

Chapter I

THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

(Arjuna Vishada Yoga)

This is the Yoga of the despondency of Arjuna. Arjuna saw all his kinsmen, sons, brothers-in-law, cousins, teachers (Bhishma, Drona and others) standing arrayed in battle and said to Lord Krishna (26): “My limbs fail and my mouth is parched, my body quivers and my hairs stand on end; Gandiva slips from my hand (29). I do not wish to kill them even for the sake of the Kingship of the three worlds (35). It is a great sin to kill my teachers and relatives. If I kill them, family traditions will perish. There will be lawlessness (40). Women will become corrupt. There will be caste-confusion. The slayer of the families will go to hell for, their ancestors will fall, deprived of rice-balls and oblations (42). Caste-customs and family-customs will vanish”(43). Arjuna was overwhelmed with grief. He threw away his bow and arrows and sank down on the seat of the chariot (47).

Chapter II

SANKHYA YOGA

This is Jnana Yoga or Vedanta which bespeaks of the Immortality of the Soul. Lord Krishna said to Arjuna: “Wake up from the slumber of ignorance. This body and the world are indwelt by the Imperishable Atman, Brahman or the Soul. None can cause the destruction of That—the Imperishable. This Atman is not born nor does It ever die. It is unborn, eternal, changeless, ancient and inexhaustible. It is not killed when the body is killed (20). It slays not, nor is It slain. Just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so also the embodied Self casts off worn out bodies and enters others which are new (22). Weapons cut It not, fire burns It not, water wets It not, wind dries It not (23). This Self is unmanifested, unthinkable and unchangeable (24).

“O Arjuna! do your duty. It is the duty of a Kshatriya to fight. There is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous war (31). Develop a balanced mind. Having made pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same, engage thou in battle, thus thou shalt not incur sin; thou shalt cast off the bonds of action (38).

“Thy right is to work only but never with its fruits. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be for inaction (47). Perform action, being steadfast in Yoga abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is Yoga” (48). Arjuna says, “O Lord Krishna! What is the state of a Sthithaprajna? How does he speak? How does he sit, how does he walk?” (54). Lord Krishna replies, “A Jivanmukta is free from desires, longings, mine-ness, I-ness, attachment and fear. He is satisfied in his own Self. He is indifferent amidst sensual pleasures. He is not elated by getting desirable objects. He has a poised mind at all times and under all conditions. He has perfect control over his mind and senses. He lives in Brahman. He is centred in his own Self. He is dead to the sensual world” (55 to 57).

Chapter III

THE YOGA OF ACTION

(Karma Yoga)

Arjuna said, “If it be thought by Thee that knowledge is superior to action, why then O Krishna, does Thou engage me in this terrible action (1)? Thou confusest my understanding. Tell me that one way for certain by which I may attain eternal bliss” (2). Lord Krishna replies, “In this world there is a twofold path, the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogins (3). Man cannot remain even for a moment without performing some kind of action. Everyone is helplessly driven to action by the qualities born of nature (5). That fool, who merely controls the organs of action but continually thinks of the objects of senses is called a Mithyachara or hypocrite (6).

“Do sacrifice to the Devatas. They will in turn give you plenty of food and cattle (11). Constantly perform your duty without attachment. You will attain the Supreme (19). Janaka attained perfection by action (20). The great man should set an example to the world (21). I perform action though there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Me (22).

“The egoistic man thinks ‘I am the doer’. In reality Prakriti does everything (27). A Jnani who remains as a silent witness and who knows the essence of the division of the quality and functions is not bound (28).

“Control Raga-dvesha, obstructors of the spiritual path. Do your own duty well. Control desire and anger—the enemies of wisdom. Master first the senses. Kill this enemy-desire by restraining the self by the Self and by knowing Him who is superior to intellect” (37-43).

