**The Autonomous Adult**

**And**

**Karma Yoga**

**Tulsi Bhandari**

**Preface**

This small book speaks about the applied aspects of Bhagvadgita’s Yoga and Sri Aurobindo’s Integral yoga, and is farfetched from a scholarly attempt at that, for which, I am not in the least qualified. No comparisons, conclusions, or putting forth of new thoughts or ideas have been attempted; it is simply like talking about the need for a conscious practice of yoga as the aim of human life to some friends who are willing to lend their ears. The emphasis is on the importance of an enrichment of the holistic or the spiritual in human life. The call of the Spirit haunts many of us but there are few who get aside to hear what it has to convey; and there are fewer still who have the will to follow it, which makes them seekers. The path is tougher than what can ever be visualized and there are even fewer who reach a ground where the feet are so firmly placed that no question of not trudging it can ever arise. It becomes clear to the seeker that methods, rules, and gradations apply here and there are no short cuts. A pure intuition or inner guidance has to be followed while changing directions and not the dictates of the ego, and therefore it does not matter whether one renounces ordinary life or lives in the midst of it; the seeker needs to be baked into a stronger vessel able to receive Light and Knowledge from above for living a life in Divine Peace and fulfillment in the world.

A transformation in ones nature is not easy to acquire, the seeker places himself at the Divine Feet with a pure aspiration for it. The Gita’s Yoga is meant to make life and work meaningful and harmonious; the battle of life has to be fought for progress and evolution both in the inner and outer fields of existence; to make us arrive at this balance and equality is the secret Will of Nature.

I most humbly acknowledge in deep gratitude, the meticulously done work by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust to preserve the originality of Sri Aurobindo’s massive writings down to every sign of punctuation, which makes all the difference to his long sentences and about which he himself and later, the Mother was so clearly attentive, and, for publishing them with such care and devotion; those of us who have had the life changing experience and have become one with his vision shall remain grateful for this dedication of all who have been involved in this task. Tulsi Bhandari

**1**

**Introductory Chapter**

Many friends and acquaintances had been telling me to write about the Gita’s wisdom in a way that would make it easy for them to understand and follow it and this has been the inspiration for writing this book. This does not imply that the present writer is an erudite scholar, far from that, but she is a lover and a follower of Gita, which is like an ever-green tree always available for shelter and solace. However, there are two conditions for anyone to benefit from this scripture of timeless beauty and utility for human life, firstly, to accept that human intellect with its power for reason and expression has its limitations and to receive a higher knowledge it must fall silent, and secondly, to offer the complete being to the Highest Power from which all emanates, manifests, and in which all merges and rejuvenates again. This does not mean that intellect has no place in this Yoga, on the contrary an evolved intellect and a pure understanding are the basic tools required in order to be able to make a beginning as well as to carry it through; and for this reason to present the Yoga of the Gita to the modern intellect the present writer has chosen the word autonomous adult from Eric Berne’s Psychological method for self understanding as applied for better human transactions, known as Transactional Analysis. An autonomous adult will have the qualities of head and heart like Arjuna, the original aspirant to whom this Yoga was addressed by Krishna. Without the need to discuss the popular global uses of the word Yoga, it must be reiterated here that Yoga simply means to join, to make or become one; the Sanskrit root is yuj. And even though the Bhagvad Gita is a synthesis of the then prevailing contemporary Philosophical, the metaphysical, and the inherent beliefs therein, what stands out is the essential practicality, clarity and timelessness of the answer the Gita provides to human urge for spiritual perfection and harmony amidst the bewildering enigma of life and living. We shall therefore, restrict ourselves in a way so as to derive the Spiritual essence from it which can sustain, nourish, and universalize us irrespective of any religious belief or without it.

I was introduced to Transactional Analysis, originated by Eric Berne1 when I attended a work-shop on it while pursuing an M.Ed. degree in 1985 and my interest in it compelled me to read a bit more about it, and, significantly, the simple but effective method and vocabulary it offers made it an interesting tool not only helpful for understanding my own behavior and to some extent of those around me, but also, amazingly, in gaining a better insight for the Yoga of the Gita2, which in turn, was a preparation to become one with the vision and word of Sri Aurobindo3 a decade later. These practical influences on my life have been revelatory and progressive in the unfolding of the meaning and purpose of life as the awe and wonder of the new continues to merge with what has been, so as to consolidate a deeply living faith which always thrives in spite of the interference and ravaging impacts of the many dark, apprehensive and painful periods from time to time. The importance of family, society, cultural unity, relationships, as well as the role and the meaning of individual human life are all going through a transformation which is being dictated by technology, governments and commerce, even though there are many individuals who feel the need for a value based, sustainable and spiritually meaningful human life. It is therefore, the individual who must decide about the course of life which is to be consciously lived by him and this decision must be based on clarity of compassionate thought and reason about which the Gita speaks.

It must be mentioned at the outset that the Gita’s Yoga demands a clear understanding, the intelligent will in the seeker and therefore the autonomous adult as spoken of by Eric Berne in his psychological method called Transactional Analysis has been adopted by the present writer as a suitable level of human consciousness ready to enter the spiritual realm for discovering and living in its richness, and this has been chosen in the same way and for the same intention as the Karma-Yoga of the Gita. Self-understanding is the foundation of all knowledge and is exclusively used in the method of Transactional analysis for improving relationships, but it is also something mandatory for a beginning of Spiritual evolution. It is also a fact that up to a certain stage it becomes easy to introspect by going into our family roots, childhood, parental influences, independent thoughts and interactions, motives, actions, reactions, decision making abilities, ideals, circumstances and our resultant behavior with every other person in life. We must grow up into becoming autonomous adults, which means taking much of the responsibility for what we are and not to blame anybody else at all. This becomes a step towards Karma yoga, wherein we have to give up personal expectations and desires on the way to becoming universal beings. And more importantly, the Gita is addressed to Arjuna, the evolved person of his time, who is a warrior, intelligent, sensitive, compassionate, open-minded and progressive, an autonomous adult.

The autonomous adult who is the emergent person in Eric Berne’s Transactional Analysis will be described sufficiently for the basic understanding of the reader who is not familiar with Transactional Analysis later in this Chapter. The European mental and the Indian spiritual approach, each one of it, when pursued by itself with disregard to the other, results not in overall human progress but in confusion and misery; and this fact though being realized by numerous people has not yet been practiced or implemented en masse. The ways of dealing with the practical aspects of life, the method of science and modern technology are the wonderful gifts of the West to the world waiting to be united with the mine of spiritual wealth available in India, and which in turn, waits to be explored and imbibed and lived in a manner never ever experienced by mankind. This in fact, is the secret of evolution of which Krishna speaks of to begin with—the Yoga of the Intelligent Will, called *Buddhi Yoga*. buddhi is intelligence, will, reason and intellect, all that is required to gain knowledge, to discover Truth in its entirety. The Gita is a Yogashastra, the Science of developing Spiritual Unity, Peace and Tolerance, not through a didactical or dogmatic approach but through self-discovery and a scientific attitude. The threshold of the door to this spiritual wealth must be approached with the trust and curiosity of a natural child and the mental clarity of an adult, both devoid of the ego, and the state of surrender that is achieved as a result carries the aspirant deeper into the peace and truth of the spiritual realms through the continuous unveiling of levels of a larger consciousness.

It is the sense of ego which is useful for growth and achievement, for working and interacting with others, for maintaining courage, confidence and individuality, but it is the burden of ego again which must be felt and then given up for human growth and achievement in the larger, wider and deeper meaning of contentment, peace and harmony. Eric Berne’s theory of the Ego States is useful and applicable for self-understanding and for initiating an effort to make relationships and our transactions with each other more plausible, it therefore will act as a good tool with which to look backwards and inwards as far as it will go so as to clear the ground for further search, and, then to realize that, to be liberated means a lot more than the mental search, a lot of “trash” has to be done away with and left behind in order to make progress at the autonomous adult ego state, which entails the giving up of the ego to enter the spiritual state, and to practice Karma yoga to live life to its fullest in this world of dualities and contradictions. The Ego States have more to do with personality and have been used by Berne to analyze our daily transactions with each other, but they do form a part of the ego or egotism too, in the psychological “I” and the “Me” sense, which make our feelings, perceptions and reactions personal, resulting in discontentment, unhappiness, and pain, which create obstructions for the complete blooming of life and its aims.

Eric Berne’s Transactional Analysis has been a popular and realistic method for understanding and improving human interactions which ends up making an intelligent and sensitive person discover her capacities for awareness, spontaneity and intimacy, but it may result in leaving her feeling alone, lonely and looking for more from life; and this fact more than anything else reveals the mental man’s growth by discovery and the method of Science as well as the hollowness which this mentality devoid of the Soul creates; and it is here that Krishna and Sri Aurobindo come in, the former begins with his teaching of the Intelligent Will called Buddhi-Yoga and ends up integrating knowledge, devotion and works, and the latter gives us the renewed description of the Higher Consciousness which descends and transforms the aspirants’ life on earth. Science and technology have come to rule the globe, and though, the method of Science and the scientific temper are very much necessary for the growth of the Spiritual Consciousness, the actual outcome of technological boom has been the generation of a wave of commercial, physical and material lure which exercises its power on Nations and the majority of mankind in the same manner in which the richness of a spiritual legacy is used by them for hypocritical purposes. However, there are individuals who seek a truer meaning and purpose for life and the aim and focus of writing this book from chapter to chapter is to delve deep into the ancient wisdom not just to see what it is but to be so motivated by it that to practice it and to live by it in modern times becomes a saving grace for such individuals at least.

The three ego states namely the Parent, Adult and Child which according to Eric Berne must be understood to make our transactions with each other smooth and meaningful and to have better relationships with each other, the Physical, Vital and the Mental parts spoken about by the Upanishadic Sages so well elaborated by Sri Aurobindo including the Over-Mental levels, the subconscient and the inconscient and, the three Modes of Nature-Guna- tamas, rajas and sattwa described in the Gita as well as their transcendence, all have a place in the Pragmatic Mental and the consistent Spiritual revelations, as knowledge presents itself steadily to the seeker resulting in the growth of Consciousness, Peace and Unity.

Inter-personal relations are emerging as a challenge to be dealt with in a world which is shrinking and becoming more and more materialistic; and TA(for Transactional Analysis) is of assistance to those who see the need for helping themselves and of being better and more compassionate in dealing and relating with others; but, after a certain stage such developed types will feel the need to go further to fill up the aloneness and to find more perfection and harmony which can be attained through Yoga alone; and Yoga becomes the means, method and field for eternal peace, bliss, light, knowledge, and power after the initial period of practice, voluntary control and discipline has been covered. The problems of life, of Governments, of animalism in humans, of death and disease, of ignorance and greed remain in spite of so much which gets done to overcome them; but the Yogi, the one who unites himself with the Divine through the practice of yoga, experiences Grace at all times and circumstances, and is ready to take on a task which must be accomplished for the Universal good. Grace is synonymous with the Sanskrit word Kripa; the divine consciousness so fills the soul that the Yogi attains a state of enlightenment, in unity with the higher will and knowledge. A Yogi is the one, who is established in yoga, and who does works which ought to be done in a spirit of inner renunciation, says Krishna; it is through such work that we grow towards self-perfection, peace and universal brotherhood.

These are the times of mass movements, corporate and collective efforts, economic and political power, and the power of the media, and , so many of these powers are in the hands of the greedy, selfish, and dark forces; it is also time for the selfless universal men and women to join hands with each other, and since, such persons tend to give up because they know that individually each one has to come forward out of a free intelligent will, armed with a certain level of clarity and force, and, they will not indulge in coercion and exploitation of others, they watch, they understand, and they wait for the Divine Will to intervene, this behavior may be labeled as weakness in common language and rightly so, from a point of view.

But the present situation in which humanity is placed demands a coming forward of the okay adults-- those who are aware, in control, candid and spontaneous, the integrated yogis-- those who practice yoga so as to achieve a perfect balance in body, mind, vital and intellect, and the visionaries-- who aspire for the descent of the higher consciousness and practice yoga to be in harmony with the evolutionary aim of Nature; because, lost in the rising populations and suppressed by modern materialistic values there are many who look for guidance and many who have individually followed the inner light undeterred by the outside glitter which shines through the increasing vacancies being forcefully occupied by the hostile forces.

The mechanical nature of human civilization will be transcended by the growing consciousness of the true being, and the evolution of spiritual man will result in the appearance of the superman in much the same way as the spiritual has evolved from ordinary human mentality and man has evolved from animal.

The upward movement is, then, the means towards self-fulfillment in this world; but it is not imperative on all objects. For there are three conditions for all changeable existences, the upward ascension, the arrested status, and the downward lapse. Nature in its lower status moves upward indeed in the mass, but seeks the final salvation for only a limited number of its individuals.4

Therefore, individuals who are aspirants, those who have their feet placed firmly on the path beyond, those who in their inner view, have transcended ordinary nature, mind and reason, those who hear the whispers of super-nature, shall be in a position to help, share, and co-operate with each other in whatever way it may be possible, if at all, because, the aspiration being nurtured by the individual cannot be scattered or dispersed, the line of effort cannot be given up, the unity with the higher consciousness has to be maintained, because the aspirant has come to know of it as the only source of lasting peace and bliss. This tiny book is devoted to this call of the spirit. A call is heard in keeping with the inner truth in us.

Ordinarily, birth, circumstances, opportunities, aptitudes, capabilities, abilities, physical appearance make each one of us the unique person that we are; but it is attitude, faith or Shraddha, as described by Krishna in the Gita--which makes us what we really are and will become. The Sanatana dharma, called Hinduism is based on the precept that the soul (atman) is immortal and takes birth again and again depending on the Sanskara collected in each birth to participate in the evolutionary cycle of the individual and the universal cause.\* Sanskara is a word in Sanskrit, rich in meaning- the sum total of upbringing, attitudes, deeds, endeavours, and thoughts of previous births. We become what we do by the past will of Nature in us and then live in accordance with what we really want to be. Attitude as the way of thinking shows in behavior but Shraddha is deeper in meaning, even though it also includes attitude, it is the inner will, the faith which acts in keeping with the inner truth of being. Says Krishna to Arjuna in verse 3 of the 17th Chapter of the Gita: The faith of each man takes the shape given to it by his stuff of being. This soul in man, is, as it were, made of Shraddha, a faith, a will to be, a belief in itself and existence, and whatever is that will, faith or constituting belief in him, he is that and that is he.

