty Master.

And the kindhearted teacher says, "You can, but you cannot behold the Cosmic Reality with your two eyes which are meant only for sensory operations, and which always externalise objects and tell you that all things are outside. With these eyes, you cannot have the vision of the Almighty. This Infinite Being can be beheld only by a consciousness that is within. The eye of consciousness can behold it."

Divyaṁ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ (Gita 11.8). "A divine eye is bestowed upon you here, by My grace." The divine eye is not this kind of eye, but an eye of the soul itself. The soul alone can behold the Universal Soul. These sense organs—eye, ear, and so on—cannot. You cannot see God, touch Him, smell Him, or have any sense contact with Him because sensory operations are externalised actions in space and time. Spaceless and timeless existence cannot be contacted. It is not a contact at all. The soul is of the nature of the Absolute, made in the image of God, as they say, and can behold God. The soul alone can behold God, not any apparatus of this body.

So the Master says, "I shall bestow upon you a rare opportunity of having the power to visualise this Supreme

inclusiveness, the interconnectedness of all things, where everything is everywhere. God is everywhere; everything is everywhere. All things of this world and the other world, of all the realms of creation—heaven and earth and hell, everything you can find—is interconnected in this cosmic timeless infusion of the reality of all existences.” Suddenly there was a flash, the Gita says. What kind of flash was it? It was not the flash of light that you can see with your eyes. It was not the sunlight that you see. You cannot open your eyes and look at the Sun, but thousands of Suns arose simultaneously in the horizon, as it were. Imagine what that would be like. That kind of light flashed before Arjuna.

Divi sūryasahastrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā, yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsas tasya mahātmanah (Gita 11.12). Na tatra sūryo bhāti (Katha 2.2.15), says the Upanishad. The Sun is like darkness, like a firefly, as it were. The light of the Sun is actually virtual darkness before that light. Na tatra sūryo bhāti: The moon and the stars and fire will not shine there.

Na candra-tārakam, nemā vidyuto bhānti, kuto'yam agniḥ: tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ vibhāti (Katha 2.2.15). All the lights of this world are reflections, perhaps distorted reflections, of the Almighty Light. That light shone before Arjuna, whose soul was shaken up completely. The personality broke, as it were, and this shattering which Arjuna felt before this incomparable majesty of the Almighty made him sing prayers, which are incomparable in themselves.

When you are in the state of ecstasy, you do not know what you are speaking. When you are angry, you also do

not know, and say anything that you like. But much more is the difficulty you feel in ecstasy. The mouth shuts and the tongue ceases to operate, and if you say anything, you do not know what you are saying, because your words at that time of divine ecstasy are of divine origin. The word that was God, as it were, manifested itself through the prayers, the hymns, the psalms of the great devotee whose soul opened itself completely before the Almighty Being, and long verses of an intricate nature of beauty and linguistic excellence form the major part of the Eleventh Chapter of the Gita.

Can you also behold that? Why should Arjuna alone be blessed with that greatness? Why not you, or I, or anybody else? Arjuna is blessed, yes. You are also blessed—or anybody. But—there is a great ‘but’. Na veda yajñādhyanair na dānaiḥ na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ, evaṁrūpaḥ śakya (Gita 11.48). Any amount of human effort is inadequate for this purpose. ‘Human’—after all, your effort is human; that is the only difficulty. You are a person, and that is divinity; it is a Super-person. You are a mortal; that is immortal. You are located in one place; it is everywhere. How would a localised, mortal individual with the frail faculties of sense organs expect to visualise that cosmic inclusiveness?

Therefore, the Gita says no amount of sacrifice, *yajna*, worship, prayer, study, will be of any avail: na veda yajñādhyanair na dānaiḥ na ca kriyābhir na tapa. Who will pray? Even intense austerity is not of any utility. You are thinking that you are doing austerity. The whole point in our spiritual practice is we do not give up the idea that

we are doing the practice: I do prayer, I study the Bible, I study the Gita, I study the Ramayana, I worship in the church, I worship in the temple, I do *tapasya*, I observe fasting, I did not sleep yesterday. How many times this ‘I’ comes in! This ‘I’ will prevent the Supreme I from descending. There is a necessity for the complete abolition of personality before the mighty God’s coming. This is the reason why it is said that ordinary *sadhanas* that are motivated by personality consciousness, or agency in action, even if it be religious, will not suffice. A dedication of oneself to God is necessary. This word ‘*bhakti*’ is used here, implying ardent longing from the deepest soul of the devotee.

‘Ardour’ is the word also used in a *sutra*, an aphorism of Patanjali’s Yoga. *Tīvra saṁvegānām āsannaḥ* (YS 1.21): Whoever’s ardour is intense, intensely intense, or threefold intense, four times, nine times intense—if the ardour for God is nine times intense, God will be immediately present before you. This is why the Gita says ordinary effort is not sufficient. This kind of vision is not bequeathed to ordinary people, whose personality asserts its egoism and confirms that it exists again and again. When God comes, man cannot stand before Him. He has to get absorbed in His mighty radiance. And as long as you stand outside as a person looking at God, you will not see the real God because the God you look at becomes an object and He becomes an individual in space and time, and it will look like a mountain or a river or a sky. Nothing of the kind is possible because the soul, which has descended from God Himself, has to go to God. That which is an evolute of

God's existence must return to the original source, and it can know God only when it has become God or, rather, entered into God's being, because the effect has to enter into the cause. As long as the effect is outside the cause, it cannot know that its relation to the cause is internal. It always feels that it is outside. God is the material as well as the instrumental cause of creation, it is said. He is not creating the world like a potter manufacturing pots out of clay or mud. There is no mud before God. There is no wood, no steel, no cement. Nothing of the kind is before God to create this world. He created out of the abundance of His existence.

Thus, the superabundance of God itself manifests as this cosmos, including yourself, myself. Therefore, this abundance that has manifested itself as this outside universe should revert and recede into the cause, so that the soul that has come from God enters into God and beholds God as He beholds Himself. This is the great, wondrous conclusion of the message of the Gita in the Eleventh Chapter.

Chapter 12

COMMUNING WITH THE ABSOLUTE THROUGH THE COSMIC TREE

“How do we approach God?” and “How do we conceive Him?” are questions raised at the beginning of the Twelfth Chapter. These procedures that we adopt in our endeavour to contact God are called, as you know very well, Yoga. A Yoga is an art of union with Reality. God, who is the Ultimate Reality, is to be contacted by some means. The means that we adopt is the Yoga, the method of inner communion.

It is possible to regard God as an all-pervading, infinite presence. Or, we can conceive God as a Supreme Person appealing to our emotions and feelings. Which is the better way? Arjuna put a question: “Are we to concentrate our mind on our concept of the Universal Impersonality of the Absolute, or are we to occupy ourselves with the Supreme Personality of God?” The answer is very interesting: It is perfectly all right if you are in a position to commune yourself with the Infinite Presence. This is very good. But who on earth will be able to achieve this, or perform this mighty feat?

The concept of the Infinite becomes a bare abstraction without any inner content when we stand outside it as visualisers of the Infinite. The mistake that the concept of the Infinite can commit is that it stands outside the Infinite when it so conceives it. Who will conceive the Infinite, inasmuch as the Infinite includes all the finites? So the question itself becomes redundant. Are we to meditate on

the Infinite Impersonality? Who are 'we'? What kind of 'we' or 'I' is this? Who is it that is thinking in this strain? Is there anyone capable of conceiving the Infinite? The Infinite precludes the concepts of finitude of every kind—finitude of even the conceiving person, the seekers of God. As long as this body is here as a so-called hard substance clinging to our consciousness, as long as even the best of seekers of Truth cannot forget that he or she has a body, a strong isolated personality and the consciousness of 'I' exists. The best of people cannot overcome this consciousness of 'I exist'. The consciousness of 'I exist', or the awareness of the so-called 'me', will not be able to achieve this feat of the communion with the Infinite.

Kleśodhikataras teṣāṁ avyaktāsaktacetasām (Gita 12.5): A great difficulty, great sorrow, great problem indeed is this for anyone to think of the Infinite, inasmuch as the Infinite alone can think the Infinite. The only one who is fit to meditate or conceive the Infinite is the Infinite itself, and no one else can do that because anyone else is a finite. So while it is a wonderful thing to hear that someone is attempting to conceive the Infinite and meditate on the Infinite—most glorious indeed even to hear that such a thing is possible—is it practicable? It is not practicable as long as body-consciousness persists, as long as I-consciousness of individuality continues. When you exist as a person, the Infinite cannot be there. Either you are there, or the Infinite is there.

So we can, for the time being, conclude that nothing can be better for a person than to endeavour to contact the Infinite. Yet, there has to be a proviso that it is not

practicable in ordinary circumstances. We can aspire for it, we can keep it as a kind of possibility in our future; it is a great, worthwhile thing, yet the physical individuality which is ridden over with ego and often controlled by the activities of sense organs will be an unfit instrument for even the notion of the Infinite.

Therefore, the personality of the individual seeker can accommodate itself only with the personality of God. A person can contact only a person. A person cannot contact a nonperson. There cannot be any kind of harmony between personality and impersonality. As every one of us is a person, God also has to be a person for us—a Supreme Person. We can stretch our imagination to the extent of excluding everything outside His personality. Mighty Visvarupa, Cosmic Form, All-inclusive God, Almighty Father—you may designate Him in any way you like, but nevertheless He is the Supreme Person.

The concept of God's personality arises on account of our impossibility to get over the consciousness of our own personality. God's personality, as we conceive it, is a cosmic counterpart of our own individual personality. It is an extension of our own notion of what we are, so that God would look like a big person and something like our own personality. We cannot think in any other manner. If we want to associate immense capacity and great knowledge and power with God, the only thing that people can think is that He has multiple powers. His eyes are everywhere, His hands are everywhere, His feet are everywhere, as the Gita tells us. Inasmuch as our hands or eyes cannot be everywhere, we have to associate God with everywhere

of even the limbs. We are ignorant, and therefore God has to be all-knowing. We are unhappy; therefore, God is bliss. We are in only one place; therefore, God is everywhere. There is an opposite, counter-correlative aspect of God's conception of us in our endeavour to think Him.

So in the earlier stages of spiritual practice, it is no use on the part of any seeker to jump over his own skin and try to be infinite if the Infinite becomes only a conceptual object, an abstraction to the conceiving mind. Yet, we may maintain it as a kind of theoretical possibility. One day or the other, this finitude of ours may melt down and the Infinite may take possession of us. It is a blessedness we may await. But in the earlier stages, God-consciousness will take the form of a blessed, benevolent father, mother, friend, guide, philosopher—whatever you call it. This is the answer Bhagavan Sri Krishna gives to Arjuna's question: Which is the better way for a spiritual seeker—the pursuit of the impersonal Absolute, or devotion to a personal God?

The answer is that both are equally good, under different circumstances and conditions. But the body-consciousness of an individual will not permit an immediate communion of itself with the infinite Absolute, so love of God is what is available to us as a redeeming factor. Meditation should be carried on in this way, on the Supreme Being, the Creator of the Universe. What kind of meditation? How are we to adjust our mind to the thought of God?

As I mentioned, these ways are called Yoga. We have four Yogas mainly, as you must have heard—Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga. Four verses,

commencing with the verse mayy eva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya, nivasiṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ (Gita 12.8), briefly adumbrate the nature of the practice of the four Yogas: Concentrate yourself on Me only, to the exclusion of everything else. Let your mind be devoted to Me and the intellect dedicated to Me, and you shall reside and abide in Me. The abiding of oneself in God is the crucial point in Jnana Yoga.