Chapter IV

THE YOGA OF WISDOM

(Jnana-Vibhaga Yoga)

Lord Krishna said, “O Bharata! Whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness becomes powerful, then I Myself come to birth (7). For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness I am born from age to age (8). In whatever way men approach Me, so do I reward them: men follow in every way My path, O son of Pritha (11). He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is a Yogi, even while performing all actions (18). Whose undertakings are all destitute of desires and purposes and whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge him the wise have called a Sage (19).

“Without hope, with the mind self-controlled, having abandoned attachment to the fruit of actions, all greed and envy, always content with whatsoever he obtains without effort, free from the

pairs of opposites, balanced in success and failure, with his thoughts established in Brahman, he is not doing anything, although doing actions; he is not bound, though acting (20-23).

“Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the clarified butter; by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action (24).

“Some Yogins perform sacrifice to Devas; while the Jivanmuktas offer the Self in the fire Brahman. Some again offer hearing and other senses in the fire of restraint. Others again sacrifice all the functions of the senses and the breath in the fire of Yoga of self-restraint kindled by knowledge. Others again offer wealth, austerity, study of scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice. Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming and the incoming in the outgoing (25-29).

“Superior is knowledge-sacrifice to the sacrifice of objects. All actions in their entirety, O Partha, culminate in knowledge (33).

“Know that by long prostration, by question and service; the wise who have realised the Truth will instruct thee in that knowledge (34). Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yet thou shalt verily cross all sins by the raft of knowledge (39). Just as the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes (37).

“The man who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who has subdued the senses and obtains this knowledge and having obtained knowledge he goes at once to the Supreme Peace (39). The ignorant, the faithless, the doubting self goes to destruction; there is neither this world, nor the other, nor happiness for the doubting (40).

“Therefore, with the sword of knowledge cut asunder the doubt of the Self born of ignorance, residing in the heart and take refuge in Yoga. Arise, O Bharata” (42).

Chapter V

THE YOGA OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

(Karma-Sannyasa Yoga)

Arjuna said, “Renunciation of actions, O Krishna, Thou praisest, and then also Yoga. Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two” (1).

The Blessed Lord said, “Renunciation and Yoga of action both lead to the highest bliss; but out of the two, Yoga of action is superior to the renunciation of action (2). Children, not the wise, speak of Sankhya (knowledge) and Yoga (Yoga of action) as distinct; he who is truly established in one obtains the fruits of both (4). That place which is reached by the Sankhyas (Jnanis) is reached by the Yogis (Karma Yogis). He sees, who sees Sankhya and Yoga are one (5).

“I do nothing at all’, thus would the knower of Truth think—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, letting go, seizing, opening and closing the eyes—convinced that the senses move among the sense-objects (8-9). Neither agency nor action does the Lord create for the world, nor union with the fruits of actions. But it is Nature that acts (14).

“Thinking of That, merged in That, established in That, solely devoted to That, they go whence there is no return, their sins dispelled by knowledge (17).

“Sages look with an equal eye in a Brahmin endowed with learning and humility, in a cow, in an elephant, and even in a dog and in an outcaste (13). With the self unattached to external contacts he finds bliss in the Self: with the self engaged in the meditation of Brahman he attains endless bliss (21). The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain, for they have a beginning and an end, O son of Kunti (O Kaunteya); the wise do not rejoice in them (22).

“He who is able, while still in the world, to withstand before the liberation from the body the impulse born out of desire and anger, he is a Yogi, he is a happy man (23).

“Eternal peace lies near to those controlled ascetics who are free from desire and anger, who have controlled their thoughts and who have realised the Self (26).

“Shutting out all external contacts and fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, equalising the outgoing and incoming breaths moving within the nostrils, with senses, mind and intellect ever controlled, having liberation as his supreme goal, free from desire, fear and anger—the sage is verily liberated for ever” (27-28).