The consistency of Indian Spiritual traditions is based on the experience of Self-Realization, the Spiritual knowledge-jnana of the Atman and Paramatman; it has resulted in identification with the Universal Oneness and considers all manifestation emerging from the One Supreme and possesses an inherent tolerance for all. The immortality of the Soul is a belief which has emerged from knowledge gained through identity by following methods which include the Will, the complete peace and purity, silence, meditation, and surrender to the Highest Power. This knowledge is far above a mental concept and cannot be explicitly put in words; but a complete change in perception is the inevitable outcome. The following quotes are cited for the sake of more clarity:

The embodied soul casts away old and takes up new bodies as a man changes worn-out raiment for new. It is uncleavable, it is incombustible, it can neither be drenched nor dried. Eternally stable, immobile, all pervading, it is forever and forever.

Gita: Chap 2: 22, 24

They say indeed that the conscious being is made of desire, but of whatever desire he comes to be, he comes to be of that will, and of whatever will he comes to be, he does that action, to that he reaches….Adhered to by his Karma, he goes in his subtle body to wherever his mind cleaves, then, coming to the end of his Karma, even of whatsoever action he does here, he returns from that world to this world for Karma (action). Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

The central being [Jivatman] which presides over the different births one after the other, but is itself unborn, for it does not descend into the being but is above it—it holds together the mental, vital and physical being and all the various parts of the personality and it controls the life either through the mental being and the mental thought and will or through the psychic, which ever may happen to be most in front or most powerful in nature. If it does not exercise its control, then the consciousness is in great disorder and every part of the personality acts for itself so that there is no coherence in the thought, feeling or action.

Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga p 2

There are some who receive the call from within, listen to it and follow it; the soul within pines for a perfect union, seeks that bliss the haunting memory of which it carries within itself; the deeper this haunting the higher and the wider it grows hoping to reach out to the One it looks for amidst the beauty and the mystery of Nature which it secretly knows to be emanating from it. And though it is not necessary but it too happens, that the imperfections and pains of life so touch a soul that it comes to know of its destined union with the unknown, which we call the Divine. But till the time this knowledge does not dawn on it, it continues to search outwards and it is here that relationships assume significance pressing for meaning and contentment. However, a mental seeking will prove futile in the end and the real journey will begin only when the seeker learns to develop a silence which is not penetrated by the waves which touch him on the outside. In the richness of this silence is discovered the fount which flows within, the spark which must lead all life towards the One Source of beauty, power and light.

Values and morals have changed rapidly in recent times; there are those who do not care about relationships ,others simply carry on as long as their purpose is served, are opportunistic or, find an easy way out for egoistic or self-centered reasons without a deep thought given to what must be the overall good, then there are those who attach a lot of importance to relationships and believe that all must be of help to each other psychologically, physically and in as many ways as can be possible. Human reason can justify anything; therefore, arguments serve no real purpose in the long run. But the truth is that, relationships are of importance even for the highly evolved and individualistic person; even for him who leaves them behind to follow a call. In the ordinary sense a call may be a strongly felt ambition which shapes up as a dream, an ideal, a vision, a life force, which must be followed for achieving self-fulfillment and contentment in life.

Transactional Analysis has helped many people who want to know about better ways to deal with human transactions and relationships. Our transactions with others and especially with those who are taken for granted like parents, children, siblings, spouse, servants, family members, friends and subordinates most of the time happen to be mechanical, laced with expectations we have from each other considering ourselves entitled to be understood no matter what; when the misunderstandings and the communication gaps grow bigger they may create bitterness, pain, discontentment, disenchantment, and mental disturbance. When we learn to interact with each other comfortably at each level called the Ego state our behavior is easy, respecting, and peaceful; we are friend, philosopher and guide to each other, and, enjoy a relaxed and more productive life. But the problem changes itself when, for example, only one member or spouse is willing to address the problem and not the others/other. This changed person understands the fact that we all are okay and yet, grows lonely or seeks a more fulfilling life in one way or the other depending on the individual need, like a different spouse, new friends, another kind of work place, going out into the world for deeper reasons, religion, and hobbies. One thing is clear- such a person has started growing within but how far he/she shall go depends on faith and inner determination. But the others who prefer to continue the status-quo carry on playing games and go through life without ever becoming the autonomous adult and deal with the possible consequences in different ways in keeping with their ego states. The need to relate to others is always there even though the form of its expression or manifestation would differ in individuals. There are times when many people find themselves in situations which provoke them to take charge of themselves, to understand a lot of things about their very existence and behavior and the behavior and attitude of others. Such people wish to settle the what, why and how of life situations in order to live a meaningful and peaceful life; and TA is a method to help them make a good beginning by understanding the three Ego states, namely the Parent, Child and Adult in us which mainly dictate our transactions in speech and mannerism with each other, to become conscious of them and come to a ‘we are all okay’ position by having complementary Transactions and not the crossed ones which make for confused, irritating, or blocked relationships.

The parent ego state is derived from the parental figures, these are recordings of what the child saw her parents do or say during the first five years; the adult ego state comes from personal experiences, appraisals, and intelligence since the age of ten months or earlier; and thirdly, the child ego state is what was imbibed by the child between the age of two and five years, these are the recorded responses of the child in us. According to TA, The adult and child parts of ego are internally originated, whereas the parent is the external influence on the personality. The three parts of personality of which we are made are depicted by drawing three circles one on top of the other for each person confronting the other; when transactions take place in parallel lines between two people, they are open and smooth but when the ego states touch each other by crossed lines then communication cannot proceed smoothly, causes disturbance or gets blocked. It is possible for us to analyze if the Ego State in us is habitual, contaminated or not okay and improve upon it so as to become the autonomous adult, who is simple, straight forward and aware.

Complementary transactions take place when people relate to each other as adult to adult, parent to parent, child to child, child and parent, or adult and child. A deep understanding of different human natures, patience, compassion and the will for harmony are required for complementary transactions to take place; two or more people as Adults can discuss a matter with a broad outlook which sees a general welfare of all inclusive of the limitations and assets which are a universal phenomenon, two Parents can be critical of the youth of today and can have a smooth and sympathetic transaction which is at once psychologically fulfilling, two friends may spontaneously enjoy the breeze on their face and sing a sweet song together enriching each other’s natural Child and so on, if one partner needs to behave like a child, the other can act like a nourishing parent and vice-versa. However, there can be superficial transactions at all levels, and to solve problems of genuine communication in families, marriage, work place and society is not possible by TA alone. It is the individual who can change if he so wills, and the lasting and peaceful way remains the spiritual; the inner change comes by self-knowledge, by practicing yoga; we begin to understand others when we know our own Nature.

Eric Berne had tried to formulate a theory for human personality and social activities, and, as a psychiatrist he had used it for the purpose of psychotherapy by analyzing the various transactions which take place among people based on the three ego states elaborated by him. But for the general purpose an individual can perceive the pattern of her own transactions with others, introspect and decide, whether they were based on habitual behavior from the Parent Ego State, the behavior coming from the Child needs or responses, or it is the candid Adult who needs to take over most of the time even when a child-like spontaneity was the best option; and this is one method for self improvement as well as for developing better transactions with each other if that be the common motive of two or more people of a group and it can be used without the need for psychotherapy.

Parent depicts the play of the Ego state which sets out to impose the way it was imposed on the little person, it is external in value, Child focuses on the ego state which is derived from feeling about things in the archaic way, and it is internally derived. There has to be the okay critical and nurturing Parent, the okay natural and curious Child and okay Adult, not contaminated by the not okay Child, who may be rebellious or obstinate by habit and by the not okay Parent, who is either overly critical, over-protective and rigidly conventional or all of it by habit. The autonomous adult lives a life of spontaneity, intimacy and awareness; it instinctively lets the natural child rejoice in the beauty and mystery of life and it deliberately scrutinizes the parent to value its treasures helpful in building a balanced life. It is easy and interesting to observe when a particular ego state is taking over during different interactions in life—my child was vulnerable or my parent was operative or the adult in me was in cool control; it helps to look back, introspect and to be compassionate towards ourselves and others in order to move on with life more positively and confidently.

The same method applies in spiritual practice—the mental, vital, physical personalities come alive in us to be dealt with and the subconscient and the overmental become realities to us; at the same time we know when it is tamas or rajas or sattwa which is dominant or it is one overlapping the other, exactly as the ego states overlap each other.

People do structure time for the periods of social coming together and this “short term structuring of time in human social behavior” according to Berne, are in the form of withdrawal- to pursue what one likes doing best, rituals- of following a routine, methods of praying or doing things in a ritualistic manner alone, with family, friends or in social circles and functions, strokes- to meet up in a way so as to be there for each other for a feel good need, activities- work, pastimes- there can be many, and games. Out of these Games are those transactions which are ulterior in motive, repetitive, and above everything else are initiated for a purpose of which Berne speaks as “a well defined psychological pay off.” For example, the mother lets the child indulge in an activity like watching television or playing with the Laptop or jumping on the sofa which the child is not normally allowed to do for good reasons, to make him eat home cooked food or drink milk, whereas he wants to have chocolates, ice cream and burgers all the time and this drama goes on every day for which the child and the mother both are prepared. Such a child may not give up this habit as an adult and may indulge in it in various other forms by behaving like a sulk or a jerk with his colleagues or spouse, thereby creating problems for others in life. Such a person will not be able to tolerate those who do not meet with his own needs, he becomes cross with others for petty reasons, feels the need to be pampered and is not able to maintain close healthy relationships; somebody has to play games with him to keep him going. Similarly, a child who was mostly left alone or lived in threat of the parents, was never allowed to use the adult part in her may grow up to remain aloof, lack in confidence, not be able to talk to the point, be too severe or too easy with her own kids etc. Many of us do not develop equal circles for the parent, child and adult parts of our personality, which evidently shows during our transactions with each other, when there are unsatisfying transactions or communication blocks in personal life these ego states can become important issues for self study and help us to change our behavior accordingly for our own good. Playing Games entails that, “the agent pretends to be doing one thing while he is really doing something else”-- games involve a con, a gimmick, and a payoff. And it is indeed horrifying to know that games are being played around to the extent that the true and candid appears to be abnormal to the players. But the autonomous adult is the one who sees the futility of playing games and lives life without indulging in them by remaining straight forward, candid and spontaneous. Such a person has a purity of nature which does not have the compulsion of exploiting others in any way, least of all for emotional reasons. He has the three okay ego states—Parent, Adult and Child in equilibrium with each other.

Albert Einstein5 in 1932 spoke about himself thus: Although I am a typical loner in daily life, my consciousness of belonging to the invisible community of those who strive for truth, beauty and justice has preserved me from feeling isolated. And then: The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavour in art and science. His statement appears even more beautiful to the heart, to the child in us and appeals to the Adult in us, this is a satisfying transaction from child to child and adult to adult; the faith and curiosity of a child and the attitude of the adult are evident here. Faith is a spiritual certitude, said Sri Aurobindo, a common experience in the life of a human being; if it were not so, man would be a play thing of a changing mind or a sport of circumstances.6

We may or may not have a good going in the worldly sense but it does not matter so much as what is going on within us; as was said by Emerson, what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. Some of us search for the ideal, the true, the harmonious, and the meaningful; this makes us a bit restless in the soul, always trying to reach for that unknown perfect through all we come across in life; and till we come to be sure of our bearings having experienced deep pain, a sudden insight, or finding a Guru we do not clearly hear the call of the psychic within. Psychic is the term used by Sri Aurobindo for what is casually called the Soul in common language. He called it the Caitya Purusha in Sanskrit to avoid any confusion that may occur in the intellect of an aspirant. It is the Divine spark behind the heart which participates in human evolution; it is the Antaratman. The psychic being evolves through many births; it must come in front and lead, so that, the entire nature moves towards a Divine perfection. This is the call of the True being—the truth of our being and becoming--present within each one of us, meant to take us through the levels of Truth consciousness within and above us. Many poets have expressed their craving for something which the heart knows as beautiful, true, and above everything else.

The use of the word soul/spirit in the English language has always been a bit confusing with respect to the Sanskrit Purusha, Atman, Jivatman and Paramataman, because the richly spiritual Sanskrit words cannot be translated and have to keep their originality; a clearness of vocabulary is being described in Sri Aurobindo’s words as follows:

The Jivatman, spark soul and psychic being are three different forms of the same reality and they must not be mixed up together, as that confuses the clearness of the inner experience.

The Jivatman or spirit, as it is usually called in English, is self-existent above the manifested or instrumental being—it is superior to birth and death, always the same, the individual Self or Atman. It is the eternal true being of the individual.

The soul is the spark of the Divine which is not seated above the manifested being, but comes down into the manifestation to support its evolution in the material world. It is at first an undifferentiated power of the Divine Consciousness containing all possibilities which have not yet taken form, but to which it is the function of evolution to give form. This spark is there in all living beings from the lowest to the highest.

The psychic being is formed by the soul in evolution. It supports the mind, vital, body, grows by their experiences, carries the nature from life to life. It is the psychic or caitya purusha. At first it is veiled by mind, vital and body, but as it grows, it becomes capable of coming forward and dominating the mind, life and body; in the ordinary man it depends on them for expression and is not able to take them up and freely use them. The life of the being is animal or human and not divine. When the psychic being can by sadhana become dominant and freely use its instruments, then the impulse towards the divine becomes complete and the transformation of mind, vital and body, not merely their liberation, becomes possible.

The Self or Atman being free and superior to birth and death, the experience of the Jivatman and its unity with the supreme or universal Self brings the sense of liberation, it is this which is necessary for the supreme spiritual deliverance: but for the transformation of the life and nature the awakening of the psychic being and its rule over the nature are indispensable.

The psychic being realizes its oneness with the true being, the Jivatman, but it does not change into it.7

The rare great soul who realizes and sees all as the Divine, does so at the end of several births, says Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita; and this must be the outcome of going all out towards the Divine having paid heed to the call from within. Krishna is the most loved and worshipped Avatar in India. An Avatar according to the Hindu tradition is the birth of the Godhead in humanity for the establishment of righteousness and evolution. Many legends have grown around Krishna, but his Gita is the most read, commented on, and followed; it is not only the crème of the Vedas and the Upanishads but its catholicity is the all time anchor that provides direction, meaning, and depth to life. Arjuna, the warrior is the friend and disciple of Krishna. He suffers with nervousness, acute depression and a deep sense of futility when he finds himself standing in the war of Mahabharata against his kin; unable to fight, he puts his weapons down. He represents the evolved man of his time ready for a Transformation which Krishna seeks to bring about in Humanity as an Avatar; not through what He dictates as a Law, but as something offered for each human being in keeping with his/her Nature-Swabhava, Position and duties in life and society compatible with individual nature and capacity- Dharma and Swadharma, because it is Yoga which must be done to bring life to fruition.