When we tried to understand the meaning of *jnanin* on an earlier occasion, we observed that a *jnanin* expects nothing from God because he wants God only. To want God is to abolish oneself as a person because of the infinite inclusiveness of God. So the abiding of oneself in God implies, would suggest, a total surrender of oneself to the extent of annihilation of personality itself; otherwise, abiding in God would be difficult. You would be abiding in God as a separate entity there, and the infinitude of God would not permit that situation. So this verse is a suggestion for Jnana Yoga: seeing everything everywhere.

Taccintanaṁ tatkathanam anyonyaṁ
tatprabodhanam, etad ekaparatvaṁ ca brahmābhyāsaṁ
vidur budhāḥ (Panchadasi 7.106). Brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma
haviḥ brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam, brahmaiva tena
gantavyaṁ brahmakarmasamādhinā (Gita 4.24). These
verses tell us that our occupation in daily life should also
get melted down into the very process of meditation. Work
and meditation do not stand apart in *jnana*. There is no
secular life and spiritual life isolated from each other. In
jnana, in wisdom of God, there is no secularity, materiality,
externality, personality. All 'ities' vanish. There is only the

wisdom of existence, wherein one beholds all things everywhere. If a *jnanin* talks, he does not talk on any other subject. And when he discourses to people, he will not discourse on anything else. He will try to elevate people to the consciousness of the Infinite Existence of God and depend on the grace of God only. The Gita also tells us *tadbuddhayas tadātmānas* (Gita 5.17): The mind is sunk in it, the intellect is entirely devoted to it, and the soul is totally inseparable. Depending on that only even for your sustenance, such a thing is *jnana*, which is hard for anyone to practice because it depends mostly on external factors, under conditions of bodily existence and, to some extent, sensory activity.

If you find that to be difficult, the Lord adds more. Without expecting any word from the disciple, the Teacher, the Master, the Guru apprehends the difficulties that are possible in the case of an ordinary seeker, and without even a question raised, the answer comes as an emendation of the first doctrine of *jnana*: If this is not possible, go on practicing again and again the same routine every day, whether you succeed or not. A continuous day-to-day maintenance of the consciousness of God's omnipresence as *jnana* may be difficult, but you may try for it at least. By practice you become perfect. Sit for meditation at a particular time, at any time as is convenient to you, and do not forget to be seated for meditation at this particular time. You may say the mind is not concentrating, it is not coming round. It does not matter; sit nevertheless. Make a decision that, "I have sat here for meditation to rouse in my mind the consciousness of God's existence." And every day

if the sitting is done, one day or the other the mind will come round, and you will succeed. Repeated attempts on the part of a person to see that the consciousness of God enters one's mind can be assisted by the study of scriptures, the company of great masters and saints, etc.

Perhaps this is also not possible: "Even that repeated practice is difficult for me; my knees are aching and my back is paining in excruciating agony, and my mind is flitting from one thing to another thing; even my simple practice is difficult, let alone *jnana*, or the knowledge of God." The Lord says if the second prescription is also not fitting to you, love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might. Can you not at least love? Are you so poor that even love is not possible? I am not asking you to concentrate your will or strain your intellect or reason. I am telling you some simple recipe. Be immensely affectionate to God. You can love God and want nothing else. Always wanting God is the highest *sadhana*, as you will realise one day or the other. If you do not want Him, all your efforts, concentration of will—*dhyana*, *bhakti*, *karma*—nothing will work. As love can emanate from a person spontaneously on account of the preponderance of the emotional faculty in oneself, loving God is considered as easier, especially in this age of distraction and sufferings of various kinds. The directing of one's feelings and emotions to God in utter devotion and surrender is to be considered as the best of Yogas. You need not go to Patanjali's Sutras or Yoga Vasishtha or the Upanishads; they are very difficult things. If you love anyone, the love is reciprocated automatically. Your affection will be felt even by animals

and trees. Therefore, if you cannot sit for meditation every day and carry on this practice, at least in your heart be devoted to God.

But that also is not possible. You have an excuse for that also; even love is not possible. What else is possible? “I will do work. I am very busy with all kinds of work, so I have no time to love anybody.” If you say that, okay; if you do not want to love even God Himself, do your work. But whatever fruit accrues out of your work, offer it to God. If you get something as a fruit, as a consequence, as a result, a fructification of your deeds, do not enjoy those fruits. The *phala tyaga*, or the abandonment of the fruits of one’s action and the dedication of these fruits as a consecration to God, that also is a Yoga, and God says He can be satisfied with it. *Sarva-karma-phala-tyāga* (Gita 12.11) is also a great Yoga.

But the mind is such a mischievous imp that it will not permit you to do even that: “Why should I abandon the fruit? It is my tree and, therefore, the fruit also is mine only. How can the tree be mine and the fruit be somebody else’s? If I do hard work, I will reap the fruit thereof. And if God takes the fruit, and I work hard, the mind will say that this is no good.”

You have to expect something. The expecting of some result as a consequence of your deeds is to create a gulf between the fruit and the action because the action is confined to the present, while the fruit is in the future. The expectation of the fruit of an action is also a miscalculation. The fruit you accrue is not in your hands. Only the action is your prerogative. Work you must, but you cannot expect a

particular result to follow from it. While you have the choice and the freedom to act according to the ability of your higher reason, you cannot know at that time what consequence will follow from that action because the result of an action is conditioned and determined by various other factors which are not always under your control.

First of all, the fruit is in the future, not in the present; therefore, your expectation of the future fruit will cause unnecessary distress in your mind: when will it come, when will it come, when will it come? And when it comes, it may not come in the way you expected. So many a time you find that your actions fail, as they do not bring you what you wanted. *Sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnir ivāvṛtāḥ* (Gita 18.48), says the Bhagavadgita: Every action that one performs is infected with some defect. As no one can be omniscient, no one can know what kind of result will follow from a particular action. Unexpected result follows. Therefore, expecting a result of an action is not wise. Let anything come, and offer it to God. You have done your duty.

Here also a caution has to be exercised that the work that you perform should be a duty, and not merely any kind of humdrum activity. Selfish action cannot be regarded as duty. A duty is an incumbent operation on your part for the welfare of a larger inclusiveness of your personality which comprehends other people also. Service of nation, service of people, service of humanity, does not actually mean service of somebody outside you. Outsideness also brings selfishness, together with it. The people outside, so-called—humanity in general whom you are serving—are not

standing outside you as independent individuals. They are included as ingredients in a larger comprehensiveness of a vital selfhood you call the self of humanity. Actually, you are serving the larger self of your own individual self, you may say. In your service to people you have actually expanded the dimension of yourself, and you see yourself in the selves of other people. The otherness of people gets obliterated completely as soon as the Selfhood in them is recognised. You see people as ends, and not as means.

So the duty that you perform is a kind of participation in the welfare of the world as a whole, and not some work that you do for personal gain or profit. If this kind of unselfish action is performed, and your life is devoted to this kind of unselfish work, and the fruit is dedicated to God only, that is also a great Yoga, and God is satisfied with it. How a devotee behaves in this world—how gentle and good, how compassionate, how satisfied, how non-complaining—is described towards the end of the Twelfth Chapter.

It is in the Thirteenth Chapter that we have some philosophical considerations once again brought out which were perfunctorily touched upon in the earlier chapters of the Gita. The cosmological doctrine of the creation of the universe was covered in our earlier considerations—how the world evolved from God—and you know it through the Sankhya doctrine of evolution. Briefly the Thirteenth Chapter also mentions the creation of the five elements, the *tanmatras*, and the individualities of a person.

Mahābhūtāṇy ahaṁkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca, indriyāṇi daśaikam ca pañca cendriyagocarāḥ (Gita 13.5),

and the next verse, *icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṁghātaś cetanā dhṛtiḥ, etat kṣetraṁ samāsenā savikāram udāhṛtam* (Gita 13.6) both tell us briefly that the universe is constituted of the five elements, the mind, intellect or reason, *Avyakta Prakriti*, and the Supreme Being. It was in the Second and Third Chapters that we had occasion to know something about this evolutionary process, during our consideration of the *Sankhya* doctrine. In the Thirteenth we have, in addition to a brief description of the same cosmological process, the life of an individual that is to be lived as a spiritual seeker by the gradual adjustment of oneself to the realities of life, which is described in verses commencing from *amānitvam adambhitvam* (Gita 13.7), etc., all which you must read very carefully from a good commentary.

The presence of God as a Supreme Inclusiveness is beautifully narrated in certain verses in the Thirteenth Chapter. What is the Absolute? The vision of it we had in the Eleventh Chapter, in a beautiful literary style. Some verses of the Thirteenth Chapter tell us what Brahman is. *Jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtam aśnute, anādimat paraṁ brahma na sat tan nāsad ucyate* (Gita 13.12): Having known which, you shall become immortal. I shall tell you what it is. That is the Brahman, the Absolute, which has neither a beginning, nor an end. *Sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṁ tat sarvatokṣiśiromukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati* (Gita 13.13); *sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṁ sarvendriya-vivarjitam, asaktaṁ sarvabhṛc caiva nirguṇaṁ guṇabhokṣṛ ca* (Gita 13.14); *bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaraṁ caram eva ca, sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyam dūrasthaṁ cāntike ca tat* (Gita 13.15);

avibhaktaṁ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktaṁ iva ca sthitam (Gita 13.16).

Jñeyaṁ yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvāmṛtaṁ aśnute: The pervadingness of God, the inclusiveness of this Absolute, and the unconditioned existence of what is called Brahman is described in these verses. It is, on the one hand, the light that shines in your own heart. On the other hand, it is the creative principle in the cosmos. It is Atman inside and Brahman outside. It is the Self within everybody and also the Universal Reality outside. And all values in life, all that you consider as good, all that is meaningful in itself, is a manifestation of this Great Principle.

Avibhaktaṁ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktaṁ iva ca sthitam. It appears to be divided into various particularities, while it beholds the apparent particularities or individualities. But it is avibhaktaṁ: it is really undivided. It is undivided because it exists even between the so-called divided objects, the terms of divided relation. When something is different from another thing—one thing is divided from another—the consciousness of this division, the awareness of there being two things, is there at the same time, transcending the two things. There is a relation that transcends the terms of the relation. A is different from B, but the one who is conscious of the difference between A and B is neither A nor B; therefore, there is a transcendent principle present even in the so-called divided object—avibhaktaṁ. The *adhidaiva* principle, which is undividedly present everywhere, connects the so-called particulars.

Bhūtabharṭṛ ca taj jñeyaṁ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca (Gita 13.16): It absorbs everything into itself as the body,

the sense organs, and the mind are held in unison by the Atman consciousness within them. We feel a sense of integratedness of our personality on account of the Selfhood within us; otherwise, we would be dismembered shreds of personality, fractions rather, not individual wholes. The wholeness that we feel in our own self is due to the Atman consciousness pervading all the particulars. So many limbs, so many cells, so many parts constitute this body, but yet we never feel that we are made up of small bricks. We are one continuous, indivisible, compact form. This compactness and indivisibility that we feel in our own selves is due to the pervasion of that indivisible consciousness. It is throughout the body, inside and out. It is within, and contacts every little part of the body, giving a sense of wholeness, but it operates even outside it—not merely within. Its operation outside takes place when we perceive objects outside. When we are aware of something that is there in front of us, the consciousness within pervades in a particular manner through the sensation and the mind, and it is manifesting itself as also that which is beyond us, transcendent to us, outside us.

Jyotiṣām api taj jyotiḥ (Gita 13.17): It is the light behind all lights. It was mentioned in the context of the Visvarupa Darshana: thousands of suns cannot shine before it. All the brightest lights that you can think of are like shadows cast by that light. *Yasya chaya amritam yasya mrityuh*, says the Rig Veda: Even immortality and death are shadows cast by the Absolute. God is not to be considered even as immortal because the word ‘immortal’ is coined from the word ‘mortal’, so it is not a positive description of God. If

mortality is not there, there will be no concept of immortality. Death and deathlessness are both shadows. Being unable to express the nature of God positively, the great poets go to such ecstasies of literary beauty, they say even immortality is not a proper description of God. Both death and deathlessness, here and hereafter, earth and heaven, are reflections of the Almighty's archetypal existence.