Chapter VI

THE YOGA OF MEDITATION

(Adhyatma Yoga)

Lord Krishna said, “He who performs his bounden duty without depending on the fruits of action—he is a Sannyasin and a Yogi; not he who is without fire and without action (1). For a Muni or a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means; for the same sage who has attained to Yoga, inaction or quiescence is said to be the means (3).

“Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, let him not lower himself; for the Self alone is the friend of oneself and this Self alone is the enemy of oneself (5). The Self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the Self, but to the unconquered self, this self stands in the position of an enemy like the external foe (6).

“Having in a clear spot established a firm seat of his own, neither too high nor too low, made of a cloth, a skin and Kusa grass one over the other, let him firmly hold his body, head and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of his nose, without looking around, serene-minded fearless, firm in

the vow of a Brahmachari, having controlled the mind, thinking on Me, and balanced, let him sit, having Me as the Supreme Goal (11-14).

“Verily Yoga is not possible for him who eats too much, nor for him who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much nor for him who is always wakeful, O Arjuna (16).

“Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain for him who is moderate in eating and recreation, who is moderate in exertion in actions, who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness (17). Little by little let him attain quietude by intellect held in firmness; having made the mind established in the Self, let him not think of anything (25). From whatever cause the restless and unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it under the control of the self alone (26).

“With the mind harmonised by Yoga he sees the Self, abiding in all beings, and all beings in the Self, he sees the same everywhere (29). He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him” (30).

Arjuna said, “The mind verily, O Krishna, restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding, I deem it quite as difficult to control it as that of the wind” (34).

Lord Krishna said, “Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed, the mind is difficult to control and restless, but by practice, O Kaunteya and by dispassion, it can be restrained” (35).

Arjuna said, “He who is unable to control himself though he is possessed of faith, whose mind wanders away from Yoga, what end does he, having failed to attain perfection in Yoga meet, O Krishna?” (37).

The blessed Lord said, “Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and having dwelt there for everlasting years, he who fell from Yoga is reborn in a house of the pure and wealthy (41). Or he is born in a family of wise Yogins only; verily a birth like this is very difficult to obtain in this world (42). Then he comes in touch with the knowledge acquired in his former body and strives more than before for perfection, O son of the Kurus (43). By that very former practice he is born on in spite of himself. Even he who merely wishes to know Yoga goes beyond the Brahmic world (44).

“The Yogi is thought to be superior to the ascetics and even superior to men of knowledge (obtained through study of Sastras); he is also superior to men of action; therefore, be thou a Yogi, O Arjuna! (46). And among all Yogins, he who, full of faith with his inner self merged in Me, worships Me, he is deemed by Me to be the most devout (47).

Chapter VII

THE YOGA OF WISDOM

(Jnana Yoga)

The Blessed Lord said, “I shall declare to thee in full this knowledge combined with realisation, which being known, nothing here remains to be known (2). Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection; even among those successful strivers, only one perchance knows Me in essence (3).

“Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, egoism—thus is My Prakriti divided eightfold (4). This is the inferior Prakriti, but different from it, know thou, O mighty-armed, My higher Prakriti, the very life-element, by which this world is upheld (5).

“I am the sapidity in waters, O son of Kunti. I am the light in the moon, and the sun; I am the syllable OM in all the Vedas, sound in ether and virility in men (8).

“Verily, this divine illusion of Mine, caused by the qualities is difficult to cross over; those who take refuge in Me alone cross over this illusion (14).

“Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me O Arjuna, and they are the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the wise, O lord of Bharatas (16). Of these, the wise, ever steadfast and devoted to the One excels; for I am exceedingly dear to the wise, and he is dear to Me (17). Noble indeed are all these; but the wise man, I deem as My very Self; for, steadfast in mind he is established in Me alone, as the Supreme Goal (18). At the end of many births the wise man comes to Me, realising that all this is Vasudeva, the innermost Self, such a great soul is very hard to find (19).

“By the delusion of the pairs of opposites, arising from desire and aversion (likes and dislikes) O Bharata, all beings are subject to illusion, O Parantapa (scorcher of foes) (27). But those men of pure deeds, whose sin has come to an end, who are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me, steadfast in vows (23).

