

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.

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Commentary on
THE BHAGAVAD GITA
(2)

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Chapter two of the Bhagavad Gita is entitled *Sāṃkhya Yoga*—“The Yoga of Knowledge.” Arjuna’s arguments against war are very plausible to our human understanding. Sri Krishna read Arjuna’s heart. Confusion ran riot across Arjuna’s mind. The unmanly sentiment in his Kshatriya blood he took as his love for mankind. But Arjuna was never wanting in sincerity. His mouth spoke what his heart felt. Unfortunately, his sincerity unconsciously housed ignorance. Sri Krishna wanted to illumine Arjuna. “O Arjuna, in your speech you are a philosopher; in your action, you are not. A true philosopher mourns neither for the living nor for the dead. But Arjuna, you are sorrowing and grieving. Tell me, why do you mourn the prospective death of these men? You existed, I existed, they too. Never shall we cease to exist.”

We have just mentioned Arjuna’s philosophy. Truth to tell, we too would have fared the same at that juncture. Real philosophy is truly difficult to study, more difficult to learn, and most difficult to live.

The Sanskrit word for philosophy is *darshan*, meaning ‘to see, to envision’. Sri Ramakrishna’s significant remark runs: “In the past, people used to have visions (*darshan*); now people study *darshan* (philosophy)!”

Equally significant is the message of the Hebrew Bible: “Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”

Arjuna for the first time came to learn from Sri Krishna that his human belief concerning life and death was not founded on truth. He felt that he was distracted by illusions. He prayed to Sri Krishna for enlightenment: “I am your humble

disciple. Teach me, tell me what is best for me.” For the first time, the word ‘disciple’ sprang from Arjuna’s lips.

Until then, Sri Krishna had been his friend and comrade. The disciple learned: “The Reality that pervades the universe is the Life immortal. The body is perishable; the soul, the real in man, or the real man, is deathless, immortal. The soul neither kills nor is killed. Beyond birth and death, constant and eternal is the soul. The knower of this truth neither slays nor causes slaughter.”

Arjuna had to fight the battle of life and not the so-called Battle of Kurukshetra. Strength he had. Wisdom he needed. The twilight consciousness of the physical mind he had. He needed the sun-bright consciousness of the soul’s divinity.

Sri Krishna used the terms ‘birth’, ‘life’ and ‘death’.

Birth is the passing of the soul from a lower to a higher body in the process of evolution, in the course of the soul’s journey of reincarnation. The *Sāṃkhya* system affirms the absolute identity of cause and effect. Cause is the effect silently and secretly involved, and effect is the cause actively and openly evolved. Evolution, according to the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, can never come into existence from nothing, from zero. The appearance of ‘is’ can arise only from the existence of ‘was’. Let us fill our minds with the immortal utterance of Wordsworth from “Intimations of Immortality”:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home:

Here the poet carries us into the mystery of the soul’s eternal journey and reminds us of the perennial Source.

What is life? It is the soul’s only opportunity to manifest and fulfil the Divine here on earth. When life begins its journey, Infinity shakes hands with it. When the journey is half done, Eternity shakes hands with it. When life’s journey is complete, Immortality shakes hands with it. Life lives the life of perfection when

it lives in spirituality. When life lives in spirituality, the Breath of God, it stands far above the commands of morality and the demands of duty.

God says to the human life, “Arise, awake, aspire! Yours is the goal.” The human life says to God: “Wait, I am resting. I am sleeping. I am dreaming.” Suddenly, life feels ashamed of its conduct. Crying, it says, “Father, I am coming.” Throbbing, it says, “Father, I am come.” Smiling, it says, “Father, I have come.”

Life, the problem, can be solved by the soul, the solution; but for that, one has first to be awakened from within.

He who lives the inner life knows that death is truly his resting-room. To him, death is anything but extinction. It is a meaningful departure. When our consciousness is divinely transformed, the necessity of death will not arise at all. To transform life, we need peace, light, bliss and power. We cry for these divine qualities. They cry for our aspiration. They are equally anxious to grant us everlasting life. But until our body, vital, mind, heart and soul aspire together, the divine power, light, bliss and peace cannot possess us.

The body dies, but not the soul. The body sleeps; the soul flies. The soul-stirring words on death and the soul in this chapter of the Gita, let us recollect:

Even as a man discards old clothes for the new ones,
So the dweller in the body, the soul,
Leaving aside the worn-out body,
Enters into a new body.
The soul migrates from body to body.
Weapons cannot cleave it,
Nor fire consume it,
Nor water drench it,
Nor wind dry it.

This is the soul and this is what is meant by the existence of the soul.