This is the grand presentation of the structure of the Supreme Absolute in the verses of the Thirteenth Chapter. Some of these beautiful verses in the same chapter also go into the details of how we can meditate by *satsanga* with saints and sages, by study of scriptures, by chanting of the Divine Name, by *japa sadhana*, and such things. A few sidelights on the Sankhya doctrine also are shown in the Thirteenth Chapter.

The Thirteenth Chapter is philosophical. Many devotees and interpreters of the Gita think that philosophical description is to be found in the Thirteenth Chapter, the means of devotion to God are to be found in the Eleventh Chapter, the means of meditation are to be found in the Sixth Chapter, and the art of work or performance of duty is to be seen in the Third Chapter. So if you cannot study the whole of the Gita from One to Eighteen, read the Third for gaining knowledge as to how you have to perform your duty, read the Sixth for knowing how to meditate, read the Eleventh to know how you have to love God as an Almighty Person, and read the Thirteenth to know the intricacies of the philosophical aspects of the Bhagavadgita.

The chapters of the Gita that follow from the Fourteenth onwards give us some additional insight into the themes touched upon in some of the earlier chapters, especially the Second and the Third. There are the *gunas* of Prakriti. You know what are these *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These *gunas* of Prakriti were considered as the substance of Prakriti, the very thing out of which Prakriti is made. Now, when we think of substance or thing, we are likely to imagine some solid thing in front of us. The *gunas* of Prakriti, or Prakriti itself, are not substances in the sense of tangible things. They are forces, not solid objects. These *gunas* are actually energy contents. It is something like electric energy. You cannot call it an object. It can solidify itself into some objectified form under given conditions, but by itself it is a force, an energy, a motion. The *gunas* of Prakriti—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—are actually motion, energy continuum, forces operating not in the world but constituting the world itself. The *gunas* of Prakriti do not act as something outside the world; they are the very stuff of the world. Today we are told that electric energy is the sum and substance of all things. Even space and time can be bundled up into a continuum of space-time complex. Ultimately the world is made up of not substances or things, but energies, forces which devolve on themselves.

These *gunas* are described in the Fourteenth Chapter, suggesting thereby that they constitute the be-all and end-all of everything. To remove the idea of tangibility and solidity, substantiality, etc., an additional chapter is devoted, which is the Fourteenth, where we come to know that the entire world which looks so hard, so solid and

charged with gravitations of every kind is, after all, not so constituted. Appearances are deceptive. Things are not what they seem. The world is not solid. We feel the solidity of a table or a chair when we touch it with our fingers; but we are told today it is due to the electrical impulses created between the molecules constituting our fingers and the molecular content of the object called the table or chair. There is a repulsive activity taking place, a colliding of atomic principles, the molecular forces that form the object into a shape of wood or steel or any object on the one hand, and on the other hand they operate through the sensations of our fingers, etc. Actually, what we touch is not an object, and that which touches cannot be regarded as a finger; it is a sensation. If the sensation is not from the finger, the touch will not be there. If we cannot have the sensation of seeing or touching or hearing or smelling or tasting, there will be no world before us. Therefore, the world is sensory, sensational, which means to say, it is non-solid. It is liquid, as it were, a non-substance, and it fades into airy nothing.

God actually created the world out of nothing, because there was no material substance before God. Either we should say God created the world out of Himself, or we should say that He created it out of nothing. To say that God created the world out of Himself is to say the world does not exist except God; and to say that God created it out of nothing is again to say God only is, and nothing else exists. Prakriti, the *gunas* and the Sankhya doctrine, and the adumbration of all these properties that we are discussing, finally lands us in a negation of all particularity, externality, and the very world-consciousness itself.

In the Fifteenth Chapter we are taken to a height of a different type altogether where the cosmological theory is brought before our eyes once again in a new fashion. Ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥśākham (Gita 15.1): This universe can be compared to a tree with its roots up and its branches down. Usually the roots of trees are below and the branches shoot forth above in the sky, but here is a cosmic tree which is of a different nature. All this world seen with our eyes, the entire presentation of phenomena, should be regarded as the branches, the twigs, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits of this mighty tree of creation, of which the roots are above in the Absolute Creative Will. Ūrdhvamūlam: the root is above; adhaḥśākham: the branches are below.

Aśvatthaṁprāhur avyayam: The tree is compared to an aśvattha, a holy tree, the sacred peepal tree. Aśvattha also means 'that which will not last until tomorrow'. Transitory is this world. It will not last until tomorrow, not even until the next moment, because every new moment is the creation of a new form and a shape of the structural pattern of creation. So the world is transient, momentary, a fluxation, and it is not a solidity. That is why it is called aśvattha—na śvaha tha. Aśvatthaṁ prāhur avyayam.

Chandāṁsi yasya parṇāni yas taṁ veda sa vedavit: All the Vedic knowledge, all knowledge whatsoever of any kind, should be regarded as the leaves of this mighty tree. The knowledge of the world is also a manifestation of this tree. Sankaracharya, especially in his commentary on this description of the inverted tree in the Katha Upanishad, goes into great details of beautiful enunciation of the

problems we feel in our life and the manner in which we are connected to the Ultimate Being.

The root sustains the whole tree; therefore, if you manure and water the root, you will be feeding virtually the whole tree. If you want to see that the leaves are green and luscious, and there is flowering and that the tree yields fruit, you water the tree and put manure. But you will not manure and water the leaves, though they are actually what are in your mind. Although you are not interested in the root of the tree as much as the fruit and the leaves, still when you tend the tree, you tend the root because the leaves and branches are automatically nourished spontaneously by the nourishing of the root.

Mūlaṁ hi viṣṇur devānāṁ, yatra dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ (Bhagavatam 10.4.39): The Supreme Being is the root of all things. If you serve God, you serve entire humanity. On the other hand, if you serve all the leaves and allow the root to dry up, you have virtually done no service. So you may do any kind of service to your brethren and your family members, and even to the whole world of people, but you have done nothing at all if the root is forgotten. If the root withers and dries up and your love is not there, if your concentration is diverted from the root's welfare and goes to the leaves and the branches, then your service is nil. You have to learn the art of moving from the leaves, the twigs and the branches to the root, through the stem.

That Great Being is to be sought after, says the Fifteenth Chapter, by withdrawal of sense organs and humility of practice. The process is gradual ascent. We are down below in the form of these manifested shapes of the tree as leaves,

flowers, fruits, branches, twigs, etc. We have to go gradually through these processes to the trunk, and then touch the root. Having gone there, we see the whole tree present in an incipient form.

You will find the entire universe in God. In the root, in the seed, you will find the whole banyan tree. The little seed of the banyan, so minute in its contents, that tremendously insignificant little particle of seed, contains within itself this tremendous expanse of the banyan which can give so much shade. So is this invisible Reality looking like an abstraction and no substance at all, a non-entity for us. God is a non-entity because He cannot be seen with the eyes. He cannot be contacted because He is non-objective. Such a non-objective, so-called abstraction of intellect is the very reality of all things. As this solid, mighty banyan is in this insignificant, invisible seed, the so-called invisibility of God will become the substantial visibility when you see the cosmos present in everything. When baby Krishna yawned, the entire ocean, the entire sky and time were seen inside his mouth.

So this mighty tree is only an allegorical description of the creative process which was otherwise described in earlier chapters. This world is one aspect of the manifestation of this tree which is there before us as an object, and ourselves as subjects of perception also stand there as another aspect. And a third aspect is Purushottama. *Dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca, kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭasthokṣara ucyate* (Gita 15.16); *uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ, yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ* (Gita 15.17).

Kshara and *akshara* are the perishable and imperishable aspects of creation. The perishable aspect is the *adhibhuta*, the imperishable aspect is the soul in the *adhyatma* or individual. Transcending both is the Purushottama, the Supreme Person. Reaching and having known Him, you will remain perfectly blessed, says the Fifteenth Chapter.

Chapter 13

THE POSITIVITY AND THE NEGATIVITY OF EXPERIENCE

Reference was made in the Fourteenth Chapter of the Gita to the three properties of Prakriti known as the *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is on the basis of this distinction of the three properties of Prakriti manifested both cosmically and individually that in the Fifteenth Chapter a further distinction was drawn among Kshara, Akshara, and Purushottama. In a way, this distinction is comparable to the difference that we noticed earlier among *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*. *Adhyatma* is comparable with the Akshara Purusha, *adhibhuta* with the Kshara Purusha, and *adhidaiva* with the Purushottama.

Dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca, kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭasthokṣara ucyate (Gita 15.16);
uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ, yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ (Gita 15.17).
The perishable is the *adhibhuta*; it is the Kshara Prakriti. The *tamasic* nature, which is perishable and is visible to us in the form of the objective universe, is what is apprehended in perception and cognition by the Akshara, which is the consciousness that beholds and knows all things. The consciousness that is responsible for the awareness of anything in this world is considered as imperishable in comparison with everything that changes in the world in the process of evolution—namely, Kshara.

That which changes is known by something which itself cannot change. The evolutionary process is, of course, a

continuous movement, a fluxation in time; therefore, it is subject to transmutation from moment to moment. In this sense, the entire universe of objective perception can be regarded as Kshara, transitory, perishable. But one who is aware of it is not perishable because that which is perishable cannot know the perishable by itself. Movement cannot know movement. There must be something which does not move and does not change in order that movement and change can be cognised and become objects of one's perceptual awareness.

But there is something above both the perceiver and the perceived. As you have noticed in our earlier studies, the perceiver, the subject, the individualised consciousness—Akshara Purusha, so-called here in this context—is also related in some way to the Kshara Prakriti. This relation has been explained in the terminology of the Sankhya and the Vedanta as the *adhidaiva*, indivisible consciousness, which itself cannot be cognised. That which is responsible for real cognition of things itself is not cognisable. “Who can know the knower?” says the Upanishad. There is a transference of values taking place between the subject and the object at the time of perception, and a peculiar twofold modification takes place, called *vritti vyapti* and *phala vyapti* in the terminology of Vedantic epistemology.

In perception of an object, the mind takes an important part. The mind is cast in the mould of the object of cognition at the time of the knowledge of the object. That is to say, the mind takes the form of the very thing which it is supposed to know. But the mind, being a rarefied form of the *gunas* of Prakriti and Prakriti being not conscious at

all—it is unconscious activity—cannot by itself, of its own accord, independently, know anything. The mould can take the shape of the thing that is cast into it—the crucible can assume the shape or the form of that which is poured into it—but it cannot know that such an event has taken place. Knowledge is a different factor altogether.

So in perception, it is not only necessary for the mind to assume a formation, it also has to know that such a formation has taken place. The objectivity or the objectness has to become a content of awareness in the subject. This awareness is a contribution that is made by the consciousness inside. This procedure adopted by consciousness in assisting the activity of the mind in perception is called *phala vyapti*.

Thus, there is a consciousness of a form in the perception of an object. The form is the particularity that is the outcome of the shape that the mind has taken in enveloping that particular form, and consciousness of it is the effect of the Atman itself participating in a way through certain degrees of its descent in the work of the mind. This takes place both cosmically and individually. We may say, for the time being, these terms Kshara, Akshara and Purushottama used in the Fifteenth Chapter of the Gita try to blend the cosmic and the individual aspects in a single grasp of vision. The Kshara is cognised by the Akshara, the perceiver becomes aware of the object. The perceiver stands distinguished from the object in the act of perception. You do not become the object when you know the object, as you know very well. It stands outside you, due to which it is that

you develop certain psychological reactions in respect of that object. These reactions are like and dislike.

