

31. The Geetha balance

MANY Pandiths and scholars have explained the Geetha in many ways to you all these days; if you ask Me, I will say that the Geetha is like a balance, scales, needle and all. The scale on the left is *shloka* 7, of the second chapter, speaking of "*Kaarpanya dosha*." The fulcrum is the 22nd *shloka* of the Ninth Chapter, beginning with "*Ananyaaschinthayantho maam*;" and the scale on the right is the *shloka* in the eighteenth chapter, speaking of "*Sarva-dharmaan parithyajya*." See how apt the fulcrum *shloka* is; it speaks of single-minded attention, steady, like the needle of a well-adjusted balance! Really, the Geetha begins with two scales and a fulcrum, the two armies, of Righteousness and Unrighteousness, with Krishna the Teacher in the middle! We have the two scales of *Loukika* and *A-loukika* (worldly and other worldly), clamouring for attention and respect, *jnaana* (spiritual knowledge) alone can remove the *ajnaana* (ignorance) of Arjuna, that is the *Sankalpa* (Will) of the Lord.

The *Jnaana* has to be put into practice. Otherwise, it is useless. Once the deer of the forest gathered in a great assembly and discussed their own cowardice in the face of the pursuing hounds. They argued, "Why should we, who are equipped with fleeter feet and sharp antlers, be afraid of these insignificant dogs?" At last, a resolution was moved and passed that no deer should henceforth flee before hounds but, even while the cheering was going on, they heard the distant baying of the hounds and, not one stayed there; all had fled as fast as their legs could carry them! The resolution could not be put into practice!

***Karma* has to be done as it is one's nature**

Now these *Pandiths* are well versed in the art of teaching and explaining the sacred scriptures to the people; what is lacking is training for the people in the art of listening to them and following their suggestions for spiritual advancement. The art of engaging in *karma* (action) without getting involved is the thing that has to be learnt, *Karma* has to be done, because it is part of one's nature, not out of any external compulsion. Suurya (Sun) is a *Sahaja karmachaari* (worker by nature), He draws the vapours of water high up to form clouds which pours back as rain; no one taught Him to do this. When you do the *sahaja karma* (action dictated by nature), it won't be a burden. It is when you go contrary to it and do something out of the way that you feel the misery.

The police constable's life is not *sahaja* (natural); so, he feels happy when he comes home, and doffing his uniform, gets into ordinary clothes. When the baby wails, all rush towards the cradle because its *sahajakarma* is to smile and be contentedly happy. So too, *karma* done for the profit arising therefrom accumulates consequences which bind a man. It increases in size like a snowball, but *karma* done without any thought of the fruit therefrom, keeps on diminishing and leaves you free from all consequence.

One cannot escape from doing *karma*

The *Dharma-karmas* (virtuous actions) have to be done; there is no escape. Fleeing to the forest is no solution, for it only gives the situation a new turn. Your body may be in the jungle, but, your mind will wander in the market-place! There was a *saadhaka* (spiritual seeker) once who was initiated by a *Yogi* into some *manthram* (holy words); he wanted to meditate on it undisturbed and he found his home too full of distraction. He fled to the forest and discovered a convenient tree, under which he could meditate. Before long, the birds roosting on its branches

started to clamour aloud and they showered on his head their droppings. He was greatly incensed. "Have I no place where I can commune with God", he cried. "Children at home; birds and bats in the jungle! I shall immolate myself, get born under better auspices and then, start *saadhana* afresh," he decided.

So, he collected a pile of fuel and making a pyre out of it, lit it and was about to ascend it, when he was interrupted by an old man who accosted him. He said, "By all means, carry out your decision; but, just as now the wind blows from here towards those huts where we live; so, please wait until the wind turns its direction, for, the smell of burning human flesh does not agree with us. Or, if you are in hot haste, you can shift to some other place and avoid being a nuisance to us, poor folk." The *saadhaka* felt he had no freedom even to die. So, he returned home, and decided to brave it all there itself. He understood that *karma* has to be carried through in the objective world itself and there is no use trying to shake it off in a huff. From the *A-shaanthi*---the confusion and travail of the world---one has to snatch harmony and peace.

Be in the world, but not of it

Vishnu is described as "*Bhujaga shyanam*" (lying on the snake) and also as *Shaanthaakaaram!* The *bhujaga* (snake) which has *visha* (poison) represents the *vishaya* (worldly desires) and when you rest upon it, instead of allowing it to envelop you, you can afford to have *shantham* (peace). Let your boat be on the waters, but do not allow the waters to enter the boat. Be in the world, but, not of it. That is the secret of a successful life.

Desire leads to ultimate ruin. It can never be destroyed by fulfilment. It grows upon each satisfaction and becomes a monster that devours the victim him self: so, try to reduce your desires, go on reducing them. There was once a pilgrim who accidentally sat under the *Kalpatharu* (a wish granting tree)! He was terribly thirsty and said to himself, "How I wish some one gave me a cup of sweet cool water!" And, immediately, there was placed before him a cup of deliciously cool water.

He was surprised, but, drank it nevertheless. Then, he wished for a meal of tasty dishes, and he got it in a trice. This led to a wish for a cot and a bed and when he wished his wife was there to see all this wonder, she appeared in an instant. The poor pilgrim mistook her for an apparition and when he exclaimed, "O she is an ogress!" she became one, and the husband shook in terror, crying, "She will now eat me up," which she promptly did!

The chain of desire binds one to the point of suffocation. Control, curb your tendency to wish for this and that. Tell the Lord, "You are enough for me. I do not wish for anything else." Why pine after golden jewels? Pine for gold. The Geetha teaches the lesson of *Sharanaagathi* (unconditional surrender to the Lord); wish for His Will to prevail, not your wish to succeed. This is what Krishna meant when He said, "Be a *Sarvaarambha parithyaagi* (one who renounces all self-centred actions)."

Sharanaagathi* is the main gate to attain *Mukthi

Death is but a passage from this life to the next; it is the change from old clothes to new, as the Geetha says. But, some cynics laugh at the comparison and ask, what about the death of new-born infants, children, youths and middle-aged persons? Their bodies cannot by any stretch of meaning be classified as *jeerna*, (worn-out)! Well, the clothes might not be old, but the cloth out of which they were made must have been from very old stock, so that though new clothes were prepared out of it, they had to be discarded soon. Again, there are some crooked men who refuse