If we look closely, we shall see that there is a straining of mind and life on their heights towards their own perfection, toward some divine fulfillment, towards their own absolute. That and not only something beyond and elsewhere is the true sign, the meaning of this constant evolution and the labour of continual birth and rebirth and the spiral ascent of Nature. But it is only by the descent of supermind and the fulfillment of mind and life by their self-exceeding that this secret intention in things, this hidden meaning of Spirit and Nature can become utterly overt and in its totality realisable.8

In the Hindu tradition of yogic realization the Supreme has been experienced as Sachchidananda, the One with the triple aspect Reality, Consciousness, and Bliss. Nature-Prakriti and Soul-Purusha; Lord and the Executive energy are the eternal One in Monistic-Advaita philosophy of Vedanta. The manifestation of Truth Consciousness or the Supermind is the aim and the vision of Sri Aurobindo’s yoga, therefore it is necessary to quote him here: Consciousness is a fundamental thing, the fundamental thing in existence—it is the energy, the motion, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it—not only the macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself……When it wants to liberate itself, slowly, evolutionarily, out of matter, but still in the form, it emerges as life, as animal, as man and it can go on evolving itself still farther out of its involution and become something more than mere man. If you can grasp that, then it ought not be difficult to see further that it can subjectively formulate itself as a physical, a vital, a mental, a psychic consciousness—9

However, numerous human beings are so involved with the material and the physical life ,that they do not pay heed to a call which is heard from within from time to time; the so called urgencies or demands of ego, desire, trends, status and the like sound much louder and the call from within loses its force. But for many others, it is time in the evolutionary cycle of Nature, that the hidden call of the Spirit must be heard through matter too and the covert evolutionary principle of creation become manifest through the descent of a higher consciousness. The secret quest, the aspiration of the soul shall so unite with the One Spirit above that the inevitable transformation of life, mind and matter shall become complete.

To be aware means to be conscious-to have knowledge or to be well informed; but a person who is very intelligent and knowledgeable may not be aware or careful about those aspects of life which enrich it; such a person allows himself/herself to follow the trend even though he/she may not be quite comfortable with it. Many people start becoming aware when they feel beset with questions about the meaning and purpose of life, when they find themselves in the wrong moulds, as square pegs in round holes, when it pinches deeply. Self-awareness devoid of selfishness is a good sign as far as humanity is concerned, whereas people feel the need to adjust better in a life situation, have better relationships with each other, and help each other to be aware, happy, and creative. But there is much more to life than just relationships, it places us in situations over which the autonomous adult has no control and is compelled to take decisions which were not visualized before. Those of us, who can opt for Divine guidance as the aware and intimate Arjuna was able to do so spontaneously, are opting for lasting peace and wisdom. Andfor thisfaith is required; which is just there in us or is not. Faith it is much more than belief. Belief, according to Sri Aurobindo, is an intellectual acceptance, but for faith he says that: ….All men of action, discoverers, inventers, creators of knowledge proceed by faith and, until the proof is made or the thing done, they go on in spite of disappointment, failure, disproof, and denial because of something in them that tells them that this is the truth, the thing that must be followed and done.10 Faith, however blind to begin with gets strengthened through practice and continues to arrive at its own truth till the end of life.

Transactional Analysis makes it easy to understand our outer behavior and talk about it with each other or introspect for improved outcomes; being overly critical, interfering and protective from the Parent Ego State—being unduly adaptive or stubborn, demanding attention, feeling insecure from the Child Ego State—being too much of an adult to appraise reality too objectively are some of the traits which become recognizable during our transactions with each other or afterwards when a thought is given to what had transpired and why did it end in misunderstanding or a block in communication or whether it was a game which was being attempted; and it provides us with the ability to change, so as to retain or revive the Spontaneity of a Natural Child, the deep Concerns and Convictions of a Caring Parent, the Candidness of the Adult who is aware, focused, faces and values life and its gifts with gratitude. A person who has become aware will stop playing games with others and being a sulk or a jerk, and, is ready to become autonomous. However, trying to become the autonomous adult will not be easy for most people because it also involves a falling out from the flow of ordinary life, it therefore requires an inner courage and will, and, when attempted with the lack of such qualities it involves the danger of scattering a person. For certain fortunate people there is something which transcends all classifications of behavior, and that is awareness; something that rises above the programming of the past, and that is spontaneity, and something that is more rewarding than games and that is intimacy. But all three of these may be frightening and even perilous to the unprepared. Perhaps they are better off as they are, seeking their solutions in popular techniques of social action, such as “togetherness”. This may mean that there is no hope for the human race, but there is hope for individual members of it.11

The “individual members” who do not accept life as a time pass, who do not want to play games in relationships, and who look for a deeper meaning and purpose of life are the ones who turn the search light inwards in Mahatma Gandhi’s words; and they are the ones who hear the call; but out of them only few decide to follow it; and out of those who follow it the rare ones live it to the end. This truth consciousness which is the foundation of Yoga grows from level to level as a life devoted to yoga proceeds lead by the Psychic being which joins the Atman above for Spiritual realization. But, Berne is right in observing that it indeed can be dangerous to opt for a life devoid of the availability of popular techniques of social action; therefore, many of us have to stop here and continue with life using the popular techniques of social action because the call has not been heard yet or if heard, enough courage has not been generated to follow it, and, if such techniques are used with good-will for all and not with malice and only good games without any ulterior motives are played which are compatible with these techniques, such as “togetherness’”, it is indeed fine. Eric Berne defines a game as follows: A game is an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well defined, predictable outcome. Descriptively it is a recurring set of transactions, often repetitious, superficially plausible, with a concealed motivation; or more colloquially, a series of moves with a snare, or “gimmick”.12

It is not difficult to see how games are played in a family, in marital life, in society, institutions and politics; hypocrisy, greed, self gratification, emotional blackmailing, manipulation and exploitation are but some descriptive features or motives of games people play, besides the ones which are being played all the time to keep up with superficial norms in social and family relationships. Ordinarily, a game free life is tough to visualize, because individuals have to maintain certain social norms to live in society, and the idea of a game free life appears to be scary, frightening or even perilous, in Eric Berne’s words. A liberated person transcends ordinary Nature to discover, and sustain himself/herself from, the fountainhead which flows within each one of us and above us. However, games can also be healthy, enjoyable and good when the participants are honest, natural, aware and spontaneous.

Any mental method like TA, will be helpful for those who are not yet aware or conscious of their inner reality which aspires for spiritual fulfillment and evolution in life; because, it awakens and strengthens the mental consciousness in as much purity as will be possible individually, so that the person is now ready to possess a larger perspective of life, its joys, and problems; the inner consciousness is a part of the Universal Consciousness waiting to come alive and evolve when the time comes. Therefore, when ready, the autonomous person will grow towards the meaning of awareness in a larger realization of it as described by Sri Aurobindo: Consciousness is not only power of awareness of self and things; it is or has also a dynamic or creative energy. It can determine its own reactions or abstain from reactions; it can not only answer to forces, but create or put out from itself forces. Consciousness is Chit but also Chit Shakti (force).13

The autonomous person, in order to move forward on the path of the spirit, has to develop an inner quietness, not only for a mental introspection but in order to realize the Atman through meditation and the guidance received from a Guru; all interactions, transactions, decisions and works, in fact all life becomes a conscious means of doing yoga, and, the person must become more and more aware of this process which becomes the only aim of life. Not finding a Guru must not be an excuse for the true seeker after the Divine; the inner spark, the Psychic being is the guide; and it so happens that the Guru is found at the right time; and not only that, after a certain stage of Sadhana (spiritual practice), the Divine Mother takes it up and becomes the sadhak (the one who practices yoga) in us, the entire creation seems to be helping the seeker.

The autonomous adult examines the parent and child aspects of his/her personality, rejects what contaminates and burdens the adult and adopts what enriches and harmonizes it. He continues to grow more aware, spontaneous, and intimate; and refuses to fall back to the old mechanical and erroneous ways of nature. The ego states in the language of TA do not contradict what Sri Aurobindo writes with respect to the transformation of our lower nature at the mental, vital and physical levels: These habits of the physical–vital are almost automatic in their action and it takes either a very strong will or a persistent effort of self-discipline to get out this automatic, almost reflex action. You should not therefore get discouraged by the difficulty, but go on with the necessary perseverance of the will to press it out of existence.14 This advice is being given to a disciple who has become aware of the presence of ingrained habits which suddenly show up in contradiction to the spiritual expectations of himself, but can be taken by all who wish to change their nature for the better and the higher. We realize that most of what we are is an amalgamate of habitual actions and reactions; and we become sensitive to them especially when we witness ourselves making the wrong gestures or responses in our interactions with others. And, of course, it is not easy to transform our nature, it is rather a very tough and even dangerous task to accomplish because the outer conflicts and challenges sometimes appear as massive rocks and tunnels on the way, but if the awareness is that of the adult and the will and perseverance are strong, these obstructions are seen to disappear on their own as we enter newer levels of consciousness as spiritual aspirants.

Consciousness is made up of two elements, awareness of self and things and forces and conscious power. Awareness is the first thing necessary, you have to be aware of things in the right consciousness, in the right way, seeing them in their truth; but awareness by itself is not enough. There must be a Will and a Force that make the consciousness effective. Somebody may have the full consciousness of what has to be changed, what has to go and what has to come in its place, but may be helpless to make the change. Another may have the will-force, but for want of a right awareness may be unable to apply it in the right way in the right place.15 But, if the aspirant’s consciousness is pure, he/she can call the Divine Mother’s force to eliminate or bring in the change and a progress will always be made; all parts of personality will grow harmonious because the conflicts will be observed with the right awareness and conquered by the intelligent will. However, doing it right amidst the complexities of life even when a complete awareness has been awakened is not only tough but almost impossible, but, Krishna prescribes the method of Karma Yoga which integrates nature-swahbava, work, understanding and the heart.

There is gradation, a relativity, a hierarchy which exists in life and evolution of it on earth; awareness has this hierarchy in human growth which moves up from the senses to the ability for abstraction through mind and intelligence, but as long as the being remains dominated by desires which arise from these levels or gradations in which he is placed at a time by nature, his awareness will not be of the right kind. We have to become aware of the calm light of the Self-Purusha-Atman, which can be done when the understanding is clear, it is not clouded by emotions, ego, desires and anger or in other words when the consciousness has risen above the senses, ego, mind and intelligence. Therefore, the following Verse is being quoted as a message for the emancipated, free, autonomous adult, who finds himself ready to take up the Yoga of the Gita:

Yoga is an arduous task to one who is

Not lessoned in self-control. But he who is

Master of himself is cut out to arrive

By perseverance and well-directed efforts.16

Notes and References:

1 Eric Berne (1910- 1970), a psychiatrist from California developed the method of TA, based on the Ego states which could be used as group therapy helping people to transform themselves and enjoy better relationships by understanding and talking about their behavior in a simple vocabulary created by him. He spoke about the psychological games people play with ulterior motives and for receiving pay offs. He is the author of books like: What Do You Say After You Say Hello? Games People Play, Transactional Analysis In Psychotherapy. Many other books were written inspired by Transactional Analysis and the one called I’M OK—YOU’RE OK, written by Thomas A Harris, had become a best seller.

The terms Parent, Adult, Child and Games are specific to this method and OK got added too to signify the okay aspect of the Ego State. The Ego States are the recordings of the past which come to play during a particular transaction or situation in life. The Parent is what was imposed on the person from outside through the dos, don’ts, musts, no...s, etc, things taught and expected of her during the first five years of life; the Child is the recording of what were the internal responses of the little person to what was seen, heard and experienced by him, the felt things till the age of five; the Adult is what the person begins to learn from his own awareness, the coming to her own from the age of ten months. Game is what causes trouble because the transactions in this case are carried on with an ulterior motive to harvest a pay off, an advantage to be reaped from the other, a time pass, exploitation, hypocrisy and even deception. However, a good Game is the one which has a psychological benefit for all with no harm caused to anyone.

An okay transaction is the one in which the line of communication is smooth, progressive and healing to both the participants, but when communication is blocked, cannot be carried on or leads to undesirable consequences, is not straight but crossed, one person or both participants can benefit with the analysis of their behavior, talk about it and improve themselves by understanding their past recordings or habits which come on as the obstruction; a self-understanding leads to being more humble, straight forward, confident and compassionate as an Adult. It is the ability to interact in keeping with the other’s ego state that makes the true adult; disturbance is caused when our own ego state is not able to cope with the outer influence.

2 The Bhagvad Gita is a synthesis of the philosophical and religious system of the Hindus and is recognized along with the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. The authors of the ancient literature of India remained anonymous, and probably, the spiritual status attained and yet to be attained by them was the reason for it, but the rich diversity of thought and experience showed itself in a unity which remains unparalleled. However, Sage Vyasa who wrote the Mahabharata is considered to be the author of the Gita which occupies Chapters 23 – 40 of the Bhismaparva in this great epic. About the historicity or the Avatarhood of Krishna who gave the knowledge to Arjuna, it serves no purpose to argue as long as the Scripture has, as pointed Aldous Huxley, its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind.

Krishna is the Supreme Lord, the Avatar, a living legend, a personality all at once; he symbolizes perfection, love and beauty, song and dance, child- like innocence, fun and frolic, truth and wisdom, trust and surrender, bhakti and karma, harmony and bliss, music of his flute and warfare, inspiration and grace, the one soul-mate for all who pine for him; loved and worshipped by millions in India and abroad, he has been the most talked about, written about, sung and danced about, enticer-manmohana-chitchora.

3 Sri Aurobindo(15 Aug 1972- 5 Dec 1950) spent fourteen years of his early life in England, where he received an entirely occidental education and returned to India at the age of 21 in 1993. A brilliant scholar in Greek and Latin, he had learned French, German and Italian and had read their literature in the original tongues. He studied Sanskrit and many Indian languages including Bengali, his mother tongue, soon after his return to India.