If the objects were not standing outside the perceiver in space and time, these *vrittis* or psychoses of like and dislike would not have arisen in the mind. But it is also not true that the object is entirely outside the perceiving subject. There is a double factor involved in the process of perception. If the object is entirely cut off from the area of the operation of the subject, there would be no occasion for the subject to know that the object exists at all because already it is assumed that the object is severed from its relation to the subject. There has to be some kind of internal relation between the subjective consciousness—the perceiving Akshara—and the perceived Kshara. If this were not there, there would be no perception; nobody will even know that there is such a thing called the Kshara Prakriti.

Now, knowledge, empirically speaking, is of this dual character. That is to say, the object has to stand outside in space and time for the purpose of its being known at all; at the same time, it should not really be organically disconnected from the subject. This intriguing situation is created by the action of the *adhidaiva* hanging, as it were, between the subjective side and the objective side which, on the one hand, being uncognisable in itself, creates the sense of separation between the subject and the object and, on the other hand, being entirely responsible for the perception of the object, is unavoidable in any act of perception. The unavoidable thing is also the invisible thing.

So you are caught up in a peculiar situation of difficulty. This difficulty is what is known as *samsara*, involvement in

a peculiar tangle from which you cannot easily extricate yourself, this tangle being the expectation of the object to be always outside you in order that you may possess it or not possess it; on the other hand, you are inwardly longing to have assistance of something, without which this perception would not be possible.

Purushottama is supreme. *Adhidaiva* is the linking consciousness which is the transcendent essence between every degree of subject-object relation. There are different degrees of this relation in the cosmic evolutionary process, and the relater—namely, the subjective side—and the objective side stand totally cut off in the lowest level of experience, especially in the physical world where you and I do not seem to have any connection whatsoever. The object outside—the thing that you have, anything in this world—does not seem to have any vital, organic relation to you. That is the lowest level to which consciousness has descended by its utter segregation from the objective world. But as experience rises in its dimension through meditational techniques, the *adhidaiva*, which is invisible, becomes more and more perceptible, tangible and experienceable, so that the rise from the lower levels to the higher will also be a diminution of the distance that appears to be there between the subject and the object, so that in the highest state the *adhidaiva* engulfs both the subjective side and the objective side and there is no one perceiving anything.

Yad vai tan na paśyati, paśyan vai tan na paśyati (Brihad. 4.3.23): Seeing, you do not see; knowing, you do not know; being, you do not have any consciousness of

being in that state where the seer merges into the object on account of the absorption of both the sides into the *adhidaiva*, the Universal Consciousness. This is something that is to be considered as the import of this marvellous verse—a hard nut to crack for many of the commentators on the Gita. *Dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cākṣara eva ca, kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭasthokṣara ucyate; uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ paramātmety udāhṛtaḥ, yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ*. These two verses are something like mantras that are repeated by every seeker. Thus, the concluding verse of the Fifteenth Chapter says whoever knows this secret is free forever.

These three *gunas* pursue us wherever we go, perhaps till the end of the Eighteenth Chapter. This subject started from the Thirteenth Chapter, where mention was made of Prakriti and its three *gunas*, Purusha, and Yoga.

In the Fourteenth Chapter we were told that the three *gunas* of Prakriti are responsible for every kind of experience. There are three things, we are told—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—and the import of their action has been in a more cosmological fashion described in the Fifteenth Chapter. It is in the Sixteenth that we land on a revelation which seems to present before us the truth that there are no three things, as we have been told up to this time. There seems to be only two things: the positive and the negative forces. This is the subject of the Sixteenth Chapter: the positivity and the negativity of experience. *Daivi asura sampat* is the terminology used here. The divine and the undivine qualities act and react upon each other throughout creation, right from the highest to the lowest

level. The three *gunas* manipulate themselves and operate in such a way that they seem to be capable of acting as only two forces in the universe.

Dvau bhūtasargau lokesmin daiva āsura eva ca (Gita 16.6): Creativity is of two kinds: divine and undivine. There can be a divine creativity and also an undivine creativity. You can manufacture demons or you can manufacture gods, if you so like. Both these are in your hands. But how is it that you are capable of manufacturing two contraries? These are explainable in terms of what you already know as the centripetal and centrifugal forces, as they are called. The forces that tend towards the centre of anything are called centripetal forces. From the periphery or the circumference they gravitate towards the centre, try to become one with the centre. This force that gravitates towards the centre of anything is known as the centripetal force. But there are other forces which ramify themselves in a distracted manner from the centre towards the circumference and become rampant everywhere. These are called centrifugal forces. So there are two operations taking place in this world—tending towards the centre and tending away from the centre. The *daiva*, or the divine, is that which tends towards the centre; the undivine is that which runs away from the centre.

Now, it is up to any one of us to know how we are feeling anything at all in this world. Are you centrifugal or centripetal in your experiences? If you are running after the world and feel very much wretched, miserable and inadequate in your own selves—you feel that you are poor nothings, that the world is everything, so you have to run

after the gold and silver and the wealth of the world—if this is your attitude, the centrifugal force is violently working in you. But if you feel the world is not superior to you; that your being is far superior to the becoming of things; that you need not run to things in the world; that the world has to come to you on account of the centrality of the subjectivity in you—if you are a person satisfied in your own self and do not want things to come from outside to satisfy you, then the centripetal force is working in you. The divine *daivi sampat* is operating in each person when there is satisfaction in one's own self.

Yadṛcchā-lābha-saṃtuṣṭo (Gita 4.22). You never make complaints, and you never say you want something. You have a feeling, a conviction that things are perfectly all right in the world and there is nothing wrong anywhere. The only thing is you have to adjust yourself to the conditions prevailing in the whole creation because it is said in the Upanishad, *yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāc chāśvatībhyas samābhyaḥ* (Isa 8). The Isavasya mantra tells us that God, when He created the world, seems to have foreseen every necessary change or emendation in the constitution of the creation, and there is no need for the parliament of the cosmos to go on emending things every day or from moment to moment. Even the necessary changes that may be foreseen after centuries or ages in the future have already been preconceived and have been taken care of. That is to say, a spiritual seeker's duty seems to be finally an adaptation of oneself to the circumstances in the cosmos, and not trying to rectify the cosmos. There is no necessity to attempt that impossibility.

Therefore these two forces, the divine and the undivine, are operating both outwardly and inwardly, and the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are epic representations in a dramatic fashion of the war that seems to be taking place, the conflict that is always there between the *daiva* and the *asura*, the centripetal and the centrifugal, the divine and the undivine, the good and the bad, light and darkness. Dvau bhūtasargau lokesmin daiva āsura eva ca.

It appears that the seed for this duality or conflict is sown at the time of the creative act itself, as the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, for instance, tells us in a very dramatic fashion. The One willed to be two; that is all. The moment this will has started operating and the One thinks it is two, or the two have actually become manifest, there arises a necessity to bring about a relation between these two. This is the conflict. The conflict of the world is nothing but the conflict of relation between things. The most difficult subject to study in philosophy is the subject of relation—how anything is related to another thing, how the subject is related to the predicate. The subject is related to the predicate; otherwise, there cannot be any kind of logical judgment. But it is also not related to the predicate, on account of which it is dichotomised, and it is necessary for logic to bring them together into an act of cognition, which is deduction.

Thus, at the very beginning when the Will seemed to have taken the shape of a dual consciousness—“May I become many”—the manifold revealed itself only after One had become two. We do not want to go into details of the manifold; two are quite enough for us to create trouble all

over in the world. Even if there are only two people in the world, war will take place. It is not necessary for millions to exist in order that there be conflict. Conflict can be there even if there are only two because conflict is the irreconcilability between one thing and another thing, and that thing is precipitating itself into the medley of the manifold that we see in the cosmos. So these two forces seem to have been somehow or other operating right from the beginning of time. We do not know how they started.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad tells us there has been a gradual descent of this nature of conflict into grosser and grosser forms until we are here, quarrelling among ourselves in any way whatsoever. In the beginning it is a metaphysical distinction, and not actually a quarrel in the sense of brothers and sisters or soldiers fighting in a field. That has taken place only latterly. In the earlier stages it is a philosophical, conceptual distinction of the subject and the object. This has also been mentioned in the Upanishad. I am digressing a little from the Gita to the Upanishad to elucidate this point. In the earliest of stages, as the Upanishad will tell you, the dual consciousness of One having become two is again consolidated to the consciousness of "I am myself these both". The One convinces itself, after having manifested itself into the two: After all, where are these two? "I myself am A. I myself am B. I am A and B." A is not B, of course; they are two different things according to the law of contradiction, but you cannot know that A is not B unless there is something in you which is neither A nor B. So the consciousness

asserted itself, “After all, I am A and B both because I am between A and B—the supreme *adhidaiva prapancha*.”

There is a gradual descent from the divine origination of this metaphysical duality into the lesser forms of creation through the realms of being—the fourteen realms, as we are told in our Epics and Puranas—until we come to the lowest kingdom of this Earth where that consciousness of there being something between A and B is lost completely, and all we know is that everything is different from everything else. Kali Yuga has come, we say. Kali Yuga is the age of conflict; everything is different from everything else, and nobody likes anybody. Everyone is at loggerheads with everyone else in this Kali Yuga, in which we seem to be somehow sunk. As the scriptures say, some five-and-a-half thousand years or nearly six thousand years have passed in the Kali Yuga, which seems to span four lakhs and thirty-two thousand years. So further descent into conflict may be expected, but before that we will quit this world. We do not want to stay here until the last conflict takes place where each one will abolish the existence of everyone else. That is Kalki Avatara, the Transcendent Being coming in the form of an abolition of both things, subject and object: neither this nor that. God will say, “I don’t want this creation at all. I made a mistake.” We may perhaps draw this kind of humorous conclusion from the act of Kali which, in a wonderful way, and in a very unpalatable and destructive way, is described in the Epics and Puranas.

So here we have, in the Sixteenth Chapter, the definition of the twofold forces acting in different ways, centripetal and centrifugal, the *daivi* and the *asura sampat*.

The *asura sampat*, which is the devilish form it takes when it becomes uncontrollable, is psychologically engendered by certain operations in us, to which a reference is being made towards the end of the chapter. Trividhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ, kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayaṁ tyajet (Gita 16.21): The road to hell is threefold. The undivine nature can take you to the lowest perdition; and its seed is sown in our own hearts. Life and death are both operating in our own selves in a mysterious way, right from the time of our birth from the womb of the mother.

Desire, anger and greed are the sources of trouble in this world: kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas. Intense longing for a thing is *kama*: “It is impossible to exist without it. I want it, and I want it in any way.” This kind of unquenchable thirst or longing for things is *kama*. And if any obstruction comes in the way of the fulfilment of your desire, you are angry at the source of that obstruction. You want to see the end of it. This is *krodha*. Therefore, *kama* and *krodha* are dual factors operating as a single force of longing. One is longing per se, as it is in itself; the other is the longing itself acting in a different way against that which is derogatory to the fulfilment of the longing.

It appears that gods, demons and men went to Prajapati, the Creator. “Give us some instruction.” Prajapati, the great Creator, answered: “*Da*,” he told the gods. “Do you understand what I am saying?” “Yes, we understood.” He told the demons “*Da*”, and the demons said, “Yes, we understood what you are saying.” He also

told human beings, “*Da*.” “Yes, we understood.” What is it that they understood?

Three people understood the one sound *da* in three different ways. The gods understood *da* to mean *damyata*, “be self-controlled”, because the celestials in heaven are supposed to be engrossed in the pleasures of life. The senses become highly rarefied in heaven. We cannot properly enjoy things in this world because physicality hampers cognition of things to a large extent. The weight of this body and the weight of the object obstruct a real satisfaction taking place in us, whereas in heaven there is no physicality; therefore, there is lightness, buoyancy of spirit, and enjoyment is more intense. Hence, inclination to rejoicing is more in heaven than even on this Earth. So the gods understood, “Yes, he is telling us not to be too engrossed in the joys of the senses—*damyata*. We understood. You are telling us that we must be self-controlled. We should not enjoy through the senses.”

