

THE ONENESS
OF THE
EASTERN HEART
AND THE
WESTERN MIND

Part II

Sri Chinmoy

This is the 1,470th book that Sri Chinmoy has written since he came to the West in 1964. His first book was published in 1970.

Copyright © 2004 Sri Chinmoy

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without express written permission from the Publisher.

**Agni Press
84-47 Parsons Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11432
13 April 2004**

Commentary on
THE BHAGAVAD GITA
(3)

New York University; New York, New York, USA
Vanderbilt Hall
17 March 1970

In the second and third chapters of the Gita, Sri Krishna blessed Arjuna with a few glimpses of Yogic light. In chapter four, he blesses Arjuna with a flood of spiritual light. He widely and openly reveals the secrets of Yoga. Hard is it for Arjuna to believe that Sri Krishna taught Vivasvān (the Sun-God) this eternal Yoga. Vivasvān offered it to his son Manu, and Manu imparted it to his son Īkṣvāku; from him it was handed down to the royal Rishis. Long before Sri Krishna's birth, Vivasvān saw the light of day. Naturally Sri Krishna's declaration would throw Arjuna into the sea of confusion.

The eternal mystery of reincarnation is now being revealed. Says Sri Krishna: "Arjuna, you and I have passed through countless births. I know them all; your memory fails you. Although I am birthless and deathless and the Supreme Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself in the physical universe through My own Maya, keeping My *Prakriti* (Nature) under control."

Māyā means 'illusion'. It also means the unreality of ephemeral things. The unreality is personified as a female, who is also called Maya. The words *dharma* and *maya* are the constant and spontaneous expression of the Indian soul. According to Shankara, the Vedantin of the Himalayan peak, there is only one Absolute Reality, the Brahman, without a second. *Advaita* or Monism, deriving from Vedanta, is his momentous philosophy. There is only the Brahman. Nothing outside the Brahman exists. The world as it stands before our mental eye is a cosmic illusion, a deceptive prison. It is only when true knowledge dawns on us

that we will be in a position to free ourselves from the meshes of ignorance and from the snares of birth and death.

A thing that is, is real. A thing that appears is unreal. An eternal Life is real. Ignorance and death are unreal. Maya is a kind of power filled with mystery. We know that electricity is a power, but we do not actually know what electricity is. The same truth is applicable to Maya. God uses His Maya-Power in order to enter into the field of manifestation. It is the process of the becoming of the One into many and again the return of the many into the original One.

Prakriti means 'Nature'. It is the material cause as well as the original cause of every thing in the manifested creation. *Purusha* is the silent Face. *Prakriti* is the activating Smile. *Purusha* is the pure, witnessing consciousness, while *Prakriti* is the evolving and transforming consciousness. In and through *Prakriti* is the fulfilment of the Cosmic Play.

Arjuna knew Sri Krishna as his dear cousin; he later knew him as his bosom friend; later still he knew him as his beloved Guru or spiritual Teacher. Here, in this chapter, he comes to know Sri Krishna as the Supreme Lord of the world. Sri Krishna says,

Whenever unrighteousness is in the ascendant
And righteousness is in the decline,
I body myself forth.
To protect and preserve the virtuous
And put an end to the evil-doers,
To establish *dharma*,
I manifest Myself from age to age.

From these soul-stirring utterances of Sri Krishna, we immediately come to learn that He is both the Ultimate Knowledge and the Power Supreme. Confidently and smilingly, he is charging Arjuna with a high-voltage spiritual current from his great Power-House.

Sam̐bhavāmi yuge yuge

I body Myself forth from age to age.

Sri Krishna now declares himself an *Avatar*. An Avatar is the direct descendant of God. In the world of manifestation, He embodies the Infinite.

In India, there was a spiritual Master who declared himself to be an Avatar. Unfortunately, he became an object of merciless ridicule, both in the West and in the East. As he could not put up a brave fight against this biting sarcasm, he finally had to change his unsuccessful policy. His proud statement went one step further: “Not only I, but everybody is an Avatar.” Since everybody is an Avatar, who is to criticise whom? Lo, the self-styled Avatar is now heaving a sigh of relief.

It may sound ridiculous, but it is a fact that in India practically every disciple claims his Guru to be an Avatar, a direct descendant of God. A flood-tide of enthusiasm sweeps over them when they speak about their Guru. The spiritual giant Swami Vivekananda could not help saying that in East Bengal, India, the Avatars grow like mushrooms. On the other hand, to pronounce that there has been and can be only one Avatar, the Son of God, is equally ridiculous.

Each time an Avatar comes, he plays a different role in the march of evolution, according to the necessity of the age. In essence, one Avatar is not different from another. A genuine Avatar, Sri Ramakrishna, has revealed the Truth: “He who was Rama, he who was Krishna is now in the form of Ramakrishna.”