He had a brief yet outstanding career in active politics from 1905- 1910 and lived a life of Tapasya-Integral Yoga and extensive writing work in Pondicherry for forty years, till the end of his earthly life. He has made an extra ordinary contribution to humanity by presenting the great spiritual wealth of India to the modern mind, so as to prepare it for the evolution it so desperately seeks. His many essays on the Gita, originally written for the monthly magazine called Arya during the years 1916 to 1920 were later published as a book. His translations, commentaries and writings on the Upanishads and the Veda are of valuable asset to the modern mind.

His Integral Yoga is based on the vision and aspiration for the descent of a higher consciousness on earth which shall manifest as the superman:

“…it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth- nature.”

Sri Aurobindo: The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth p 95

4 Sri Aurobindo: The Hour of God p 35

5 ‘My Credo’, a speech by Albert Einstein to the German League of Human Rights, taken from ‘Einstein A Life in Science’ by Michael White& John Gribbin.

6 Sri Aurobindo: Letters On Yoga p 616

7 Ibid pp 282-283

8 Sri Aurobindo: The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth p91

9 Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga pp 236-237

10 Ibid : p572

11 Eric Berne: Games People Play p184

12 Ibid P48

13 Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga p 234

14 Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga p1408

15 Ibid p238

16 Dilip Kumar Roy: The Bhagvad Gita 6. 36

# 2

# Facing a Dilemma

The autonomous adult is the one who exhibits firstly, awareness: of life, his /her feeling, of what is happening within him and around him, secondly, spontaneity: the ability to make the right choice and go for it, and thirdly, intimacy: to relate with others honestly, openly and candidly. But to remain content with being an integrated adult is not possible, nor is it within the domain of clinical psychiatry to deal with human nature in all its complexity or to keep people from falling back to their old ways or to guide the autonomous person on the inner path which he/she may seek desperately. More than anyone else, it is the autonomous adult who must confront the bare dilemma of life, the enigmatic inter-connections, links, happenings and circumstances.

A group therapy no matter how compassionately devised and practiced, will not change all in equal measure; it rests its hope on the individual; it’s the individual who will take the path of the spirit, and future progress of humanity will depend on the increasing numbers of such individuals. But undoubtedly, transactional self analysis is always useful for understanding and changing behavior as a preparation for entering the next level of consciousness. The need for a harmonious relationship has become an important aspect of modern life, as families and social circles have become smaller and more demanding than ever, they are more fragile, get easily strained, and break easily. Games are being played most of the times and the vicious circle grows more complicated by the day. However, the deep richness of life hides many “good” games too which must be discovered and followed, for example, many social interactions can bring a gratifying and refreshing touch to people through meaningful and enriching transactions where the participants benefit from them. The beauty and purpose of life must continue to unfold anew even though outwardly nothing seems to have changed.

A good game might be described as one whose social contribution outweighs the complexities of its motivations, particularly if the player has come to terms with those motivations without futility or cynicism. That is, a good game would be one which contributes both to the well- being of the other players and to the unfolding of the one who is “it”.1

A dilemma arises when life places us in a situation in which it becomes difficult to make a choice between alternatives; people can go on playing games with each other as long as all involved in it choose to remain participants. But games are more or less avoided by an autonomous adult if he has to sacrifice awareness, intimacy and spontaneity, because a superficial or surface living is not a part of his evolving nature; and therefore, when a dilemma seizes him, he will have to choose the option which is in keeping with the larger canvas and law of life as it prevails at that time, and not only for the formalities of relationships, which further make him go round and round in a false, meaningless existence. The courage of his convictions will retain the good-will he has for all irrespective of the decisions which may not please all, but many with narrower vision or selfish motives will despise him for that. Arjuna, the warrior simply found himself placed in a situation which was intensely disturbing; the dilemma envelops strongly and severely the person who is pure of heart and intention, who has love and good-will for all, who is intelligent and has a deeper perspective from many points of view, who has sacrificed and has never used others for selfish reasons or material gains. It is easy for a person like Duryodhana to go through life without ever having to face a dilemma; ego, ignorance and desire have a physical force which can be as destructive as the possessor of them chooses it to be, he is therefore, ready for battle with a huge army at his disposal, including that he has taken from Krishna, where as Arjuna, the warrior, adept in the use of arms, says to Krishna:

Seeing these my own people, O Krishna, arrayed for battle, my limbs collapse and my mouth is parched, my body shakes and my hair stands on end; Gandiva( Arjuna’s bow) slips from my hand, and all my skin seems to be burning.I am not able to stand and my mind seems to be whirling; also I see evil omens O Keshva.Nor do I see any good in slaying my own people in battle; O Krishna, I desire not victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures.2

But on the other hand, speaks the egoist and sarcastic Duryodhana to his teacher Dronachrya, who was also the teacher of Arjuna, his best pupil, the following words:

Behold this mighty host of the sons of Pandu, O Acharya, arrayed by Drupada’s son, thy intelligent disciple.Unlimited is this army of ours and it is marshalled by Bhishma, while the army of theirs is limited, and they depend on Bhima.3

The great epic Mahabharata deals with the entire gamut and range of human life, destiny, relationships, play of emotions, ego, errors, convictions and actions. The Gita finds a place in it at a time when an extreme situation presents itself when all human efforts have failed to prevent it. This moment has to be a decisive one for Arjuna, the warrior and leader of his times who had chosen a friend, philosopher and guide as his charioteer and not his mighty army for the narrow intention of winning the war against his kin.

The problems of life have to be faced by us and many a time a dilemma stands before us like a huge monster, but the yogi differs from the others even though he goes through the rigours more deeply in the light of his inner knowledge, the difference is that, he is living for the Divine and the decisions and changes he makes in his life shall be dictated by this truth alone and not by any outside standard demanded of him by the egoistic or fanatical forces around him. Therefore, it is in this spiritual knowledge and wisdom that he deals with the problem and limitations of life, and attains to peace, purity and good-will for all. Such knowledge must be integral-Samagram, says Krishna in the Seventh Chapter of the Gita, it comes by practicing yoga, by knowing the divine as the only refuge. It is hard to overcome the play of nature, and to approach the divine is the only way out. Therefore, the individual beings who understand the voice of the Spirit within them take up the practice of Yoga which makes them unite with the Higher Truth Consciousness ; and this is not only an achievement by itself, the living and growing faith and surrender transforming themselves into immortality are witnessed by him as long as he lives. Says the Gita:There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge-jnana, the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of time.4 But what is this knowledge-Jnana, the Gita speaks about which is so purifying that it leads to perfection? It is apt to quote Sri Aurobindo from the introduction of his book The Upanishads, here: Not a mere thinking and considering by the intelligence, the pursuit and grasping of a mental form of truth by the intellectual mind, but a seeing of it with the soul and a total living in it with the power of the inner being, a spiritual seizing by a kind of identification by the object of knowledge is jnana.5

Arjuna had followed his inner voice and had opted for Divine guidance instead of asking for armed help as was done by Duryodhana before the battle of Kurukshetra. This was a decisive step taken by the autonomous person who was aware, spontaneous, and intimate; the nervousness caused by the dilemma which enveloped him disappeared gradually as he made himself more and more open to Divine light and truth; and, finally he found himself ready to live life as a truth conscious Universal worker. Arjuna is a prince, a warrior, he is strong, highly evolved and possesses an all-round awareness, he is concerned about the grave destruction which the war would bring about, he is aware of his own feelings and the deep pain he is going through; as a spontaneous and intimate adult he speaks to Krishna directly, candidly and honestly, and seeks his guidance:Afflicted with the weakness of self-pity, my Lord, and with my mind in turmoil, I see no way out. So in this blind darkness do flash thy lead of light to me, thy disciple, I seek refuge in thee.6

The dilemma of life has no uniform solution which may be applicable to each one of us at the material, physical, vital, emotional, psychological, and mental level, but, the answer which applies to humanity as such, and, which is based on the collective wisdom of the yogis is that, each one of us is so placed in life and so goes through the rigmarole of it so as to reach a goal which is the same for all of us in the cycle of birth and death and, that is, Yoga, to become one with the Divine in consciousness and to realize the Unity in all creation. And in this sense the autonomous adult will choose the option, discover, create, or follow a game if life places him in the midst of it, with the spirit of wellbeing of all participants and for self-fulfillment in the beauty of it. The appeal to the divine can be made effective by the pure of heart, and not by the passionate egoistic personality, who has not felt the severity of the situation deeply enough, but who would soon move on to another aim or object which holds his egoistic interest.

“If the heart were not forced to want and weep,

His soul would have lain down content, at ease,

And never thought to exceed the human start

And never learned to climb towards the sun.”7

The bewilderment, the pain, and the suffering of the pure-hearted are the slow manifestation of the yoga of the inner being; life lived without awareness and in ignorance of one’s true nature must not continue like that, it must be renewed through a spiritual awakening. It is not mandatory to suffer before one is ready for the inner being to discover the soul, but suffering is what brings the strength which is required to replace the lower consciousness with the higher. An inner silence is the field for the descent of the higher knowledge and the beginning of self-knowledge and deliverance from dilemma, doubt and the movements of the lower nature. The higher consciousness cannot be received by a human vessel which has not been baked in the flame of suffering or austerity-tapa; it has to be purified and strengthened by this purity. A hymn from the Veda is being quoted here: Wide spread out for thee is the sieve of thy purifying, O Master of the soul; becoming in the creature thou pervades his members all through. He tastes not that delight who is unripe and whose body has not suffered in the heat of the fire; they alone are able to bear that and enjoy it who have been prepared by the flame.8

To indulge in an elaboration of pure psychological aspects of human nature is not the aim here, but since a commercial and consumer culture is becoming predominantly visible all over the globe as a result of the growth in the Scientific and technological fields, and modern psychiatric studies are being utilized in helping humanity to cope with the stress and strain and the competence and adjustments required in daily life, it is imperative to bring in the psychological angles of yoga too, as the dilemma of life never stops presenting itself in one way or the other; some notes from Sri Aurobindo’s dairy are worthy of our attention here: I mean by Yogic psychology an examination of the nature and movements of consciousness as they are revealed to us by the processes and results of yoga.

This definition at once takes us out of the field of ordinary psychology and extends the range of our observation to an immense mass of facts and experiments which exceed the common surface and limited range as the vastly extended range of observation of science exceeds that of the common man looking at natural external phenomena only with the help of his unaided mind and senses. The field of yoga is practically unlimited and its processes and instrumentation have a plasticity and adaptability and power of expansion to which it is difficult to see or set any limit.

And: A complete psychology cannot be a pure natural science, but must be a compound of science and metaphysical knowledge.

This necessity arises from the immediate perception by mind of something beyond and behind its operations, some energy of hidden consciousness greater than our apparent mentality. To know what that is, we have to resort to a metaphysical enquiry.9

Science is the quest for the discovery of truth on the material level and many a great scientists have sacrificed their lives to give such wonderful gifts to humanity helping it to overcome hunger, live a healthy life, be creative and spiritual; but the destruction of human values and rising violence is what is being witnessed in the resultant materialistic and commercial culture which is becoming more visible by the day and amazingly, it is something which is against the very spirit of science. The evolutionary aim of Nature will not be achieved through material progress alone; and Nature will find ways of bringing man around to establish knowledge higher than the mind and intellect. In brief, as she has aspired successfully from matter to life, from life to mind and mental ego, so she aspires and with a fated success to an element beyond mind, the vijnana of the Hindus, the self luminous idea or Truth-self now concealed and super conscious in man and the world, as life was always concealed in matter and mind in life.10

While living in the midst of the age of Science and technology the majorities of us are ignorant of its laws and discipline though we have come to depend on amenities provided by them in a way which has made us forget and neglect Nature’s bounty essential for life on earth in spirit as well as in matter and the lasting beauty and sense of awe which it provides us with, thereby sustaining us in body and soul. And India, the land of the Veda is witnessing a chaotic mass race in a direction opposite to where the verified wisdom of her Sages lies and from which the customs, festivals, traditions and cultures had arisen for the common people, much in the way the fruits of science are being used by the common people of the day. Many good games for ordinary life, not only meant to lend colour and zest to it but to make people socially interactive, aware and useful had originated from the spiritual wisdom of the land; and these games, while still maintaining their utility, have gradually become contaminated with time; and to put it in the language of Integral yoga, the lower consciousness could not assimilate the purity of thought which was behind them and all that is left is the superficial pleasure of the vital being. The fruits of pure science are getting contaminated in the same manner as the fruits of spiritual wisdom, and this contamination is becoming the cause of destruction, not of progress as was visualized by the great scientists like Newton, Einstein and others. Nature has provided us with all that is needed to sustain life and spirit on earth, but in his greed and ignorance man considers himself superior, exploits at will and heads for destruction. We have to get away from this mental and egoistic view to the true unifying knowledge, and that has two aspects, the essential, jnana, and the comprehensive, vijnana, the direct spiritual awareness of the Supreme Being and the right intimate knowledge of the principles of his existence, Prakriti, Purusha and the rest, by which all that is can be known in its divine origin and in the supreme truth of its nature.11

It has been acknowledged by modern Psychology, that, if the needs for emotional fulfillment, recognition, and the structuring of time to avoid boredom are not met, it results in mental disturbance and biological deterioration. And ordinarily a person goes into depression, gets resentful and angry, or is faced with a problem which he is not able to solve. Some people seek psychiatric help, organize themselves better through activities/work, pastimes, rituals, look for compatible companions and engage in games; but ultimately none of these work, what works and goes on working, enriching and perfecting is, yoga; the soul within waits for recognition, so that it will rise towards a fulfillment for which no outer dependence is needed; and though the problem of life remains, a deeper, a wider and a higher perspective will go on resolving it; the need to die and to be reborn many times in one life will be felt and met with. Sukrattama madhuno bhaksham asata- those who are utterly perfected in works taste the enjoyment of this honey, its sweetness, because the inner settings will influence the outer. Men therefore protected by the Lord of the Ananda governing this inner nature are able to accord their thoughts and actions with the inner truth and light and are no longer made to stumble by the forces of the outer crookedness; they walk straight, they become entirely perfect in their works and by this truth of inner working and outer action are able to taste the entire sweetness of existence, the honey, the delight that is the food of soul. 12

All of us do not become perfect yogis and all of us are not scientists; but the dilemma of life shall find solace only when the oneness of matter and spirit is lived through the growth of consciousness, and, this is what is meant by Yoga. Krishna spoke to a bewildered Arjuna by addressing his surface behavior and then, through the opening of his pure intelligence, went on to the necessary bit of metaphysics, the need for Yoga and its methods, which must result in doing works in the world and being established in Yoga at the same time- yogastha kuru karmani; and here the problem and the dilemma of life shall not matter in the long run.