“Do you understand?” Prajapati asked the demons. “Yes. We understand.” Demons are always angry. They are ferocious. They kill. They destroy. Their only work is destruction. They do not want anybody else to exist. “What do you understand?” “*Dayadhvam*: be compassionate. This is what you are telling us. We are very cruel. We understand that you are telling us we must be compassionate.” *Da* means *damyata* in the case of gods: be self-controlled; but *da* means *dayadhvam*, “Be compassionate,” in the case of the demons.

What about human beings? “What did you understand?” “We understood ‘*Datta*: give in charity’.”

Human beings are greedy, they want to possess, and go on accumulating land, property, gold and silver. So human beings understood *da* to mean give in charity: “Don’t be greedy. Give! Give in charity.” Be self-controlled, be compassionate, be charitable in nature. These three instructions Prajapati gave to the threefold manifestations of these three *gunas*: passion, anger and greed. These are the road to hell: trividhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ, kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet. We close the Sixteenth Chapter with this, and need not go into further details.

In the Seventeenth Chapter, taking the clue from a verse towards the end of the Sixteenth itself, Arjuna raises a question: “What do you say, my Lord, if people act with intense faith but do not follow the ordinance of the scriptures? Is that attitude all right? Do we follow the scripture always, literally, or is it sometimes all right to follow our own faith? If we believe that something must be done and it should be like this, scripture or no scripture, then should we still follow every word of the scripture, or do you give some concession to all those who act by faith?”

Sri Krishna says, “There are varieties of faith.” Trividhā bhavati śraddhā (Gita 17.2): Faith also is not of one kind. Conscience is associated with faith, and everyone does not have the same kind of conscience. In some people conscience pinches, as they say. But in some people the conscience may not pinch. It is dead. If the conscience is dead and they are only automatons looking like human beings but acting like machines, then where is the question of conscience? Does the tiger have a conscience when it rips

the bowels of a cow? Poor little thing, it has not done any harm, and the tiger kills it. Where is the conscience of the tiger? Its conscience is in the rudimentary stage. It is through the process of evolutionary ascent that the conscience, which is the root of what you call faith, becomes more and more purified, and we have varieties of consciences even among human beings.

Do we expect every human being to behave in the same way always? Are there not cannibals in the world? Are there not intensely selfish people who mind their business and care a hoot for others? Are there not people of that kind? There are people who are a little better; they will do tit for tat: “If you are good, I am good. If you are bad, I am also bad.” That is another type. But there are some people who are always good: “Whatever you say, whatever you do, I shall not change my attitude towards you. I shall always do good to you.” This is ethical perfection reaching its logical limits. But then there are people in the world who are saints. They are not merely good people, they are divine persons; they are God-men. So even among human beings there are varieties of consciences and acts of perception and faith.

Commenting on this question, Sri Krishna goes into details of threefold faith in various ways—three kinds of food, three kinds of happiness, three kinds of charity, three kinds of *tapas*, etc. This threefold distinction is also based on the three *gunas* of Prakriti. You can, of course, act on faith and conscience; there is no objection to it, but it should be a *sattvic* conscience, a harmless and purified conscience. It should not be *rajasic*, and it should not be

tamasic. You may say, “This is all right,” because you are *tamasic* in nature, or you may say, “This is all right,” because you are intensely distracted in *rajas*, or your ‘all-rightness’ may depend on the *sattvic* preponderance in you. So how do you judge your action? How do you know if an idea that arises in your mind is justifiable or not? How do you know whether it arises from *sattva* or *rajas* or *tamas*?

Wherever *tamas* is the root of your viewpoint, you will see that you do not consider the consequences of your action. You are somehow or other bent upon doing something. “Heaven may come or hell may come, but I have decided to do that.” You do not care for what result will follow from your action. Anubandhaṁ kṣayaṁ hiṁsām (Gita 18.25), etc., are involved in certain actions which are *tamasic* in nature. In the case of *tamas*, you consider the improper as proper, and you have decided that it is okay and it has to be done; adamant is your nature. These are the despots, the tyrants, the dictators and whatever you call them, of this world. They simply grab and destroy, and care only of themselves, thinking they are gods and others are devils. This kind of attitude may take possession of you when *tamas* preponderates. You have made a decision, and there is no duality or wavering in your mind.

But when you are not able to take a decision—this seems to be all right or perhaps the other thing also seems to be all right, and do things with a wavering mind, not knowing which is proper and which is improper, and act in a pendulum-like fashion without coming to any conclusion as to what it is you are expected to achieve through the action—it is a *rajasic* action.

It should be clear to you that something is good, not because you have decided it in an adamant fashion, but because you have considered the pros and cons of everything. Writers on ethics tell us that the action should be conditioned by at least three or four factors. Firstly, it should not produce a consequence which is worse than the condition in which you are now. The *tamasic* man does not know what consequence will follow; he will simply go ahead. A little reason, a little intellection and *vichara shakti* should be employed, by which you are in a position to foresee what would be the result or consequence of that particular deed. The consequence should not be retrograde or harmful either to yourself or to others. It does not mean that it can harm somebody while it is doing good to somebody else. It is not paying Peter and harming Paul. It should be good for both Peter and Paul. Thus, the pros and cons have to be considered before you take any particular step, and the consequence should not be bad, either for you or for others. It is difficult to take such a step, because always you will be in a quandary.

Secondly, the motive behind your doing anything should be justifiable—consequence or no consequence, that is a different thing. Sometimes, by some peculiar act of chance, no consequence will follow, but it is your motive that is important—with what intention you have done it. If the intention is not justifiable, that action is not a good action, in spite of there being no consequence.

The third is, the instruments that you employ for the performance of an action. They must be justifiable means. Your means must be as good as the end. It does not mean

the end justifies the means always, that you can do anything for the sake of achieving a particular end. That is the Machiavellian theory, which is not always accepted as ethically or morally proper.

And lastly, the act should engender a beneficial atmosphere around you, and you must become a better person than you were earlier. Who will do any work unless it is going to be for your betterment? Are you such a fool that you go on doing something for nothing? You always expect some betterment of your personality. By doing something, you shall become better tomorrow; otherwise, why are you doing anything? So, ensure that when you do anything, these four factors are there. And there are many other factors also, as the Gita will tell us.

So there are difficulties in actually employing our conscience and our faith unless they are conditioned by the operation of *sattva*. Very difficult it is to manifest it in ourselves. Mostly, even if we are into *sattva*, there is a disturbance in the midst of its action by the interference of *rajas* and *tamas*. Many a time, when we are intending to do some good deeds, we have some suspicion in our mind: "If I do this, what will I get?" I am going to do a good deed, but subtly some voice will say, "What are you going to get out of it?" Now here *rajas* comes in, and perhaps a little bit of *tamas* also. Are you going to do a good thing because it is beneficial to you? Actually, a good deed will be beneficial to you. You need not put a question like that to yourself. A duty is always beneficial; otherwise, it will not be called duty at all.

In this context, various things are explained in great detail in the Seventeenth Chapter: *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* food; *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* charity; *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic mauna*; *sattvic* meditation, *sattvic* austerity, etc. You can read all these things in detail in a commentary.

Hence, the answer to the question whether it is all right to entirely depend on faith is another way of asking whether your conscience is pure. Bhagavan Sri Krishna's answer is, it is perfectly all right; there is no objection, but be assured that it is *sattvic*. Your diet should be *sattvic*; your words should not be barbed, cutting and poison-like; they must be very sweet and *sattvic*; they should be truthful without being painful; and your joys should be *sattvic* joys.

Yat tadagre viṣaṁ iva pariṇāmemṛtopamam, tat sukhaṁ sātṭvikaṁ proktam (Gita 18.37). We seek pleasures in this world without knowing what kind of pleasure it actually is. We can be happy for various reasons. Sometimes there can be a demonical pleasure in us, there can be a highly distracted *rajasic* pleasure, or there can be a *sattvic* pleasure. A pleasure which is *sattvic* will look very bitter in the beginning. That which is real divine satisfaction will come to you as something not palatable in the beginning. For instance, if you are asked to do *japa*, mantra *japa* or *purascharana*, or sit for an hour chanting mantra of the divine name, or meditate for an hour, you will not take it as a very pleasant exercise. All kinds of excuses come—pain of the body, distraction or tension the mind, other occupations, emotional difficulties, and what not. But if you persist in it by *abhyasa*, intense practice, you

will see a good result. If you want milk and curd you have to tend the cow, and tending the cow is not a very pleasant task; but drinking milk and curd is very pleasant. If you want to harvest wheat, corn or rice from fields, will it suddenly come from the skies? How much hardship is there in it—sowing the seeds, ploughing, protecting it from pests and other things, cutting, and so on. What a great difficulty of the farmer! And then you eat the rice. So anything that is really good has some unpleasantness in the beginning.

But *tamasic* pleasure is very pleasant in the beginning, and afterwards bitter. You seem to be very elated on account of possessing or gaining something by wrong means. Very happy! When a person gets something by wrong means, the consequence of it is not known. Disturbance is the outcome of any kind of pleasure that comes by wrong means or that comes through the sense organs. Pleasures that are sensory, pleasures that are material and physical, and pleasures that come through means which are not proper are engenders of sorrow one day or the other.

Ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā duḥkhaṇaya eva te, ādyantavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ (Gita 5.22): All pleasures born of contact of subject and object are wombs of pain. Think for yourself: Have you any pleasure in this world that is not born of contact of yourself with something? All your pleasures and joys in this world are contact-born. Therefore, one day or the other there is bereavement. Either you go, or something goes. If you go, it is bad. If something goes, it is also bad because all the joys you are expecting in this world are born of the union of

subject and object. As there cannot be a real union of subject and object on account of their separation in space and time, there also cannot be real happiness in this world. Therefore, pursuing joy in this world is pursuing a phantasmagoria, pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp. Na teṣu ramate budhaḥ (Gita 5.22): A wise one will not hanker after the pleasures of sense organs, and will not employ wrong means to have pleasures in this world.

The whole of the Seventeenth Chapter is of this kind, the description of performances through three media—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is expected that your deeds, your performances, your *sadhana*, your attitude, your life itself should be conditioned by pure *sattva guna*, the property of equilibrium, harmony and the goodness of Prakriti.

Om tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ (Gita 17.23). Supreme Brahman is designated as Om Tat Sat, says the Gita. Om Tat Sat are three terms which are considered as very holy. Whenever we conclude some holy act, we say Om Tat Sat. When we utter that, the work is over, the performance is complete, the holy act has reached its consummation. Om is the inclusiveness of all the vibrations in the cosmos; and, as you know, the whole universe is nothing but a concretisation of vibrations. Forces of motions, vibrations constitute even the stuff of the hardest rock. When you disintegrate even the hardest of subjects or objects in the world, you will find that these objects that are stone-like in substance, weight and quantity will vanish into thin air. They become continuous forces which touch every corner of creation. Everything touches

everything else in the world, provided it is reduced to the condition of a force or energy or motion.

Therefore, Om is the cosmic vibration which is identified with the original *nada* or the supersonic will of God Himself. It should not be called a sound; it is super-sound. And every other sound, every other vibration, every other motion, even in the form of electricity, is the manifestation of this supreme designation of God, Om. Tat is the That-ness of the Absolute. Sat is the This-ness of the Absolute. It is That as well as This—*etad vai tat*, as the Katha Upanishad will tell us. This verily is That—*tat tvam asi*. The Thatness is the exteriority, cosmicality, transcendence of the Absolute. God appears to be the supreme extra-cosmic creator to the ordinary empirical perception. Even the Absolute Supreme Brahman looks like an all-pervading supremacy above us. So it looks like a That—*bhutatathata*, as Mahayana Buddhists call it. It is also This, the very thing that you see before your eyes. *Sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sad ity* (Gita 17.26): All this was pure *sattva* existence in the beginning. Or, Tat and Sat may also mean transcendence and immanence of the Absolute. The immanent character and the transcendent character are represented by the terms Sat and Tat. Tat is the transcendent, Sat is the immanent, and the Om is the inclusiveness of both the transcendent and the immanent. It is a wonderful term, Om Tat Sat. The whole Absolute is in your grip. You have visualised the Absolute as a transcendent creative super-cosmic existence; you have also envisaged this Absolute as immanent in every nook and

corner of creation. It is not only far away from you, it is also very near you. It is also everything. Om is the Absolute.