Now we shall be well advised to observe the existence of death, if there is any, in the momentous words of Sri Aurobindo, the founder of the Integral Yoga. “Death,” he exclaims, “has no separate existence by itself. It is only a result of the principle of decay in the body and that principle is there already—it is part of the physical nature. At the same time, it is not inevitable; if one could have the necessary consciousness and force, decay and death are not inevitable.”

What we call death is nothing short of ignorance. We can solve the problem of death only when we know what life is. Life is eternal. It existed before birth

and it will exist after death. Life also exists between birth and death. It is beyond birth and death. Life is infinite. Life is immortal. A seeker of the infinite Truth cannot subscribe to Schopenhauer's statement: "To desire Immortality is to desire the eternal perpetuation of a great mistake." There is no shadow of doubt that it is the ceaseless seeker in man who is Immortality's Life, for his very existence indicates the Supreme's Vision that illumines the universe, and the Supreme's Reality that fulfils creation.

Arjuna the disciple further learned: "Do your duty. Do not waver. Be not faint-hearted. You are a Kshatriya. There can be no greater invitation than that of a righteous war for a Kshatriya."

A Kshatriya's (warrior's) duty can never be the duty of an ascetic. Neither should an ascetic perform the duty of a Kshatriya. Also, a Kshatriya must not follow the path of a world-renouncer. Imitation is not for a seeker. "Imitation is suicide," so do we learn from Emerson.

A warrior's duty is to fight, fight for the establishment of Truth. "In his victory, the entire earth becomes his; in his death, him welcome the gates of Paradise."

Sri Krishna unveiled the path of *Sāṃkhya* (knowledge) to Arjuna: "Arjuna, take them as one, victory and defeat, joy and sorrow, gain and loss. Care not for them. Fight! Fighting thus, no sin will you incur."

The Teacher had already revealed the path of knowledge. Now he wanted to teach the student the path of action (*Karma Yoga*). Arjuna surprisingly learned that this path, the path of action, the second path, is fruitful and also will bring him deliverance. The truth sublime is: "Action is your birthright, not the outcome, not the fruits thereof. Let not the fruits of action be your object, and be not attached to inaction. Be active and dynamic; seek not any reward." We can simultaneously kindle the flame of our consciousness with the lore of the *Īśā Upanishad*: "Action cleaves not to a man."

We have already used the term 'Yoga'. What is Yoga? "Equanimity," says Sri Krishna, "is Yoga." He also says: "Yoga is skilful wisdom in action."

Arjuna's inner progress is striking. He now feels the necessity to free himself from the desire-life. Sri Krishna teaches him how he can totally detach himself from the bondage-life of the senses as a tortoise successfully withdraws its limbs from all directions. Sense-withdrawal, or withdrawal from the sense objects, by no means indicates the end of man's journey. "Mere withdrawal cannot put an end to desire's birth. Desire disappears only when the Supreme appears. In His Presence the desire-life loses its existence. Not before."

This second chapter throws considerable light on *Sāṃkhya* (knowledge) and Yoga (action). *Sāṃkhya* and Yoga are never at daggers drawn. One is detached, meditative knowledge, and the other is dedicated and selfless action. They have the self-same Goal. They just follow two different paths to arrive at the Goal.

To come back to the sense-life. Sense-life is not to be discontinued. Sense-life is to be lived in the Divine for the Divine. It is the inner withdrawal, and not the outer withdrawal, that is imperative. The animal in man has to surrender to the Divine in man for its total transformation. The life of animal pleasure must lose its living and burning breath in the all-fulfilling life of divine Bliss.

The Katha Upanishad declares the rungs of the ever-climbing ladder:

Higher than the senses are the objects of sense,
Higher than the objects of sense is the mind,
Higher than the mind is the intellect,
Higher than the intellect is the Self,
Higher than the Self is the Unmanifest,
Higher than the Unmanifest is the Supreme personified,
Highest is this Supreme, the Goal Ultimate.

We have seen what happens when we go up. Let us observe what happens when we muse on the sense-objects. The Gita tells: “Dwelling on sense-objects gives birth to attachment, attachment gives birth to desire. Desire (unfulfilled) brings into existence the life of anger. From anger delusion springs up, from delusion the confusion of memory. In the confusion of memory, the reasoning wisdom is lost. When wisdom is nowhere, destruction within, without, below and above.”

The dance of destruction is over. Let us pine for salvation. The disciplined, self-controlled aspirant alone will be blessed by the flood of peace. Finally, the aspirant will be embraced by salvation, the inner illumination.

(Sanskrit words of common occurrence in English, such as darshan, have been transliterated by Sri Chinmoy according to a freer system in which diacritical marks are omitted and a more natural English equivalent to the Sanskrit letter is employed.)