A riddle of opposites is made his field:

Freedom he asks but needs to live in bonds,

He has need of darkness to perceive some light

And need of grief to feel a little bliss;

He has need of death to find a greater life.13

Notes and References:

1 Eric Berne: Games People Play p163

2 Gita: 2: 28,29,30,31

3 Ibid 2: 3, 10

Bhishma is the Great grand uncle of Arjuna and his cousin Duryodhana. Bhima , the hugely powerful and the strongest in body, is one of the five pandava brothers.

4 Gita: 4:38

5 Letters on Yoga: p 572

6 Gita 2:7

7 Sri Aurobindo: Savitri p443

8 Sri Aurobindo: The Secret of the Veda p339 Rig-Veda 9.83

9 Sri Aurobindo: Essays Divine And Human PP 339,322,323

10 Sri Aurobindo: The Hour of God p48

“Jnana is interpreted as wisdom, the direct spiritual illumination and vijnana as the detailed rational knowledge of the principles of existence. We must have not merely knowledge of the relationless Absolute but also of Its varied manifestation.”

S. Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvadgita p212

11 Sri Auronindo: Essays on the Gita p266

12 Sri Aurobindo: The Secret of the Veda p347

13 Sri Aurobindo: Savitri 3.4.337

# 3

# Pure Understanding

A good education is a preparation for life; the kind and the outward quality of life change from time to time as do the morals, the values, and the needs. But there are those things of perennial value which remain innate parts of human development, and to cultivate them, is what is meant by educating ourselves; and in this context harmony, peace, health, prosperity, goodwill, unity, and universality are to be valued and developed for individual and collective progress.

All of us carry “trash” in us in different measures which contaminates our being and becoming mentally, emotionally, vitally and physically, and, without discarding this accumulated trash from time to time, we cannot discover and unveil the true Spirit in us. It is also important for us to rediscover the child in us with its purity, curiosity, awe and wonder for life and Nature. It is important for the individual to understand his child, not only because it is going to be with him all his life, but also because it is the most valuable part of his personality.1

The child in us according to Amy Bjork Harris has three inborn needs or longings: Security, novelty, and meaning, and the greatest of these is meaning. Because their lives had meaning, the heroes and heroines of the world may have given up a great measure of security and novelty. We are heirs to their wisdom, and we can learn from them still.2

The valuable part of personality may remain dominated by the need for security and novelty for many people through their entire lives, which remains limited to games, rituals and pastimes, but if the “meaning” part starts becoming more and more prominent and assertive in some of us due to reasons like getting disillusioned, going through deep pain, enlightenment, change in the level of awareness, etc it finds its escape in fulfilling hobbies, ambitions or such activities which the child finds attractive, interesting and worthy, or in a larger cause taken up for a valid reason. The games which children play are natural and helpful in their development, for the roles they have to take up as adults and inculcate the most wonderful qualities of sportsmanship in them. But the Games which people play with each other in their daily transactions and about which we need to be concerned are those which carry ulterior motives for the expected pay off and are a far cry from the meaning of games in the ordinary sense; even in the institutionalization, commercialization and organization of Sports, games are being played.

Some of us ask for help, indulge in introspection, and try to find solutions because we feel the need for harmony, transparency, and collective growth in relationships and natural transactions with each other, otherwise relationships have no meaning in the real sense of the word; but there are those amongst us who go through life playing games all along, therefore, there is no need for the latter to devote themselves to the pursuit of finding the deeper meaning or the purpose of life, because, this is the secret of their enthusiasm and vitality. And therefore, as remarks Berne: The destiny of every human being is decided by what goes on inside his skull when he is confronted with what goes on outside his skull. Each person designs his own life………It may not be what he wants, but it is what he wants to be.3

However, the longing for a meaning of life at the mental level will not be sufficiently satisfied, because deep within the heart is hidden a spark which needs to show itself as the real guide and collaborator for the human Endeavour for evolution and meaning; and when it surfaces it gradually converts itself to a living personality in us, which Sri Aurobindo calls the Psychic personality which reveals to us the meaning and the goal of life, to become one with the spiritual reality in us and in all, and all the beautiful qualities associated with love and gratitude then become a natural part of us. The Child in us, curious, trusting, pure and hopeful, as well as the intimate, spontaneous and aware Adult, both “internally derived”, will be the natural assets for this spiritual transformation.

Krishna had assured Arjuna that no Endeavour made for spiritual progress will go waste, a person’s value lies in what he/she strives to become and not in what he is:

In this path, no effort is ever lost and no obstacle prevails; even a little of this righteousness saves from great fear. In this, O Kurunandana (Arjuna), the resolute understanding is single; but the thoughts of the irresolute are many branched and endless.4

What is meant by “righteousness” and what is “resolute understanding” of which the Gita speaks? It is definitely not something which must be dictated or imposed on the child by a fanatical and rigid authority, which may be called a parent ego state. The internally derived child and adult are equipped with the natural gifts of observation, decision making, and will; and outside influences will not be allowed to mix with this internal purity so as to give rise to blind pursuits and errors. The method for the search of pure knowledge and meaning will consolidate itself through personal experiences; the guidance and light received from outside sources will not clash but shall merge with the inner person the Psychic being, which steadily develops in us and moves in front to become the leader, it knows what is right, how to join the will from above, and how not to let the understanding intelligence-Buddhi behind this will be maligned. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had the following to say with respect to the wisdom of the just quoted Verses of the Gita, because the purity and pure knowledge therein can only be twisted and turned by ignorant and evil minds for the purpose of making use of it for establishing their dominance over the religious minded:

The discursiveness of the irresolute buddhi is contrasted with the concentration, the single-mindedness of the resolute. Human life finds its fulfillment through self-devotion to a commanding end and not in the unfettered pursuit of endless possibilities. One-pointedness has to be acquired by cultivation. Distraction is our natural condition from which we have to be freed but not by the mysticisms of nature or sex, race or nation but by a genuine experience of Reality. Single-mindedness backed by such an experience is a supreme virtue and cannot be twisted to fanaticism.5

The precious human life is wasted in mindless, superficial, purely ritualistic, or vicious living in most cases, but those who see the futility of such a life but do nothing about it are the ones who really miss the boat and stagnate, the others may be called fine. Those who are not able to make up their mind are the ones who are attached to the desires and the many distractions, games, pastimes and rituals which hold their attention, even though deep in their heart they also want to find their real self. There has to be single-mindedness after the intelligence has accepted the value of yoga in human life. It is not a fanatic zeal but an acceptance with a pure understanding which is demanded here; the path of yoga cannot be pursued without a will, intelligence and wisdom.

One who is poised in his intelligence, Transcends the duality of good and evil. So strive for Yoga: Yoga is skill in works.6 Says, Krishna to Arjuna. Striving for Yoga is possible only when we are free from confusion, fear, greed, ignorance, pride and anger. The real skill of doing works in the world starts flowering when we are established in Yoga with a higher consciousness, work then, will not bind us but will get done in a spirit of calm freedom and dignity without producing the negativity which can only come from selfishness and undue expectations from others and results in anger and resentment.

Many methods are suggested to curb, control, or to be rid of anger. But a method will work only when we are capable of admitting the fact that anger is unjustified, no matter what causes it and then, to become aware of it , to be able to observe it, and to stop it from controlling our speech and behavior. And even if, in the beginning it cannot be done to perfection, it will be done in retrospection with a feeling of regret and a will to conquer it. This awareness will not only take care of anger but many positive qualities will enter into our nature which were earlier not there, till the main culprit the ego is caught in hiding and is gradually pushed out.

The Gita speaks of the fact that desires and expectations cause anger, impatience, despair, anxiety, restlessness and emotional impurities which lead to a disturbed mind and our resultant actions in turn create imbalance of the kind which is detrimental to spiritual progress, threatens our relationships, ruins peace and puts undue pressure on those around us. The much needed state of inner joy cannot be found or created in an angry person; he will continue to look for happiness outside himself and to blame others for his unhappy state. This does not mean that environment has no effect on our well being and much is wrong within us all the time, but anger must not be justified, on the contrary one has to proceed with a calm, intelligent will to perform our duties and carry on with our responsibilities-the *dharma.*

The Gita deals with anger in the beginning itself; it rises from desire and desire arises from attachment, and attachment is caused because the sense objects dominate the person’s thoughts. Anger brings obscurity, confusion, clouding of intelligence and destruction.

It is therefore, advised that personal desire, ego, arrogance and anger must have no place in our being. A pure and silent mind alone can concentrate and meditate on the Highest Power and receive light, peace and the right knowledge for our works and dealings in life.

A binding of our complete being in unity with the Divine has to be brought about. It is not an easy task, it is a tough decision to begin with and it is tougher still to accomplish it, but if the will is there, all life seems to be meant and designed for this cause alone and becomes an adventure which continues to bring inner joy and contentment; something which cannot be exchanged with anything else in the world.

The synthesis of Yoga of which the Gita speaks will begin well with the knowledge that we do not know anything, we do whatever we do because we are bestowed with those capacities and qualities by a Higher Wisdom; we are humbled, we open ourselves with a pure intelligence in order to receive light, or knowledge from above which indeed descends. This surrender to the Divine is devotion-bhakti and this devotion enables us to receive the higher knowledge-Jnana and thus strengthened we go on doing what we must do in the world, be it in the immediate sphere or for a universal cause; ultimately it all adds up to the universal because the spirit in which work is done is the same: calm, progressive, and offered to the Divine. When the will is there, the means of carrying out the will are also clearly visible and are followed with a natural sincerity; the self discipline involved is not painful but is a part of the joy of the will. A natural routine for spiritual seeking will set itself up and will be followed up till a stage is reached when a spontaneous connectivity with the Divine can be established at will at any time and the needed light, solace, peace and strength will be received.

This does not mean that all our human failings and problems will disappear when we are so connected with the Divine, but all will change in a way that the inner progress will continue to grow towards a Divine calm, peace, devotion and joy. It is indeed symbolic that the Gita’s yoga is addressed to Arjuna, the human representative, who is a warrior, is compassionate, intelligent, humble, keen, progressive and open-minded. And to put the priceless message of this pragmatic yoga in one verse is something which must ring in the karma-yogi’s ears: “Devoting all thyself to Me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy actions into Me, resorting to the Yoga of the will and intelligence be always one in heart and consciousness with me.”

Berne too, from the mental-psychological point of view speaks of the despair and depression which life crises lead to and it is true, that, people who are intelligent, sensitive to the overall quality of life, feel deeply, and live by ideals and values are the ones whose hearts and minds are touched and moved so acutely that they are in the end, forced to become candid, aware, intimate and spontaneous to the limit where they find themselves alone, watching the drama of life and aware of their participation in it. Each person, in addition, has a preconscious life plan, or script, by which he structures longer periods of time—months, years, or his whole life—filling them with ritual activities, pastimes, and games which further the script while giving him immediate satisfaction, usually interrupted by periods of withdrawal or sometimes episodes of intimacy. Scripts are usually based on childlike illusions which may persist throughout a whole lifetime; but in more sensitive, perceptive and intelligent people these illusions dissolve one by one, leading to the various life crises…..7 The final solution lies in Yoga and not in any way in psychiatry which of course may be of great help initially.

The Gita says, that, by doing Yoga, Buddhi (Understanding) becomes perfected in a way that the good and evil of the world do not cause any disturbance to it and ever united with the Divine-the One Reality such a yogi is able to do works in the world with evenness of mind and equality; this evenness of mind though difficult and even impossible to achieve by mental efforts, becomes a natural state of existence through yoga. Such a one does his works in unity with the divine consciousness and remains equal both in success and failure. This equality or equanimity is the test to be gone through from stage to stage and is directly proportional to the extent of the calm purity of understanding. But then again, what is meant by right understating?

By the understanding we mean that which at once perceives, judges and discriminates, the true reason of the human being not subservient to the senses, to desire or to the blind force of habit, but working in its own right for mastery, for knowledge.8

Krishna speaks of purifying the understanding as the first step of Yoga, and not only for solving the problems of ordinary life; even the confusion caused by the scriptures must be cleared from the mind: a pure intelligence is neither limited by the scriptures, nor is it confused by them; and, even when some bewilderment is caused by the scriptures, such a buddhi is capable of regaining complete stability and calm from which must arise unattached action9. He has assured Arjuna by telling him clearly--not to remain the Adapted child, who shows agreement with the parent and behaves by parental or social norms to please them, but on the contrary, he must not allow his intelligence to be deluded even by the Vedas but should stand firm in Samadhi**\*** and attain to Yoga. Says the Svetasvatara Upanishad: Like butter in cream is the self in everything. Knowledge of the self is gained through meditation.

The scriptures can be equated with the parent ego state which the autonomous adult is able to see in the right perspective to move ahead with his/her life. However, though the Indian Hindu religion is rooted in individual realizations based on contemplation and meditation, but certain ways or rules were prescribed by the erudite for social (the majority is not made up of autonomous adults) harmony and practice, and therefore, it has largely become parent dominated; and even though, the contemporary individual is asserting himself, this assertion is mostly of the nature of a rebellious child who wants to grab things and finds opportunities for immediate gratification, rebels for materialistic reasons alone and not for the assertion of the inner voice. The Parent is a huge collection of recordings in the brain of unquestioned or imposed external events perceived by a person in his early years roughly the first five years; the Child is the recording of internal events, the responses of the little person to what he sees or hears; the ten month old has found he is able to do something which grows from his own awareness and original thought. This self-actualization is the beginning of the Adult.10 Problems are created within the individual and society, when the Child part remains adaptive for too long even when the Adult part needs space to grow but the mental clarity has not been developed due to many reasons. But a greater problem may result in anarchy and hooliganism when the rebellious Child is strong, unable to scrutinize the Parent, because the okay Adult has not developed.