There are two eternal opposites: good and evil. According to Sri Krishna, when wickedness reaches the maximum height, God has to don the human cloak in the form of an Avatar. Sri Krishna’s advent had to deal with the darkest evil force, Kāṃsa. Similarly Herod, the peerless tyrant, needed the advent of Jesus Christ. Christmas, the birth of Christ, demanded the extinction of the life of ignorance. *Janmāṣṭamī*, the birth of Sri Krishna, is celebrated throughout the length and breadth of India, with a view to leaving the sea of ignorance and entering into the ocean of Knowledge.

The easiest and most effective way to conceive of the idea of a personal God is to come into contact with an Avatar and remain under his guidance. To have an Avatar as one’s Guru is to find a safe harbour for one’s life boat. In this connection, we can cite Swami Vivekananda’s bold statement: “No man can see God but through these human manifestations. Talk as you may, try as you may, you cannot think of God but as a man.”

According to many, as the Buddha is the most perfect man, even so is Lord Krishna the greatest Avatar the world has ever seen.

There are also *Aṃśāvatāras* (partial Avatars). But Sri Krishna is a *Pūrṇāvatāra* (complete Avatar) in whom and through whom the Supreme is manifested fully, unreservedly and integrally. When human aspiration ascends, the divine Compassion descends in the cloak of an Avatar.

“As men approach me, so do I accept them.” There can be no greater solace than this to the bleeding heart of humanity. If we accept Sri Krishna with faith, he illumines our doubting mind. If we accept Sri Krishna with love, he purifies our tormenting vital. If we accept Sri Krishna with devotion, he transforms the ignorance-night of our life into the Knowledge-Sun of His eternal Life.

Sri Krishna now wants our mind to be riveted on caste. He says that it was he who created the fourfold order of the caste system according to the aptitudes and deeds of each caste. There are people who give all importance to birth and heredity and deliberately ignore those who are abundantly blessed with capacities and accomplishments. The result is that society has to suffer the ruthless buffets of stark confusion. True, birth and heredity have their own importance. But this so-called importance cannot offer us even an iota of light and truth. It is by virtue of action, serene and noble, that we grow into the Highest and manifest the Deepest here on earth.

From verse 16 to verse 22, we see Sri Krishna throwing light on action, inaction and wrong action. Action—that is to say, true action—is not just to move our legs and heads. Action is self-giving. Action is to abandon attachment. Action is to bring the senses under control. Wrong action is to dance with desire. Wrong action is to disobey one’s inner being. Wrong action is to swerve from the path of Truth, esoteric and exoteric.

In common belief, inaction is tantamount to inertia, sloth and so forth. But true inaction is to throw oneself into ceaseless activities while keeping the conscious mind in a state of sublime tranquillity or trance.

Faith and Doubt close this chapter. Faith is not a mere emotional feeling to stick to one’s belief. It is a living inner breath to discover, realise and live in the Truth. Faith is the exercise taken by a seeker of his own will to force himself to stay in the all-seeing and all-fulfilling Will of God. The Yajur Veda tells us that consecration blossoms in self-dedication, Grace blossoms in consecration, faith blossoms in Grace, and Truth blossoms in faith. What else is faith? To quote Charles Hanson Towne,

I need not shout my faith. Thrice eloquent
Are quiet trees and the green listening sod;
Hushed are the stars, whose power is never spent;
The hills are mute: yet how they speak of God!

Doubt is naked stupidity. Doubt is absolute futility. Doubt is outer conflagration. Doubt is inner destruction.

“*Samśāyātmā vinasīyati*—The possessor of doubt perishes.” He is lost, totally lost. To him the path of the Spirit is denied. Also denied is the secret of life’s illumination.

Says Sri Krishna: “For the doubting man, neither is this world of ours, nor is the world beyond, no, nor even happiness.” The New Testament presents us with the same truth: “The man of doubtful mind enjoys neither this world nor the other, nor final beatitude.”

In *Nyāya* (logic), one of the six systems of Indian Philosophy, we notice that doubt is nothing but a conflicting judgement regarding the character of an object. Doubt comes into existence from the very fact of its recognition of properties common to many objects, or of properties not at all common to any objects. Doubt is that very thing which is wanting in the regularity of perception. Also doubt, being non-existent, exists only with non-perception.

Doubt is an all-devouring tiger. Faith is a roaring lion that inspires an aspirant to grow into the all-illuminating and all-fulfilling Supreme.

Poor, blind doubt, being quite oblivious of the truth that faith is the most forceful and most convincing affirmation of life, wants to give a violent jolt to man’s lifeboat.

The poet’s haunting words of truth stir our hearts to their very depths:

Better a day of faith
Than a thousand years of doubt!
Better one mortal hour with Thee
Than an endless life without.