“Those who know Me in the Adhibhuta (pertaining to the elements) in the Adhidaiva (pertaining to the gods) and in the Adhiyajna (pertaining to the sacrifice), know Me even at the time of death, steadfast in mind” (30).

The Blessed Lord said, “Therefore, stand up and obtain fame. Conquer the enemies and enjoy the unrivalled kingdom. Verily by Myself they, have been already slain; be thou a mere instrument, O Savyasachi (Arjuna)” (33).

Arjuna said, “Thou art the Primeval God, the Ancient Purusha; Thou art the supreme refuge of this universe. Thou art the knower, the knowable and the supreme abode. By Thee is this universe pervaded, O Being of infinite form (38). I am delighted, having seen what was never seen before and yet my mind is distressed with fear. Show me that form only with four hands, O God; have mercy, O God of gods, O Abode of the Universe (45-46).

The Blessed Lord assumed His gentle form with four hands and showed this form to Arjuna and consoled him who was terrified (50).

The Blessed Lord said, “Neither by the Vedas nor by austerity, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen in this form, as thou hast seen Me so easily. But by the single-minded devotion, can I of this form be known and seen in reality and also entered into, O Parantapa. He who does actions for Me, who looks on Me as, the Supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment, who bears enmity towards no creature, he comes to Me, Pandava” (53-55).

Chapter XII

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

(Bhakti Yoga)

Arjuna said, “Those devotees, who ever steadfast, thus worship Thee, and those also who worship the Imperishable, the Unmanifested—which of these are better-versed in Yoga?” (1)

The Blessed Lord said, “Those who, fixing their mind on Me, worship Me, ever-steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, in My opinion are the best in Yoga (2). Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the unmanifested; for the goal, the unmanifested, is very hard for the embodied to reach (5). Fix thy mind on Me only, place Thy intellect in Me; then thou shalt no doubt live in Me alone hereafter (8). If thou art not able to fix thy mind steadily on Me, then by Yoga of constant practice (Abhyasa Yoga) do thou seek to reach Me, O Dhananjaya (9). If thou art unable to practise even this Abhyasa Yoga, be thou intent on doing actions for My sake; even by doing actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection (10). If thou art unable to do even this then taking refuge in union with Me, renounce the fruits of all actions, with the self controlled (11). Better indeed is knowledge than practice; than knowledge meditation is better; than meditation renunciation of the fruits of actions; peace immediately follows renunciation (12).

“He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving; ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me (13-14). He who is free from envy, fear and anxiety, who is free from wants, pure, expert, unconcerned, untroubled, who has renounced all undertakings or

“Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, speech, body and mind controlled, ever engaged in meditation and concentration, taking refuge in dispassion (52), having abandoned egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, covetousness, freed from the notion of ‘mine’ and peaceful, he is fit for becoming Brahman (53). Becoming Brahman, tranquil-minded, he neither grieves nor desires the same to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me (54). By devotion he knows Me in reality, what and who I am; then having known Me in reality, he forthwith enters into the Supreme (55).

“The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His Maya, to revolve as if mounted on a machine (61). Take refuge in Him with all thy heart, O Bharata; by His grace thou shalt attain supreme peace and the eternal abode (62).

“Fix thy mind in Me, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me, thou shalt reach Myself; truly do I promise unto thee, for thou art dear to Me (65). Abandoning all duties take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not (66).

“Has this been heard by thee, O Partha, with an attentive mind? Has thy delusion caused by ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?” (72).

Arjuna said: “My delusion is destroyed, and I have gained knowledge through Thy grace, O Achyuta (O Immutable One), I am firm; my doubts have vanished. I will do according to Thy word” (73).

Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Partha, the archer, there are prosperity, victory, happiness and sound policy, so I think (78).

Hari Om Tat Sat.

Om Santi! Santi! Santi!