But a conflict rising from the parent, child, and adult ego statesis being witnessed all over the globe. In this context a quote from Nathaniel Branden is worth reading: Central to the science of psychology is the issue and problem of motivation. The base of the science is the need to answer two fundamental questions: why does a man act as he does? What would be required for a man to act differently? The key to motivation lies in the realm of values. The tragedy of psychology today is that values is the one issue specifically banned from its domain. It is not true that merely bringing conflicts into conscious awareness guarantees that patients will resolve them. The answer to moral problems are not self evident; they require a process of complex philosophical thought and analysis. Effective psychotherapy requires a conscious, rational, scientific code of ethics—a system of values based on the facts of reality and geared to the needs of man’s life on earth.11

“The key to motivation lies in the realm of value”, but from where are those values going to spring up suddenly when required? Where is their domain? And secondly, “a process of complex philosophical thought and analysis” is very much available in Vedanta, which along with its tributaries has been openly flowing since thousands of years in the land of its origin, even though on the surface the complexity and contradictions witnessed all around hardly provide any hint of its existence and practice; yet, it is here that it still flows in spite of the inconsistencies and diversities in its actual practice, a diminishing value attached to it, but still open to the tests and scrutiny of the modern scientific mind; diminishing in value not because it has nothing to offer, is out dated or primitive, but because, the spirit is not being allowed to surface as much as the material needs of the lower nature; all is being judged by modern norms of politico-economic, material-glitter, and a superficial view of human rights, and also, the creation of rivalries by highlighting the natural differences at the cost of unity is being done by the thriving hostile elements within.

It is quite appropriate to quote J.M. Roberts too, from his book, ‘The Pelican History of the World’ to drive a point home: “It was in the fifth century that Indian arithmeticians invented the decimal system. A layman can perhaps glimpse the importance of this more readily than he can that of the Indian philosophical resurgence of the same period.” And ironically, it is the Parent ego state which has maintained the flow for good or for bad by making the child adaptable and supple; more autonomous adults are needed through an education system--more suited to India than a mere preparation of a work force able to go and survive or make it big in developed countries abroad. What then are the norms based on which the aspirant must decide about life matters, if the Gita says that we shall transcend the dualities of good and evil, for what else is buddhi needed for? The process of the purification of buddhi continues after the aspirant is firmly established in the practice of Yoga and meditation, the dualities of life are seen as the manifestation of Nature-Prakriti in individual beings, but the final aim for all humans is to arrive at the higher levels of consciousness, having understood that the yogi is not disturbed by dualities, but receives guidance from the Divine which transcends such differences and is based on a higher wisdom of existence.

The autonomous adult has to be the person with a settled understanding- Sthithprajna, the one in Samadhi12 of which Krishna speaks to Arjuna in the Gita: when the inner state is firmly established in calmness, truth, non-attachment, and light, all the outward occupations do not disturb the person, he lives in self-contentment, and carries out works in the spirit of goodwill for all. Desire is the cause for anger, restlessness, intolerance, violence and destruction; greed and desire pollute the mind, the understanding becomes impure and intelligence is destroyed- buddhinasta13. Therefore says Krishna: And by your soul’s own light slay once for all this redoubtable and elusive enemy—lust.14 This verse cannot be explained to those who have not yet taken to the spiritual path; the intelligence gets purified by the atman which is beyond it, it is in purity alone that it is possible to dwell in the atman; the lower self is steadied in the Higher. The seeker who has arrived at this steady state turns to the Self-atman alone for guidance, protection and fullness of progress. Therefore, to do works without attachment, is not meant in a narrow way open to useless argument, but is the most natural outcome of a larger universal and transcendent approach, and to develop it, a pure understanding is required as the foundation.

Notes and References:

1 Eric Berne: What Do You Say After You Say Hello? p 12

2 Amy Bjork Harris and Thomas A Harris, M.D.: Staying OK p 146

3 Eric Berne: What Do You Say After You Say Hello? p 31

4 Gita: 2:40-41

5 S Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvadgita p116

6 Gita: 2.50

7 Eric Berne: What Do You Say After You Say Hello? Pp25-26

8 Sri Aurobindo: The Synthesis of Yoga p296

9 See Gita Chap 2, Verses 52-53

\*Trance or Samadhi is a state of intensity of concentration and unity with a Higher Consciousness; a flow of ananda, light and pure knowledge is received in a state of stillness, which makes the yogi transcend the ordinary mentality.

“As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the yogi of subdued thought who practices union with the Self.” Gita 6: 19

10 The ego states as defined by Thomas Harris in his book I’M OK- YOU’RE OK:

11Taken from, I’M OK- YOU’RE OK, pp209-210 by Thomas A Harris

12 See Gita Chap 2 Verses 54-72

These verses provide Krishna’s description of the inner qualities when Arjuna asks Him for the signs of a man who achieves Samadhi, the one whose intelligence/understanding has become stable.

13 Gita 2: 63

14 Dilip Kumar Roy: The Bhagvad Gita A Revelation 3:43

# 4

# Moving Ahead

Material assets are of relative value and possessing them to move ahead in life is a natural incentive to work hard for earning money; but the political and economic storm which originated from the West has so swept the East that its societies which were founded on Spiritual progress made over a long time in human history have started to break down in confusion and chaos; a kind of spiritual exaggeration had resulted in the negligence of many practical aspects of human life, and today, there is a strong impulse and a race for grabbing e political and economic power, and the technological wonders and consumer goods which are being placed before them, even though there has been no uniform development or even appreciation of intellectual honesty, the method and spirit of science, and the discipline which goes with it. Can this accumulation of assets, gadgets, of things acquired for a status symbol or for quenching rising desires be called human progress?

Yes, it is progress from one point of view that man now has much scope and skill to develop things and ideas which can be marketed for making money or for fame and position, and, is able to focus on them and work hard for it; but if only the element of exploitation of others could be absent here; that is, if all the games played for the ulterior quality and pay off alone could be replaced by the good ones, which could provide rejuvenating joy to the child and inspiring support to the adult in us. The psychiatrist, who is in the best and perhaps the only position to study games adequately, unfortunately deals almost entirely with people whose games have lead them into difficulties. This means that the games which are offered for clinical investigation are all in some sense “bad” ones. Since by definition games are based on ulterior transactions, they must all have some element of exploitation. For these two reasons, practical on the one hand and theoretical on the other, the search for good games becomes a difficult quest.1

The present writer is aware that she is stretching modern Psychology from its utilitarian appeal to join it with the spiritual, though the “theoretical” aspect of it is not derived from the spiritual but from the problems of outward human behavior. The secret of the assimilative power of India which has made her survive in continuation with the ancient in her, in spite of too many foreign onslaughts lies in her spiritual wisdom, but the negligence of the pragmatic aspects of life makes way for a study which is likely to result in the inference that as a Nation she should not have blindly aped what has proved to be suitable for the advanced countries of the day. And in this respect a western scientific mind may be more suitable to delve into the rich spiritual wisdom of India, because it is the outcome of a scientific method applied to the discovery of reality in the realm of the spirit which can be accessed by going beyond the intellect. And in this respect there has been no dearth of good games in India at the personal, family and social levels which were played in the form of conduct with children, siblings, friends, juniors, elders, the knowledgeable-jnani, sage, teacher, guru and all, and, as celebrations, festivals and rituals all of which had a larger meaning behind them, of unity, gratitude, faith and progress. It has been due to unfortunate coincidence that gradually the simple beauty of it all is getting covered up by superficial ostentation and even uncouth ways of merry making, hence many of them have to be taken as otiose.

Spiritual knowledge comes from experience and realizations, and the laws and forces which lead it reveal themselves as concretely as an experiment in science; the problem is that, where as the results of science are being made use of in the physical domain by one and all, the spiritual cannot be imposed or applied in the same way because it has nothing to show outwardly in terms of surface utility and economics; and if this trend goes on and the inner domain continues to be neglected or used in name for playing games of all kinds—which also includes exploitation—then, from where shall values, norms or dharma arise to fill in the hollowness of life? The truth is that, games are needed in ordinary life and the good ones can only come from what has been inwardly realized as good and of lasting value.

The signs of a barrenness of soul are becoming visible not only in the West but all over the globe and many are turning towards India to find it: The message of the East to the West is a true message, “Only by finding himself can man be saved,” and “What shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?” The west has heard the message and is seeking out the law and truth of the soul and the evidences of an inner reality greater than the material. The danger is that with her passion for mechanism and her exaggerated intellectuality she may fog herself in an external and false psychism, such as we see arising in England and America, the homes of the mechanical genius, or in intellectual, unspiritual and therefore erroneous theories of the Absolute, such as have run their course in critical and metaphysical Germany.2 This observation of Sri Aurobindo made a hundred years back can be grasped by what was being said by Thomas Harris some Seventy years later, based on his observations and experience with people of all ages, the young and old as a Psychologist, and the emphasis on the practical is clear here: Most of us give that incomprehensible span of time eternity some thought, now and then. It generally is thought of as a religious concept, rather uneasily by some, or cynically by others. Can it be thought of in practical terms? 3 The point to be made here is that, yoga is so practical spiritually, that the outward life devoid of its unity with the inner appears as impractical, unreal, and false to the yogi. Values on which human life and progress must be based will not come into play if the spiritual realm and not the religious dictates alone are not made a part of life and the required games; Krishna informs Arjuna : That (higher being) which is to all creatures is a night, is to the self-mastering sage his waking (his luminous day of true being); that life which is to them their waking (their day, their consciousness, their bright condition of activity) is a night (darkness of the soul) to the sage who sees. 4

Sri Aurobindo, while appreciating the “practical” approach of the West so badly needed by the East had expressed his apprehensions about the superfluous blind aping which could prove to be disastrous: The East also is waking to the message. The danger is that Asia may accept it in the European form, forget for a time her own law and nature and either copy blindly the West or make a disastrous amalgam of that which she has in its most inferior forms and the crudeness which are invading her.5

This was the true foresight of a visionary sage, who had transcended much so that the unity of existence was clearly seen and lived by him; and this was made possible due to the power of yoga. However, peace and harmony shall prevail only when life is lived inside out and not outside in; the responsibility lies on India to make it happen first for her and then for humanity as such, because it is here the spirit still lives, in spite of its relegation behind stage for a free directionless play of the lower forces of nature; the inferior forms and the crudeness which are arising from within her, growing strong, and making their presence felt with the crude impunity nourished by the forces of ignorance and lowness have a weak yet collective parent ego due to a lack of education which would inculcate discipline, values, civic sense and proper behavior, and, the child and adult ego states, internally derived, are getting lost in the disastrous amalgam of religion, technology, exploitation and unhealthy competition in the guise of a moving ahead message. It may soon become too late to relate and transact with such ego states, which will result in a communication gap too large to cover; it can be stopped only by an efficient and well-meaning administration able to provide guidance to the budding youth; even education has become secondary to this need, because it is being dominated by a commercially competitive society, and one after another, problems of law and order are being named as political, not human issues related to basic human needs, qualities, endeavours and the appreciation of these in those who possess them; where is evolution, progress, and what kind of a moving ahead can be spoken about?

The onus again lies on the individual and such an individual who understands what is meant by moving ahead during a short, uncertain and valuable human life on earth. But coming back to the overall meaning of progress for humanity, a moving ahead in life for the individual, the aspiration expressed in the Upanishads: Lead me from the unreal to the Real, Lead me from darkness to Light, Lead me from death to Immortality.1 is not only still unrealized but is no longer the aim for many of us. The yogi achieves in spirit what a scientist achieves in matter; a balanced and harmonious life on earth needs their unity, because Truth is not one-sided; and, since only those who have the call can achieve it, therefore they are the ones who owe it to themselves to move ahead to achieve it. And amazingly, this Unity was known and lived by our Sages thousands of years ago. What then shall be our ideal? Unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests…6

Thomas Harris, as a Psychologist dealing with an okay life for people, writes: Our guiding star is the faith that something better can exist between persons in this world than the combative and manipulative exchanges that threaten to destroy us today.7 What must take shape in real life needs a vision for progress which must be seen to materialize, and, it is the yoga of the Gita which can be is practiced by some, appreciated or discovered by others and could be made a model to live by, irrespective of any religious faith. It is an established truth in the spiritual field that the higher force descends according to its law on those who have been prepared for it, have been purified and strengthened to receive it, therefore all cannot pursue it beyond a certain limit, but living with the values required for it in order to keep a balance in humanity is necessary for peace and happiness on earth, and this is what India had achieved to a very large extent, and unfortunately this is what is being sacrificed in favour of an erratic material progress which is producing the extremely rich and the extremely poor, and the soul is disappearing in the process, the egoistic nature is appearing in strength, forcing the materially deprived to give up the simplicity and faith which are still capable of sustaining them; the Parent is dying, the Child is becoming an orphan, the Adult is becoming helpless. The power of the soil is still there and the heavens shall descend with their bounty if the call is made strong. What is “threatening to destroy” is also being encouraged by the Governing powers; a free economy has come to mean, that, people remain busy earning endlessly bigger all the time for the sake of greed and status, and, for playing games in their pursuit for pay offs which they feel will bring them happiness.

When Krishna speaks of renouncing the fruits of actions in the world in the following words: Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits; let not the fruits of thy works be thy motive, neither let there be in thee any attachment to inactivity,8 it does not mean that we lead a meaningless life by throwing away all that we have achieved due to our hard work and perseverance, but on the contrary a progress is demanded of us which can be achieved by remaining free from the attachment to the fruit of our work, as well as to doing no work, which is a hindrance for further progress. To achieve something and then not to see beyond that in order to live happily ever after is a narrow way of viewing life; on the contrary we are meant to progress from a lower to a higher nature by doing works and acting according to our inner nature and the gradations of inner consciousness covered by us; and this is what is meant by moving ahead. All opposite forces, conflicts, as well as the happy stages in life are means of progress, not of stagnation. Krishna, as the teacher had to accomplish the task of transforming his pupil from his ordinary consciousness to a spiritual one; he proceeds with the surface personality, its behavior, its works and duties, and joins it with the individual spirit, and the Spirit in all. It is indeed a beautiful process which leads the pupil to a more beautiful open-ended fulfillment.

The emancipated autonomous adult will focus on ways which make him grow larger than life, so that he/she finds himself ready for the hour of that transformation which he carries in his inner vision and which Mother Nature intends for him. He shall perceive and overcome the obstructions caused for the spirit’s flow in too much inertia and ignorance, as well as in too much materialism, order and dictates of intellect. And where is any room for narrowness, ego, anger, greed, and the rest on the way, because, a great calm, equality, light, and bliss have to descend on him progressively as he moves on the path of a higher realization? The spiritual journey once it becomes sure-footed brings many interesting stations en-route and continues to become more enlightening, enriching, vast, and adventurous. It is tough, gets tougher at times, but the higher consciousness in which the aspirant starts living internally is so beautiful, that all else is a mirage compared to it. To become truth conscious, to move ahead towards the vaster truth all the time, and to learn to live life in the world with the inner truth of our being is possible when there is a quest for it, when we meditate on it, and when we make it the focus of all our activities and progress.