So thus, the concluding verses of the Seventeenth Chapter give you some wonderful definition of the Supreme Reality—Om Tat Sat.

Chapter 14

OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WHOLE CREATION

The Eighteenth Chapter commences with a question in regard to the nature of action, which is a theme that predominates throughout the Gita. “Action binds, and action is unpleasant,” is the usual notion that people have regarding any kind of action. Nothing that you call an activity is pleasant and happy in its nature. It binds a person in various ways by anxieties of different types. But the Gita also says that action is a must.

What is it that binds, and what is it that is a must? Questions similar to this were raised by Arjuna at the beginning of this chapter, to which brief answers are given in various ways by Bhagavan Sri Krishna. *Tyājyaṁ doṣavad ity eke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ, yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyam iti cāpare* (Gita 18.3). There are people who feel that abandonment of action is not permissible, inasmuch as action is a manifestation of the very structure of the human personality.

The insufficiencies involved in the very makeup of individuality are the reason why nobody can get beyond the impulsion to act. You are limited in a hundred ways—perhaps in every way. Action is an attempt to overcome the consequences of the limitations of personality. If you feel no limitation—you are self-contained, self-sufficient, self-existent—then you need nothing at all from outside. If that were the case, you would not lift a finger; you would not budge an inch. But you feel that there is inadequacy from

all sides in the total personality of yours—physically, mentally, socially, in every blessed way. So to make good this defect or deficiency that you are experiencing every day, you do a kind of plastering, as it were, as you plaster a wall that is likely to fall down. You take your meal, you drink water, you take rest, you do this, you do that, but however much you may try to maintain this finitude of personality through efforts of different kinds, you find the next day you are in the same condition. It does not mean that today you have fulfilled all the conditions necessary for overcoming the limitations of personality, and tomorrow you are blessed. Tomorrow you shall be as hungry and fatigued as you are today. You are the same person. This shows that while action is a necessary evil, as it were, which you have to resort to for the sake of getting on and surviving in this world, it is not a cure for the malady of personality defects.

The answer is *yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyam*: Action is incumbent upon human individuality as long as individuality continues, and its need diminishes gradually as the individuality also diminishes correspondingly. When your self expands, the consciousness increases in its dimension in the direction of universality. The individuality also withers away gradually, proportionately. This verse that I quoted is a pithy admonition on the obligation of every person to engage in certain performances, and they are mentioned as three important items—*yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyam iti cāpare*. Wise people tell us that *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* are not to be given up, inasmuch as we are connected with our involvements in

this world. *Yajna* is sacrifice, *dana* is charity, *tapas* is austerity. These are obligatory, and every day you must be engaged in the performance of these three noble acts which correspond to the transcendent divinities that subject us to their operations, to people outside with whom we are concerned, and to our own self, this psychophysical individuality.

Our life is constituted of basically three involvements: involvement in the transcendent divinities that invisibly control us, involvement in human society with whom we have daily contact, and involvement in the vestures of our personality—the five *koshas* or sheaths of personality called *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijnanamaya* and *Anandamaya*. You have to take care of your obligation to the gods in heaven, you have to take care of your relation to society, and you have also to take care of yourself.

Or, to put it more plainly, it is a threefold duty involved in your being an *adhyatma* and *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva* at the same time. You are connected to the *adhidaiva* principle, and you are connected to the *adhyatma* and the *adhibhuta* every minute of your life. Since you are what you are and you cannot be anything other than what you are, you are *adhyatma*, the individual psychophysical person, to which aspect you owe an obligation. You have to take care of it, protect it, nurture it, educate it, and enable it to move forward in the direction of the enlargement of its dimension.

This is done by austerity, *tapas*. If you indulge in objects of sense through the organs of external operations, you will be depleting your energy every day. Therefore, self-control

is required of every person. You have to eat, you have to keep yourself fit physically, mentally and socially, but you cannot indulge overmuch in any of these acts that are otherwise regarded as necessary. You must eat for the sake of survival, not for the sake of enjoyment of the taste, says the Upanishad. *Aushadham*: as a medicine you have to take food, because if you do not take a proportion or quantum of diet which is suitable, the body will vanish into thin air. You will not even survive. Eating is for the sake of living, and living is not for the sake of eating. We do not live to eat, but we eat to live. So to the extent that it is necessary for you to live, to that extent you have to give the necessities or requirements to the body, the mind and the emotions. If you give more, you are indulging. That is called enjoyment.

The Smritis, such as the Manusmriti, are very specific in this instruction that we should not live in this world for the sake of enjoyment of objects of the senses. The universe, the field of activity in this world, is also a field of education. When you go to a school or college, you go there for a certain discipline for improvement of personality, and not for eating or enjoyment. Education is not an enjoyment; it is a discipline. Discipline looks like something totally different from enjoyment. You go home after school or college and then entertain yourselves with any kind of delicacy which you cannot get in the educational institution. But you know very well how important education is. Discipline is also a kind of necessity, and necessity cannot be other than what is a joy for you in the long run.

So nobody can escape from the duty of performing *tapas* or austerity. Every person, especially a spiritual seeker—or anyone, for the matter of that—who wants anything in this world, spiritual or otherwise, should be an austere person. Indulgence is contrary to the welfare of beings—not only your personal being, but also the being of other people around you. You harm yourself by being indulgent and, in a way, you harm other people also by your indulgence in the sense that you deprive other people of their requirements. So there is a double error involved in sense indulgence—harm to one's own self and harm to society outside. Exploitation of people and ruin of one's own personality are involved in every kind of sense enjoyment. Therefore, you have to give the body, the mind, the feelings and emotions only as much as it is necessary for survival.

Now, what kind of survival? It is not somehow or other getting on, just keeping the *prana* alive. You must be robust in health, very vigorous in your personality, healthy and capable of utilising this body and mind for the purpose for which it has been given to you, which is advancement in the pursuit of the Universal Spirit. So you have to be very cautious in the performance of austerities, *tapas*. Do not go to extremes. Over-indulgence is as bad as over-austere torture of either the feelings or the body. Neither should you torture the mind and the body, nor should you indulge them. Madhyama marga is the middle path, the path of harmony, *samatvam*. Samatvaṁ yoga ucyate (Gita 2.48). Yoga is the harmony of attitude in all respects, including your attitude towards the body, mind and spirit. Neither

give it too much, nor starve it. This is the austerity that is involved. You have a duty towards it. Every day you have to be engaged in this austerity because every day you have to be with yourself. *Tapas* is defined in this manner.

Dana is charitable nature, which is your goodwill towards others. Now, “Love thy neighbour as thyself” is an old saying, and it may be regarded as the highest dictum that is available to us for living a good life—the idea behind it being that you have to consider other people as important as you yourself are. We are mostly selfish people; almost everybody has some element of selfishness which somehow or other appears and works out a means of establishing its superiority over others. Logically you don’t argue like this—you never say you are superior to other people—but basically there is a survival instinct in every person at the cost of anybody else. While you have to survive, it is good that others should also survive. In what way are you more important than others? All living beings are limbs of the same cosmic personality; therefore, a consideration that you bestow for the welfare of others is supposed to be equivalent to the consideration that you bestow on your own self. Charity is this much: a well-being that you extend to other living beings who are as good and as aspiring, as meaningful, as your own self. This is called charity, *dana*. Every day this has to be performed. Your goodwill for people is not only for today; it is for all time and every day, as long as you are alive in this world. So, you should adopt austerity for your own benefit so that you may not be overindulgent or over-starving, and also good will, a

charitable nature, and a loveable attitude towards society; this is *dana*.

You have a duty, therefore, to yourself and to society; but there is another duty which you may miss in your overenthusiasm in regard to people outside and your own self—namely, divinities that are superintending over you, the invisible gods, *adhidaivas*. They control even your breathing process. The very vitals of your personality are operating on account of the working of these divinities. Suryanarayana is the Sun god about whom we complain so much, and whom we do not consider as anything at all in our daily life: “Sunrise and sunset—let him do his work; in what way are we concerned with it? He is drudging through the skies.” But we cannot exist for three days if solar energy does not sustain and energise us.

The rise of the Sun in the east is actually the propulsion for activity of the *prana*. The Upanishad says, look at the rising Sun as the *prana* of your own being. Throughout the diurnal sojourn of this great master of light and energy in the skies, whom you consider as a distant orb, you are involved vitally. The eyes operate due to the Sun. The ears operate due to the Dig-Devatas; the nose operates due to the Ashwini Kumaras; the skin operates due to the wind or the air principle, and the taste buds operate on account of Varuna-Devata. The mind operates because of the Moon, the intellect because of Brahma, the ego principle is in Rudra, the *chitta* or the memory is in Vishnu, the hands due to Indra, and the legs due to Vishnu, again. Like that, every part of your body is operated by some divinity, though you are under the wrong notion that you are seeing,

you are hearing, you are touching, you are tasting, you are swallowing, and you are grasping. Nothing of the kind! All the ten senses—five senses of knowledge, five organs of action—mind, intellect, ego and the subconscious memory, all these are external manifestations of an internal activity invisibly taking place on account of the working of the divinities above.

Every day you have to offer prayers. There are some who do *sandhyavandana*, the worship of the gods who are manifest in the forms of this nature. Early morn is a divinity, the rise of the Sun is a divinity, space, time, cause, and all the things that you see, even plants and trees are manifestations of these divinities. The whole world is filled with life; there is nothing called dead matter anywhere, and life emanates from the Universal Prana, Sutra-Atma or Hiranyagarbha, to which you have to offer your prayers. Every early morning when you get up from bed, your prayers should be to these sustaining divinities. From all ten directions they pour grace upon you.

Yajna is sacrifice to the gods. This sacrifice can be performed as an external act of offering into the sacred fire. As symbolic of your feeling you chant some mantras, prayers, etc. But prayer need not be in the form of material offering. Prayer is a surrender of the spirit to the Universal Spirit, to the God of creation, to the spirit manifested as humanity, to nature as a whole. Nothing equals prayer. The greatest *sadhana* is prayer. While prayer can manifest itself as actual worship in temples or altars in your house or in the form the holy fire of *yagna*, *homa*, etc., sacrifice can be in the form of the chanting of the Divine Name—*nama*

japa. Yajñānāṁ japayajñosmi (Gita 10.25), says the Lord: Of all sacrifices, recitation of the Divine Name, called *japa*, is to be considered as the best of sacrifices because it does not involve harm to any creature, or any expenditure on your side; it is just a mental act, an act of feeling. So while it is not essential and is mostly not necessary to go on performing *yajna* in the form of material offerings like ghee, charu, etc., it is permitted in the case where you feel it is an essential. Your heart is what is needed.

When you wake up in the morning, sit for a few minutes at least and be conscious of the great divinities that are inundating you, pouring themselves upon you like the sunlight pours on everything without expecting any recompense. Great God is kind enough to give us free sunlight, free air to breathe, free water to drink, and we have to be grateful. Namaste Vayo and all the *shanti* mantras are procedures adopted for carrying on this prayerful attitude in our daily life. Pray to every god. What is this 'every god'? This is the Universal Spirit operating through every little manifestation, even through a leaf in the tree. You cannot keep your foot on the ground unless you beg pardon from Mother Earth that you are treading upon her. Vishnu patnim namastubhyam, padasparsa ksamasva me. You should chant this prayer. "O Goddess of Divinity, please pardon my keeping my foot on you." The Earth is full of life; it is divinity itself, and you cannot touch anything without actually touching God in some manifestation, in some manner.