As so he grew into his larger self,

Humanity framed his movements less and less:

A greater being saw a greater world.9

Notes and References:

1 Eric Berne: Games People Play p163

2 Sri Aurobindo: Ideal and Progress, pp 47-48; this booklet is a compilation of articles from the monthly review Arya, which were written during 1915-1916.

3 Amy Bjork Harris and Thomas A Harris, M.D.: Staying OK p90

4 Gita 2: 69

5 Sri Aurobindo: Ideal and Progress p 49

And to quote him further in continuation: “The problem of thought therefore is to find out the right idea and the right way of harmony; to restate the ancient and the eternal spirit of truth of the Self so that it shall re-embrace, permeate, dominate, transfigure the mental and physical life; to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-development so that the mental and psychical life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity; and to seek for the means and motives by which his external life, his society and his institutions may remould themselves progressively in the truth of the spirit and develop towards the utmost possible harmony of individual freedom and social unity.”

6 Ibid p 51

7Amy Bjork Harris and Thomas A Harris, MD: Staying OK p9

8 Gita 2: 47

9 Sri Aurobindo: Savitri p27

# 5

# The Ego

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ego, as the person’s sense of their own value and importance, the part of the mind that is responsible for a person’s sense of who they are; egotism is the quality of being very conceited or self-absorbed; egocentric is to be self-centered; egomania is an obsessive concern with yourself; and according to the Oxford American Dictionary, egoism means self interest as the foundation of morality, which in turn is the degree of conformity to moral principles, concerned with or leading to a psychological effect associated with confidence in a right action.

The Gita views ego is an instrument which has been provided by Nature to create awareness in us with regard to our surroundings; it is needed for growth and survival in the ordinary sense, but becomes an obstruction for true evolution which must work from inside out, therefore it has to be recognized, controlled, and finally thrown away. But the ego is very compatible with anger and loves to cherish a self worth, which creates ignorance and does not allow the higher light to enter the mind-buddhi, through a mental block which is thus formed.

Sri Aurobindo defines the ego as follows: What is this strongly separative self- experience that we call ego? It is nothing fundamentally real in itself but only a practical constitution of our consciousness devised to centralize the activities of nature in us. We perceive a formation of mental, physical, vital experience which distinguishes itself from the rest of being, and that is what we think of as ourselves in nature—this individualization is being in becoming. We then proceed to conceive of ourselves as something which has thus individualized itself and only exists so long as it is individualized,--a temporary or at least a temporal becoming; or else we conceive of ourselves as someone who supports or causes the individualization, an immortal being perhaps but limited by its individuality. This perception and this conception constitute our ego-sense.1

Transactional Analysis, as one of the practical approaches to study harmonize human behavior through Western Psychological methods begins with reading the signs of the ego states and then to be able to discern whether it is the child or the parent or the adult which is predominantly responsible for a particular situation going wrong and whether a better transaction can improve this situation: In more practical terms it is a system of feelings accompanied by a related set of behavior patterns. Each individual seems to have available a limited repertoire of such ego states, which are not roles but psychological realities. This repertoire can be sorted into following categories: (1) ego states which resemble those of parental figures (2) ego states which are autonomously directed toward objective appraisal of reality and (3) those which represent archaic relics, still active ego states which are fixated in early childhood.2

It therefore, becomes possible to observe and diagnose behavior during social interactions and transactions between two persons, which must be ideally, straight, candid, balanced, and timely, and, if not so, can be rectified suitably. Though Berne is not using the word ego in the conventional sense but still ego is present in all transactions and the aim is to become aware of it and to change behavior and ones nature for the better till the autonomous adult is naturally in control. And this autonomous adult shall be free to explore the truth and be driven by it without being attached to dogma and fanaticism. The position taken has to be a compassionate, I’m OK You are OK. The exploration can be made only as individuals are emancipated from the past and become free to choose either to accept or reject the values and methods of the past.3

When seen in the context of the present world scenario fanaticism originates from the unquestioned parent, falling values arise from the contaminated adult, and violence is indulged in by the rebellious child; but the age old problem of life stares us on the face because the real solution lies in changing the individual, and, in the wisdom, that, individuals who seek peace, harmony, and meaning in life other than what is being propagated around them have to find all of it within themselves.The goal of TA is the strengthening and emancipation of the adult through a clear identification of “what part of me is coming on” and an assessment as to whether or not this information is true, reasonable, and appropriate to today’s reality. The purpose is not to do away with the parent or the child but to be free to examine these bodies of data. The adult to paraphrase Emerson, “must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness.”4

The Gita deals with the ego sense- aham bhava, by explaining the distinction between nature-prakriti and soul-purusha; as well as the field-khsetra and the knower of the field-khsetrajna in the thirteenth Chapter. All that we are, our transactions and works in the world are operations of nature for the purpose of evolution, for the realization of oneness of the individual being-jivatman with the one divine, of which it is an emanation.

The Gita is not a scripture demanding adherence to this and that or certain codes of conduct in an authoritative way; it briefly synthesizes the wisdom of the Veda and the Upanishads and gives Arjuna a practical method of Yoga which would deliver him from the burden of human limitations in the light of his own inner being and enable him to grasp the essence of life in his being and becoming. Krishna, therefore, recapitulates the more ancient knowledge from the Veda and the Brahmsutra to inform Arjuna that the Field-Kshetra is the physical body with its workings carried on by the unmanifest Nature-Prakriti, the five elements of matter, namely, ether, air, fire, water and earth, the ten senses, a mind, intelligence, the ego, and the five objects of senses sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. The Knower of the Field-Kshetrajna seated in the heart is the Atman, which is a portion of the One Paramatman-Brahman in all. This knowledge is gained through a spiritual seeking alone, and, for that meditation has to be practiced.

Therefore, Krishna having told Arjuna to carry out his duty with a clear understanding which is not clouded with emotions, ego, anger, and attachment goes on to say that: While the actions are being done by the modes of Nature, he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks that it is his “I” which is doing them. But who knows the principles of the divisions of the modes and of works, realizes that it is the modes which are acting and reacting on each other and is not caught in them by attachment. He goes on to enlighten Arjuna thus: Those who are bewildered by the modes, are not knowers of the whole; therefore let not the knower of the whole disturb them in their mental standpoint.5 This is a message of tolerance and compassion as something which is not only being taught to the Child by the Parent as an authoritative belief but is being explained to the Adult in Arjuna who faces the dilemma of life. All of us are part of the same Creative Power of Nature with the differences which have arisen from the One. And in the larger meaning of this Unity all are moving towards the same evolution, as travelers arriving at different stations in time. This Yoga or Unity cannot be achieved with a mind burdened with disturbed feelings, desire and anger; and the knower of Truth-jnani must not confuse those who take a mental stand in the absence of spiritual experience. Spiritual knowledge has to be gained, it cannot be taught mentally. This is Krishna’s way of telling Arjuna to sort himself out.

We can’t do this [change our feelings] directly by a resolution or meditate our way into a state of lasting bliss. The only way we can change feelings is through knowledge of their origin followed by a change in behavior.6 To have this “knowledge of their origin” through the ego states according to the method of TA will be of help to the mental man who is trying to improve human relations, but the “origin” lies in the ego and desires of the lower nature, which can be cleansed only when the higher consciousness descends to replace it and that happens when the human aspiration rises up seeking the higher.

But those who have realized the unity in the diversity of life on earth do not confuse others who have not yet known it, they encourage all to do good works-joshyet sarvakarmani- in keeping with the capacities which Nature has provided them with, declares Krishna in the Gita. All of us contribute something towards the fulfillment of Nature in us and others in the world. The levels of consciousness have to be reached to be understood as such, there is no other way. A human being has to wake up to it, the slumber cannot go on endlessly; the free adult has to be ready for action and change, but there can be no real action and change solely from the mental and material point of view, the adult has to be grounded in unity and the very practical method of coming to this unity is by giving up ego and desire; and the slow process of giving them up, of this renunciation will begin when enough purity of understanding is achieved for the inward glance; it is through this inward glancing that the atman sees the atman, and such a state will be attained through the practice of yoga brought about by regular meditation. Here there is the clear distinction between two levels of consciousness, two standpoints of action, that of the soul caught in the web of its egoistic nature and doing works with the idea, but not the reality of free will, under the impulsion of Nature, and that of the soul delivered from its identification with the ego, observing, sanctioning and governing the works of Nature from above her.7

The lower consciousness identifies itself with the ego and all life actions are taken up by the individual ego-sense, but when the cosmic consciousness is reached the individual ego-sense dissolves in it and attains a cosmic unity which enlarges life; and even though the separate self is there the diversity of life is seen and lived as One by the person who has become one with the world soul; but above the individual consciousness and the world consciousness, uniting the two, is the Purushottama, the One source of all Consciousness and Nature manifest as well as not manifest to us; this is how Krishna puts it across in the Gita as the three purusha- kshara, akshara and the purushottama. That all is contained in the One, though, may be acceptable to the mentality, but to realize it, experience it and the most difficult of all to live it amidst the dualities and complexities of life is possible when a complete peace and purity has been attained by devotion and surrender to the Divine.

A prayer, a master act, a king idea

Can link man’s strength to a transcendent Force.8

Therefore, the ego which was originally useful for self-awareness and the works carried out from that level, becomes an obstruction for the growth of consciousness and is seen as such by the aspirant on the path of this journey towards the higher consciousness; the subtle eye catches it in its hiding and places it before the Higher Power for eradication as the journey proceeds further; and for this, a complete quietude is required in the body, mind, and the mental, aided by meditation; and this calmness and stillness will enter us in proportion to the emptying out of everything else which has been there as the working of the lower nature in us; it is then observed and realized how the light, bliss, peace, and the all encompassing knowledge pours down and transforms in many ways, and the Upanishadic insights of those enlightened Sages of yore ring within the heart in all their Mantric Power:

OM. Complete in itself is that yonder and complete in itself is that which is here and the complete ariseth from the complete: but when thou takest thecomplete from its fullness, that which remaineth is also complete. OM. Peace! Peace! Peace! 9

Krishna makes it clear that coercion is of no use, because each one of us must proceed in keeping with our individual nature- swabhava; and even those who aspire for the deeper meaning and growth for which human life on earth is a stage, have to verify what is told to them by concentrating on it and practicing the truth of it; it is the autonomous adult who through understanding the play of the ego states in himself and others, has developed the capacity to accept or to reject what has been a part of his person and of his behavior. What the modes of nature-Guna are, and the necessity to transcend them to achieve liberation from ego and desire for a positive transformation of human nature according to Krishna, shall be brought in later.

However, it is but within the context of the synthesis of the pragmatic and the spiritual to bring in Krishna’s statement of the reality of existence and the giving up of ignorance for a transformation to the higher nature of our being and becoming, once again: The five gross elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), self-sense-ahamkara, understanding and also the unmanifest, the ten senses, the mind and the five objects of the senses constitute the Field-Khsetra, but this is the lower Nature, apara prakriti, the other Nature is different, it is the Para-Prakriti, which is the infinite consciousness power of the Supreme, how can it be reached unless the lower nature of the ego-sense is given up? And then, there is the witnessing consciousness-Khsetrajna in every field and of all fields, S. Radhakrishnan puts it for us in a simple language as: The witnessing consciousness is the same whether it lights up the blue sky or a red flower. Though the fields which are lit up may be different the light which illumines them is the same.10

The individual-self, the jivatman will realize its Oneness with the Universal and the Transcendent when the separative ego sense disappears in the light of the higher knowledge: When the Self illumines, the activities of the senses, of mind and of understanding become processes of knowledge and objects become objects of knowledge. Ahamkara or the self-sense belongs to the “object” side. It is the principle by which the ego relates objects to itself. It attributes to itself the body and the senses connected with it. It effects the false identification of the body with the spiritual subject and the sense of “I” or “my” is produced.11

But to arrive at this higher knowledge a will and the practice of self- discipline is required to begin with, and the individual ego-sense is of definite value here; humility, integrity, non-violence, patience, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control and non-attachment, keeping good company and devotion for the divine, bhakti, are the qualities prescribed by Krishna to gain spiritual knowledge. And though, such qualities are emphasized upon by all religions, Krishna’s deeply psychological method is to gradually lead the aspirant towards yoga with the divine, so that this growth takes place through the inner realization rather than just the surface dos and don’ts taught by the Parent to the child in an adaptive sense, to put it in the language of TA. It is indeed tough to give up the self-sense completely and to live in a state of complete unity with the divine at all times, and in this respect, our surface behavior with others in speech and mannerism is reflective of the perfection which is yet to come; the sense of superiority needs no excuse to stay and must be eradicated by the root; the authoritative and critical Parent appears during transactions with others even when one has advanced much in yoga and having had deep spiritual insights. Ego-sense is a part of all that we are gifted with as human beings, but all of our being must be offered for purification and as a sacrifice to the Lord from whom all emanates, and the braggart ego has to be replaced by a higher consciousness of unity, knowledge and harmony. This fundamental world-fact of ego and apparent division and their separative workings in the world existence is no denial of the Divine Nature of unity and indivisible being; they are the surface results of an infinite multiplicity which is the power of the infinite Oneness.12

Therefore, the once helpful ego becomes the obstruction and the cause for ignorance, when it is seen that the goal of human life is to rise from the lower to the higher nature, and this can be attained by atmajnana-spiritual knowledge or self-knowledge, which liberates from ignorance and the ego, purifies us and prepares us to receive the Higher Light-Prakasha and bliss-Ananda. The false sense of egoistic individuality gives way to the true individual, the spiritual being-the jivatman, which finds its unity with the cosmic and the transcendent Divine. The following quote from a renowned Scientist of our times is but appropriate here:

It is impossible to have true individuality except when grounded in the whole.

Anything else is egocentrism.13

Notes and References:

1 Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine p367

This is an extract from the Chapter titled ‘The Eternal and the Individual’ from the book; and the present paragraph deals with the limitations of reason.