Yajñadānatapaḥkarma na tyājyaṁ iti cāpare: Sacrifice in the form of obligation to the divinities, charitable feeling

towards people in society, and austerity on your behalf—these are incumbent on your part. Nobody can be free from this kind of work.

There are verses in the Eighteenth Chapter which go into great details of the distinction made among *sattvic* feeling, *rajasic* feeling and *tamasic* feeling. When you perform *yajna*, offer your prayers, or do charity or austerity, you may be *sattvic*, *rajastic* or *tamasic*, as the case may be. You can do a good thing in a bad way, in a grudging, reluctant manner, with no mind associated with it. You may do your prayer by chanting like a machine while your feelings are somewhere else, such as in your problems or practical family life. That is *rajasic*. Or you may be slothful or sleepy and go on imagining that you are doing some prayer. That is *tamasic* prayer. And you may ruin your personality by not understanding the minimum of the proportions with which you have to do your *tapas*, etc. We need not go into all these details just now. I am just mentioning even these good things of *yajna*, *dana*, *tapas* are of three categories—*sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*.

All actions, whatever they be, should not be regarded as performed by you independently. That you are not the sole agent of any action is another thing that is emphasised in some other verse of the Eighteenth Chapter. *Adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham, vividhāś ca pṛthakceṣṭā daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam* (Gita 18.14). Five ingredients are involved in the execution of any deed. When you walk, when you eat, when you go to the marketplace, you do not think that five things are involved. You are only the person concerned. “I am going to the

marketplace to purchase some vegetables.” This is what you feel and say. But that is not true. You cannot take one step in any direction unless five cooperative factors function at the same time. The physical body should be fit, first of all, for the requisite action. If you are a soldier, a clerk, an officer, a labourer, whatever you are may depend much upon the condition of your physical body. So one factor that conditions the nature of your action is the circumstances of the physical body. How is the body? Is it fit for some particular type of work, and not others? Everybody cannot be everything. So one factor that limits the operation of your action is the condition of your body, or the *adhiṣṭhāna*.

The second factor is *karta*, or the consciousness of the extent of agency involved in action—to what extent you feel that you are actually doing this work of your own accord, and not under pressure from somebody. You may be driven to do some deed due to circumstances. Then in that case, you are not the sole agent of an action, though you are doing it independently. If you are carrying bricks or stones on your head, or digging, you may be thinking you are doing it independently, but there is a compulsion from social conditions and other factors which makes you undertake that kind of work. So the extent of agency in the performance of a particular action is also to be considered in relation to its involvement, etc. Hence, the body is one thing, and the nature of the feeling of agency is another thing, which is called *karta*.

Karaṇam ca prthagvidham: There are also instruments of action. For instance, you may be digging, but your

instruments are blunt, not working properly, or the nib of your fountain pen is broken, so you cannot write well, or the apparatus that you use in a scientific laboratory is defective; these are various ways in which your instrument of action may not be suitable for the purpose, and this conditions the result of your action. So the instruments of action are the third factor.

Vividhāś ca pṛthakceṣṭā: The motive behind action is the fourth factor. The intention with which you are doing a thing is very important, though the intentions are not always very clear to your mind. You have a muddled idea of even the purpose for which you do some work. You drudge in an office, in a bank or a factory. Why are you working? The logical answer cannot come immediately. “I have to work because I have to live,” a person will say. “I have to take care of my family.” That is all; the matter ends there, and he does not have to pursue this question further. “Why do you want to live and take care of your family?” This question will not arise. You have a minimal understanding connected with the near future, without any thought or foresight, and the motive behind the action itself is not always clear before your mental perception. The way in which you work will also depend upon why you are working. You know very well how they are interconnected.

I have mentioned four things: the body, the agency, the instrument of action, and the motivation behind the action. There is a final thing: daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam, the will of the Supreme God. The Absolute wills that something has to be done in this way, and it will be done only in that way. It cannot be done in any other manner. And its will

manifests itself through the divinities. The eyes and ears, etc., will not cooperate if the will is not there. The central will of the cosmos decides even the movement of a sparrow, or the waving of a little leaf on a tree by the wind. Not a leaf will fall on your head unless the Central Will operates.

Now, here is a great question before you: Who is doing anything? Who are the doers of deeds? If these five factors, especially the last one mentioned, are determining all your deeds, it means all action is done by the universe. The whole universe is acting when you seem to be lifting your finger. The cosmos is active. A little movement of a single atom somewhere in the bowels of the earth is known to the distant sky, and the cosmic rays react in other ways. There is no secret action in this world. Every action is public.

The Gita is again specific in this matter to remove from your mind the idea of personality involved in action, as if you are doing things. Why are you going on saying you are doing things and getting bound, when the whole world is acting? Nobody else can act, as the whole body is acting when even the feet are moving. When the food is digested because you are eating, the whole body is active—the entire alimentary canal, the respiratory system, everything is active. So who does the action? The entire creation is acting, and no one has the right to feel that he or she is acting.

Tatraivaṁ sati kartāram ātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ, paśyaty akṛtabuddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatih (Gita 18.16). Idiotic is that person, a fool is that individual who imagines that their individuality is responsible for everything: “I have done everything. I have purchased so

much land. I have built this house. This is my family. I have so much money.” Why are you boasting? You have nothing with you. Nothing will remain with you, even for a second. Everything will desert you and run away if the will from the Supreme Being does not operate.

Sarvaṁ tam parādād yo’nyatrātmano sarvaṁ veda (Brihad. 2.4.6) is a great proclamation from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. As the great sage Yajnavalkya says, everything will leave you if you consider yourself as an isolated individual. The whole Gita and the Upanishads are busy telling you one thing only: that you are organically, livingly, vitally involved in the whole of creation. Your body is a part of the physical universe. The sense organs are controlled by the divinities. The *prana* is a part of the cosmic *prana*; the mind is a part of the cosmic mind; the intellect is a part of the cosmic intellect; Brahma Hiranyagarbha, your causal sheath, is a part of Ishvara; your Atman is Brahman. Therefore, as an individual you do not exist.

You say this is a building. This building is nothing but a conglomeration of various materials—brick, iron, cement, lime, etc. If each item that constitutes this structure is withdrawn, you will find that there is no building at all. “I have a house,” you say. You have a house, which is simply a name you have given to a shape taken by various ingredients such as iron, cement, brick, etc. “I am here. I am coming. I am doing this.” When you say this, you do not understand what you are actually blabbering. If the materials which constitute your personality are withdrawn, let us see where you stand. Let the gods withdraw

themselves. Let the bricks of this physical body go to the physical universe—the mind goes to the original source, etc. You will vanish in one second. The individuality will not be there.

Therefore, what does the Gita tell you? Your knowledge, called *sankhya*, should be so perfect that you should never for a moment forget your universal fourfold involvement, which is basically involvement in your own five sheaths, involvement in human society and living beings outside, involvement in nature which is manifest as the visible world, and involvement in God Almighty Himself. Keep in mind that you are a bundle of involvements; you are not an indivisible, solid, isolated entity. Do not say, “I am doing, I am doing.” Let this egoism go, let the *ahamkara* be surrendered, and let Reality take possession of you.

Chapter 15

KRISHNA AND ARJUNA TOGETHER IS VICTORY

Yesterday we deliberated on what the Gita has to say in the Eighteenth Chapter about the nature of action or work. We dilated upon *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* as obligatory duties on the part of everyone, the meaning of which we tried to understand.

The Gita has been insisting on a combination of knowledge and action. It started by saying Yoga should be rooted in Sankhya, with Yoga being the expertness in the performance of action, and Sankhya being the knowledge on which this action has to be rooted. This has been the viewpoint of the Gita throughout. Work, of course, is obligatory on your part, but not just any kind of work. It is work based on a correct understanding of your position in this universe, which is called Sankhya. Thus, knowledge is as important as the impulsion or obligation to work. Neither can you work in a haphazard manner, nor can you be free from it. Knowledge-based action is the message of the Gita.

But what is knowledge? Again here in the Eighteenth Chapter, a distinction is made among three kinds of knowledge—the worst kind of knowledge, the medium type of knowledge and the highest kind of knowledge. The worst knowledge is the idea of any person in regard to a particular object in the world, to which one clings as if it is the be-all and end-all of all things. If any particular thing is the object of attraction wholly and entirely, then one concentrates the

entire universe of values on that object, which happens many a time when people are infatuated over something. It is that infatuated, erroneous knowledge in regard to any object, by which you wrongly think that it is all-in-all for you. The mother says, “Oh my dear child, you are heaven for me!” If a couple has had no children for years and years and then a child is born, that child is heaven, God Almighty Himself. They go on hugging it and kissing it, and thinking that there is nothing else in the world except this little baby that has come. There is nothing else in the world. That is the highest treasure. That is called infatuation—wrongly thinking that one particular thing is everything—and if that is lost, you begin to feel that everything is lost. The whole world becomes meaningless, and you would like not to exist anymore.

This is attachment, an emotionally charged notion, and is not knowledge at all. This is the worst kind of understanding that you can have, where you cling to one thing. It may be to money, to property, to some person, or it may be to some position that you are apparently occupying in human society. Any attachment where one particular situation, event or thing is considered as everything is the worst, lowest kind of understanding. This is the fool’s point of view—the ignorant, uneducated, uncultured person’s point of view.

Higher than that is world-understanding, where you do not cling only to one particular thing, and begin to appreciate the value of other things also. Everything in the world is interconnected like threads in a fabric, into which everyone and everything is woven. No thread in the cloth is

less important or more important than other threads. This is the scientific point of view, where the scientist does not cling to any particular thing. All things are equally good for him because of the interrelation of things in the cosmos. The causation and the production of effect in the world is a process that is interconnected so that in this world, according to the scientific point of view, nothing individually, particularly, can be considered as a cause of anything. Because of the interrelation of things, anything can be regarded as a cause and also as an effect. There is a cosmic give-and-take policy, as it were, among things in the world. One influences the other, and therefore nothing can be regarded as a cause or an effect. While a cause has an influence upon a particular effect, that effect may be a cause of some other effect, so that everything is a cause in some way and also an effect in another way.

If the interrelation of things in the cosmos frees a person from attachment to particular objects only, that person is broadminded—we could say educated, cultured, and a gentleman. That is a higher kind of knowledge, a medium kind of knowledge—interconnectedness. But there is a knowledge higher than that, also.

The idea of the interrelation of things is again dependent upon the notion of the duality and plurality of things. The items of the world are considered as bits of process which act and react upon one another, and therefore it is that sometimes we feel there is an organic relation among things in the world. Everything is different from everything else; this is the lowest kind of knowledge. That everything is connected to everything else is the

medium kind of knowledge. The highest knowledge is something quite different from both of these.

What is that highest knowledge? A question will arise in your mind, “How does one know that one thing is different from another thing?” Who told you that everything is different from everything else? And who is telling you that things are interconnected, that one thing is hanging on something else? A particular thing which is hanging on something else cannot know that it is so hanging. The differentiated objects cannot know the difference at all. The isolation of things as well as the interconnection of things is a knowledge that has to be attributed to something which is neither isolated nor interconnected. There is something that is superior to both these notions, a transcendent presence which is consciousness.

Sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṁ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate, avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu taj jñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikam (Gita 18.20). *Sattvic* knowledge, the highest kind of knowledge, is described in this verse of the Gita as that which beholds one thing everywhere. Even if there is an apparent interconnection, as it were, from the point of view of the notion of the reason and the mind, truly speaking such interconnection cannot become an object of anyone’s awareness unless one stands above this concept of interconnection. So there is an absolute indivisibility of consciousness. The Supreme Almighty is there, before which nothing can stand, outside which nothing exists, and within which there is no difference. It is not different from anything else as one thing is different from other things in the world, because outside this Absolute there is nothing.

Therefore, there cannot be external differentiation in the Absolute. There also cannot be internal variety in it, because it is indivisible; it is not internally divided.

Our body is not an indivisible whole. We feel that it is indivisible; we do not go on thinking that the body is made up of different physiological or anatomical parts. Because of the pervasion of consciousness through every limb and organ of the body, we do not feel the differentiation among the organs or limbs. An anatomist or a physiologist will not observe our body in the way we feel about it, but as a scientist would see it.

Differences are of three kinds, none of which can apply to the Absolute as indivisibility. There can be a difference among dissimilar things, there can be difference among similar things, and there can be difference within one's own self. These are the three kinds of difference that we can observe in the world. A tree is different from a stone. This is difference between dissimilar things, external variety. But one branch of a tree is different from another branch of a tree. This is difference among similar things, internal variety. And the variety that is felt in one's own self is a third category—*svagata bheda*, as it is called. In Sanskrit these differences are called *sajatiya*, *vijatiya* and *svagata*. But none of these is applicable to the Absolute Being. There is nothing similar to the Absolute, there is nothing dissimilar to it, and there is no internal variety. Such a knowledge of this great, Indivisible Being should be regarded as the highest kind of knowledge, for which we have to aspire.

The Bhagavadgita concludes with a message of meditation. It is Yoga. The Bhagavadgita is a scripture of Yoga, the art of union with Reality. At the end of each chapter we are told, *ōm tat sad iti srīmad bhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśastre śrī kṛṣṇārjunasamvāde mokṣasannyasayogo nāma ashtādaśo'dhyāyah*: The Bhagavadgita, which is Brahmavidya, a Yoga Sastra, and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, is now concluded with the Eighteenth Chapter, called Moksha Sannyasa Yoga.

Now, these three terms Brahmavidya, Yoga Sastra, and Krishna-Arjuna Samvada refer to the three aspects of the importance of the message of the Gita. It is the science of the Absolute. Therefore, it is called Brahmavidya. It is the highest metaphysics and philosophy, beyond which nothing can be seen. All that you are expected to know, you will find in the Gita. After knowing this, there is nothing more to know. Therefore, it is called Brahmavidya, the science of the Supreme Being. It is not merely a science, it is also a practical application of this science in daily life. Therefore, it is called Yoga Sastra. It is a scripture of the practice of union with Reality.

So again here we have an insight into the insistence on knowledge and action going together, or rather, metaphysical insight going together with practice of meditation. Yoga Sastra is the scripture of the art of meditation, which the Bhagavadgita is, and it is also the system of the Absolute, so it is Brahmavidya.

What is the purpose of this practice of Yoga? What do you gain by the knowledge of this Brahmavidya? What are

you aiming at, finally? The aim is Krishna-Arjuna Samvada, the dialogue between man and God. It is the direct confrontation by man of the eternity and the infinity that is before it. It is the entry of the soul into the Absolute. This is Krishna-Arjuna Samvada. So the Bhagavadgita is a science, an art, and a mystical text of union of the soul with the Supreme Being.

Towards the end, as a concluding recipe, as it were, the Gita tells something very interesting for us, whose meaning it is essential for us to appreciate correctly. *Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanurdharaḥ, tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama* (Gita 18.78): Wherever is Krishna, the master of Yoga, wherever is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, there is certain to be firm qualities, happiness and prosperity.

In the beginning, in the first verse of the Gita, a question is raised by Dhritarashtra to Sanjaya: *Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ, māmākāḥ pāṇḍavāś cai 'va kim akurvata sañjaya* (Gita 1.1). "What is happening in the field of Kurukshetra?" is the question raised in the first verse. The answer is the last verse: "What shall I tell you? You are asking me what is happening. I shall tell you what is happening. Wherever Krishna and Arjuna are united together, there is victory. Why should I tell you something more than this?"

Nara-Narayanana are symbols of Krishna and Arjuna. In the Srimad Bhagavata, in the Vishnu Purana, in the Mahabharata, mention is made of the manifestation of the Supreme Being as the twin realities called Narayana and Nara, who are supposed to be invisibly practising

meditation in holy Badrinath for the welfare of everybody. The Mahabharata says their light envelopes the whole universe. Such is the glory and the power of Narayana and Nara.

They are also to be compared to the two birds whose story is found in the Munkada Upanishad. Two birds are sitting on the same tree. This tree can be the society outside, the universe of nature, the entire creation, or your body. Any one of these can be considered as the tree. And the two birds are there in yourself. You have got two persons inside, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Narayana and Nara are within—God and demon, man and Super-man, we can say. They are within this body. They are in human society as conflicting or cooperating media. They are in the world of nature, and the supreme vastness of creation. Therefore, the two birds refer to the higher principle which is merely conscious of its being, and the lower principle which is not only conscious of itself, but is also conscious of somebody else outside. The Supreme bird has no consciousness of anything external to it. It is satisfied with itself. It does not eat the fruit of the tree, says the Upanishad. *Anaśnann anyo'bhicakaśīti* (Mundaka 3.1.1): It simply gazes, and feels satisfied merely by looking on. God merely knows, sees, and is. That itself is the blessedness of God. He need not have to see something; He sees Himself only. That is Narayana. And Nara is the segregated individual.

Krishna and Arjuna are supposed to be the manifestations of the blessedness of humanity of Narayana and Nara. Eternal principles are Narayana and Nara. They are even now in Badri-Narayan. Whoever goes to Badrinath

can receive their blessing. They cannot be seen with your eyes, as mortal eyes cannot behold immortal essences. Tradition says that there are two mountains, and those who have gone to Badri would have seen two mountains, one on one side, another on the other side, between which the river Alakananda flows. That mountain, at the root of which is the temple of Badrinath, is called Narayana Mountain. They say Narayana himself is appearing as the mountain, as he will not give *darshan* as he is in himself because of the impurity of the observers. The other is Nara Parvata, Nara Mountain. So Narayana and Nara are today in the form of two hills in Badrinath. Though you cannot see them in their divine essences, still they are there. You can touch the feet of the mountains; that is sufficient.

Great power, great glory is associated with these presences. In a story from the Mahabharata there was a king called Damodava. He wanted to conquer the whole world, and had no peace of mind even for a single day unless he had somebody to conquer. He went on warring with all people, and one day he found there was no one to fight with because he had overcome everybody in the world. But still he was restless: "I have nothing to conquer. This is a miserable life. I must conquer something." So he went to Brahma, the Creator, and said, "I want to conquer, but I'm feeling very unhappy because there is nothing to conquer. I have already conquered everything."

Brahma said, "What kind of man you are! There is somebody I know of. You go to him, and he will be equal to you in war."

“Eh? There is somebody still whom I have not conquered? I thought I had conquered the whole world,” said Damodava.

“There is somebody whom you have not seen. Perhaps he will be equal to you, and teach you a good lesson. Nara and Narayana are in Badrinath. Go and meet them, and you can fight with them if you like,” said Brahma.

“Is it so? Then I shall see to it,” he said.

Damodava went to Badrinath with a large army, and Narayana and Nara were seated in meditation with closed eyes. He made a big noise. “Hello!”

They both opened their eyes. “What is the matter with you?”

“I have come to give battle,” said Damodava.

Nara replied, “This is not a place for war. Here nobody fights. This is a peaceful abode of meditation. It is a divine, holy spot. We are engaged in meditation. You have come to the wrong place. We request you to go away from here, as we do not fight anybody. This is a peaceful area.”

“No, it is not like that,” Damodava said. “Brahma has told that you are equal to me, and I want to fight with you. I want to wage a war.”

Again Nara, the younger one, said, “This is not a place for war.” But Damodava went on insisting, and he would not budge from that place. Then Nara took a blade of grass and charged it with a vehicle called Brahmastra, and let it off. One became two, two became four, four became eight, eight became sixteen. They went on multiplying. Ferocious beams of fire started darting forth and entered the eyes and every pore of the body of every soldier, every limb and

every organ, so they felt they were all perishing in one second. The entire army cried, and the king also wailed.

“Oh please,” Damodava said. “Please withdraw this.”

Nara withdrew the whole thing and said, “In the future, don’t come here. Go back. Don’t be so egoistic.”

Even Brahma is supposed to pay obeisance to Narayana and Nara. One day Brahma was holding assembly in his abode, and all the gods were seated there. Everyone stood up and offered prayers and salutations to Brahma. Suddenly these two entered the hall and passed through it, not recognising the presence of anybody there—not even Brahma himself. All were surprised. Brahma was seated there on the pedestal, divinities were in the audience and these two persons crossed the audience, going to the other side. The people were shocked and asked Brahma, “What is this kind of behaviour?”

Brahma said, “I will tell you who they are. The whole world cannot stand before them. They are Narayana and Nara, whose light it is that is enveloping the whole universe. No one can be regarded as superior to them, and nothing is equal to them. These are Krishna and Arjuna, who piloted the entire process of the Mahabharata battle. Wherever Krishna and Arjuna stand together in a single chariot, there shall be victory.”

This is a message for each one of us also. You are sure to have success in your walk of life if the Krishna in you and the Arjuna in you work together in this single chariot of your life. Your life is this bodily existence, this social existence, and also this cosmic existence. In these three layers, may Krishna and Arjuna work in a state of harmony.

Krishna is God, Arjuna is man. Krishna is grace, Arjuna is effort. Krishna is knowledge, Arjuna is action. Krishna is the universal, Arjuna is the particular. Krishna is the macrocosm, Arjuna is the microcosm. These are certain epitaphs we may employ to describe the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna. One simply is, the other is incessantly active. In the war of the Mahabharata, every minute Arjuna was active, Sri Krishna was sitting quietly. This is the relationship between God and the human individual. Incessantly active and very much concerned with all things is the human individual. Concerned with nothing is God Almighty. He is just concerned with His existence. These two realities have to blend into a single focus of attention for the purpose of success of any kind in this world.

Here again we are coming to the question of the union of Sankhya and Yoga, the essence of Sankhya being Krishna, the essence of Yoga being Arjuna. Work and knowledge, action and understanding, the individuality of a person and the cosmicality in which it is involved should go together in a harmonious setting. Then the energy of the cosmos enters into the individual, as the power of Krishna was always within Arjuna. The energy of Arjuna, with which he lifted the Gandiva bow, arose from the personality of Krishna, who was sitting there. Like a solar orb which is giving energy to the entire space—without acting in any other way, merely by existing it is giving this energy—so by the mere existence of this super-individual essence, Arjuna wrought everything in the war. And the success went to whom? We may say that Arjuna, with his dextrous moves,

conquered the Kauravas. The soldiers had won victory. But from where did the soldiers get the strength to lift their arms? The energy came from another source altogether.

In this way we have to live in this world by bringing the God element into our personality, and not excessively asserting our individuality. The Gita is a reiteration of this incumbent process in which we have to be involved every day, that we cannot miss the awareness of God for a second. Sa hanisthan maha chidhram sa ch antha jada moodatha, yan muhurtham kshanam vapi vasudevam na chinthayeth (Pandava Gita 70). This is the Pandava Gita. That is veritable hell for you, that is mischief, and that is the source of every kind of trouble. What is 'that'? It is that moment when you forget your relationship to that Universal Reality. The moment you begin to assert yourself as an independent person, trouble has already started brewing. Therefore, the study of the Bhagavadgita is not merely an academic enlightenment or learning. It is an entry into the very system of living in the world. It is a practical practice, not merely a theory that you can learn and then give it up. This is the Bhagavadgita.

Where Krishna and Arjuna are together in one place, there is victory. Where the individual is in union with God, where you are in a state of perfect internal harmony with your great Master Supreme, you shall have every kind of blessedness.