2 Eric Berne: Games People Play p23

3 Thomas A Harris: I’M OK-YOU’RE OK p260

4 Amy Bjork Harris and Thomas A. Harris, M.D.: Staying OK p21

5 Gita 3: 27, 28, And 29: the modes are Sattwa, Rajas, and Tamas which will be taken up later in this book.

The lower consciousness in us identifies itself with the ego, and, after we become aware of it and rise to the higher level of consciousness we start seeing things on the whole.

The much quoted example from the Mundaka Upanishad may be cited here once again: Two birds of golden plumage are perched on a tree, one eats the sweet and bitter fruits and the other calmly observes, they are the individual self and the immortal self respectively--personality and Impersonality. The individual self and the Universal Self have to become one; the individual self is grieved by the ego only till it sees and realizes the Higher Self; and when it unites with It, it grieves not.

6 Amy Bjork Harris and Thomas A Harris, M.D.: Staying OK p 20

7 The Message of the Gita: as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo, edited by Anilbaran Roy 3:2

8 Sri Aurobindo: Savitri p20

9 Isha Upanishad. The translation is by Sri Aurobindo, taken from his book, The Upanishads p439

10 S. Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvad Gita, Chap 13:5

11 Ibid Chap 7:4

12 Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine p402

13 Renee Weber: Dialogue With Scientists And Sages: p30

These words were spoken by David Bohm( Dec20, 1917--Oct 27, 1992), a U.S. born British known as one of the best known scientists of modern age, who combined science and spirituality like an Upanishadic sage would. He was influenced by Krishnamurthy and Einstein. He lectured all over the world on Physics and consciousness during his later years and spoke about his observation that economic development without a holistic approach will take us towards destruction.

According to him “Ego-centeredness centers on the self-image which is an illusion and delusion. Therefore it’s nothing. In true individuality a true being unfolds from the whole in its particular way for that particular moment.” Ibid

“The implicate order grew out of Bohm’s earlier work on hidden variables and the casual interpretation of quantum mechanics. Like Einstein—though for different reasons—Bohm has never been reconciled to current interpretations of quantum theory, and proposes that a hidden order is at work beneath the seeming chaos and lack of continuity of the individual particles of matter described by Quantum mechanics. The hidden dimension became Bohm’s implicate order, the source of all the visible (explicate) matter of our space time universe. The implicate order has infinite depth; Bohm proposes that in its inward recesses both matter and consciousness have their source and become unified.”

And to quote a bit more from the summing up of her dialogue with David Bohm about his theory of the implicate order and the super- implicate order:

“A clearer understanding becomes possible only by going to a deeper level—the implicate order, which is the all encompassing background of our experience: physical psychological and spiritual. This source lies in a yet subtler dimension called the ‘super-implicate order’. Beyond this we can postulate many such orders, merging into an infinite, n-dimensional source or ground.”

Renee Weber: Dialogue With Scientists And Sages p 25

# 6

# Desires and Expectations

An intelligent and compassionate person on confronting a life situation--marital, social, family oriented, professional--which is not clear, candid, and harmonious but which creates conflict, imbalance, disturbance, and pain will discover that it is so common for people to play games and go through life without ever feeling the need to straighten them out. The ulterior quality or the payoff for which games are played have their roots in the need for fulfilling personal desires and expectations from others; the most important thing is that, many of us do what we do without being really conscious about it; and the payoff we seek may be emotional, vital, physical, material, and also mental; and strangely enough we spend a life time in this position. A Game is an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well defined, predictable outcome. Descriptively it is a recurring set of transactions, often repetitious, superficially plausible, with a concealed motivation; or more colloquially, a series of moves with a snare or “gimmick”. Games are clearly differentiated from procedures, rituals and pastimes by two chief characteristics: (1) their ulterior quality and (2) the payoff. Therefore, Eric Berne further observes that: a game is basically dishonest, and the outcome has a dramatic, as distinct from merely exciting, quality.1 The autonomous adult becomes aware of the *games* which people play with each other and considers them to be obstructions on the way to human progress; to love is not just to have expectations but to have trust, therefore love is not binding, it is freedom. It is easy to point out the grosser physical, material, vital and mental desires, which not only become the cause for disturbance, imbalance, greed, anger and exploitation; but will make life and relationships dependent on *games*. An evolutionary human being continues to be confronted by the habitual, subtle or the subconscious desires and expectations in his own nature which show themselves through speech and behavior in day to day transactions with others where no games are being played. The following observation of Berne rightly shows that playing games is so common in human life, that, an emancipated adult craves for company which could be free from games: Fortunately, the rewards for game free intimacy**\*,** which is or should be the most perfect form of human living, are so great that even precariously balanced personalities can safely and joyfully relinquish their game if an appropriate partner can be found for the better relationship.2 However, an autonomous adult does go ahead with life, he/she does not feel unduly impaired if such a partner cannot be found. He moves on to become a universal being, even though his outward life may or may not show any such signs.

Krishna speaks of desires and attachments as obstructions on the path of pure knowledge, equality, peace, unity, and bliss, because, when the mind is occupied by the objects of sense, gets attached to them, the desire for them rises and the person gets into anger, thereby losing memory and destroying his intelligence, he perishes. Therefore, the emphasis here is on Yoga as the goal of human life which will be attained through purity of understanding-buddhi, which leads to knowledge-jnana through work-karma done according to one’s true nature-swabhava, and then, it naturally culminates in devotion-bhakti for the Divine and a total surrender to It, the complete source of immortal peace and bliss. There is no place for the passions of the lower nature and the ego-ahamkara here. But desires which arise from the purity of the inner being result in actions which are of a naturally sacrificing nature and true; when a growth in consciousness takes place a pure desire is the aspiration for the divine in ones being, becoming, actions and expressions. I am the strength of the strong, devoid of desire and passion. In beings I am the desire which is not contrary to dharma, O Lord of the Bharatas (Arjuna).3

The subtlety of the presence of desires and the obstructions on the spiritual path caused by them, becomes clear in the light of the higher consciousness as the Yoga progresses and knowledge grows, but till then, these can be spoken about in their grosser form alone because the spirit’s knowledge is not fully expressible in words; the desire which is not contrary to dharma, is not dharmaviruddho, it emanates from the divine in us; it is desire which gets its expression in the spirit of the evolutionary nature, but when it clashes with the lower egoistic desires of others, disharmony and conflicts arise, therefore, the Gita speaks of the perfection in equipoise and equanimity-samata, as the sign of the being who is in yoga, he is not attached to the fruit of his work and remains equal in success and failure.

According to the Psychological approach taken in transactional analysis, conflicts arise when the transactions between people are made from different ego states which cross each other and a candid communication is blocked; but the worse is, if personal desires, ulterior motives or pay offs are sought after to keep the transactions going, games are played and made the order of a superficial life. In this case work is not being done for the sake of work but for the sake of the fruit alone, only for seeking a favour in return from children, spouse, friend or neighbor. The pure evolutionary desire of the spirit will not be compatible with attachment, ego and anger; therefore, those who are in yoga will continue to cultivate the inner being slowly and steadily till it becomes strong enough to dominate the outer being as well as life itself and desire, in fact, is seen as the higher Will. The autonomous adult too has to start toeing the line consciously, at some stage of his life, because life is yoga even though it has not been accepted as such; the conscious process of yoga-*sadhana* will start when he willingly exceeds the intellect to discover and live in the light of the spirit.

Krishna, in the Gita enjoins to the Intelligent Will-*Buddhi* of Arjuna and reminds him to take into cognizance, firstly, his position in life as the brave and accomplished Aryan warrior prince, and secondly, to act keeping in view the larger issues based on the immortal truths of human life, because the *Atman* is imperishable and human life too in values, actions, relationships must be compatible with the truth of what is and is not in harmony with the truth of our being, for the ongoing evolution of mankind. The basic requirements for the Gita’s Yoga are pointed out and explained by Krishna at the outset itself, in answer to Arjuna’s questions. Intelligence without delusion, which goes beyond the need for Scriptures and is founded in the calm knowledge-*Sthitprajna,* a state achieved through deep meditation is the stepping stone of the Gita’s Synthetic Yoga. Arjuna has been advised to stay clear of all Vedic rituals performed for the sake of achieving worldly enjoyments; because those who get influenced by words which direct them towards working and praying for physical comforts and luxuries-*Bhog aishwarya* (Gita Chap 2, 42-44) as the aim of life, cannot have a firm and concentrated intelligence-*Vyavasayatmika buddhi.*

What then, are the impurities which in the form of desires prevent the understanding- *Buddhi* from becoming the fit instrument for life and Yoga? These, according to the Gita are the attachment for the fruit of work, as well as to the not doing of the required work, and, inaction and desires-*kama* which arise from the senses. But then, how to be free from these attachments to desire and the fruits of work? The answer is that, we have to live content in the self-*atman* within and perform our works in the world from this inner state of our being. It is not easy but is perfected with the practice of Yoga-*Sadhna*, through meditation and self knowledge. And to become *sthitprajna*, is to develop the state of being which is not disturbed by the pleasures and sorrows caused by the senses, attachments and desires, not to be subjected by them, so that, equipoise, equanimity, equality become a way of life, and the intelligence- *Buddhi* remains clear, able to realize the Atman above and to become one with it in purity, knowledge, universality, expansion and transcendence.

Sri Aurobindo’s experience has been that, it is time for the thus perfected and evolved human to rise to the super human level of evolution because many of us aspire for such a change. He observes that: it is doubtful whether in the pure human mould Nature can go much farther than she has gone at present; that she can for instant produce a higher mental type than Newton, Shakespeare, Caesar or Napoleon, a higher moral type than Buddha, Christ or St Francis, or to give modern examples, a Sandow or a Ramamurti. She may seek to bring about a better combination of mental and moral, or of moral mental and physical energies; but is she likely to produce anything much above the level of Confucius or Socrates? It is more probable and seems to be true that Nature seeks in this field to generalize a higher level and better combination. Neither need we believe that, even here her, object is to bring all men to the same level; for that can only be done by leveling downwards.**4**

The technological boom is a pointer towards what man can achieve through his intellect but in the resultant commercial/material culture the exploitation of the baser instincts, envy, lust, and greed in man, as well as of the weak, naive and ignorant has made the graph of humanity’s growth complicated and mostly going downward in the real sense; the “leveling downwards” is showing its effects in the name of equality and rights promised and spoken about to those who can be exploited; the outcome will be disastrous for the growth of the individual and that of society. A material environment is gripping the majority of humanity in a way that morals are changing; relationships are falling apart and at the same time, are being sought after too. Eric Berne having tried to improve relationships puts down the last line in his book Games People Play: This may mean that there is no hope for the human race, but there is hope for individual members of it. And this statement of his must at least encourage those individuals who can call themselves autonomous adults.

The spiritual and the material have to grow together; there is no other way and nothing else to hope for; the hard refusal of the Scientist and the narrow denial of the religious cannot continue forever. The Gita which was written thousands of years back and much later than the Vedas whose wisdom it restates, thereby making it eternally open-ended for human growth had spoken about the attachment the pure of heart and learned have with happiness-Sukha**\*\*** and knowledge-Jnana, which hinders further progress towards Freedom-Mukti, because freedom from ego, attachment and disturbance is required to be gained in order to achieve true Unity and Universality**5**. Such was the height of Spiritual wisdom and its practice achieved by the Sages of India; yet, if only we could have a number large enough to day “attached to real happiness and knowledge”! Says, Tagore in Gitanjali:

My desires are many and my cry is pitiful,

But ever didst thou save me by hard refusals;

And this strong mercy has been wrought

Into my life through and through.6

To expect means, to regard as likely, and to look for as appropriate or one’s due: our true expectations from ourselves are justified if they do not disturb us enough to make us irritable and intolerant with others; but the self-centered expectations we have from others which make us discontented, over-critical and angry by nature are not always visible, as many of these live in the subconscious and yield their control from there. However, it is very much possible and of course helpful to understand those Ego States—the presence of the critical or rigid parent, the dependent or rebellious child and the contaminated adult—in ourselves and to some extent in others, which need to be addressed, so as to take the right decisions, and make the right efforts to improve behavior and relationships; but, it takes some yogic effort and Grace-Kripa**\*\*\*** to eradicate ego and attachments fully and completely from the deeps of the subconscious.

Krishna says in the Gita that a person should perform all works and duties with sincerity and devotion leaving the outcome to the Grace above; a person is free-mukta, if he gives up desire, fear and wrath-vigatechhabhaykrodho. This freedom leads the spiritual aspirant towards pure knowledge, perfection, and surrender to the Highest Wisdom, which knows it all in the largest overall meaning, even though there is so much that appears to us strange, unjust, anomalous, and, at the same time mysterious and awe-inspiring in all its beauty and power of creation, destruction, and preservation. But this non-attachment does not at all mean that work is not to be done with devotion, concentration and above all with intelligence-buddhi; on the contrary it equips such a worker with sincerity and stamina.

A superficial life is the one in which the problems of never ending desires and its related miseries arise because in his ignorance man seeks the object of desire and fails to take delight in the spirit of it which is an expression of Atman- Brahman Itself. And in this respect it may be said that, the spirit in matter, work and all of nature is what gives delight to the true being in us and what is manifest has the unmanifest too behind it, therefore, egoistic desire transforms itself into discontentment, anger and envy, but the desire for the Spirit or the Divine gets transformed into pure aspiration, devotion and peace. The often asked question by many men and women is, “how to meditate?” The Lord of Yoga, Krishna, the Yogeshwara tells Arjuna in one of the most beautiful and packed up verses of the Gita, worthy of being repeated again and again, that: When a person expels, O Partha, all desires-kama from the mind, and is satisfied in the self by the self-atmanyevatmana tushtah, then the person is called stable in a higher consciousness-sthitprajna.7

The ability to feel the spirit in matter as the manifestation of the same Creative Power is developed through yoga; and even when this ability is present in the gifted, artists and poets it will find its perfection in yoga because, it is through yoga that the human life moves towards its evolution. To see the One Lord everywhere in all animate and inanimate things, which the Upanishads and the Gita have as their basic spiritual principle has had a spontaneously accommodating influence on Indian culture with its spirit of tolerance and non-violence, and therefore, the “One” is called reverently and lovingly by as many names as may be possible, and all ways and objects of worship are accepted and revered; it is as if, the aware and autonomous adult maintains the I’m OK you are OK position in his heart, when he understands this largeness of life and nature; because such a being sees the One everywhere and sees all in the One-yo mam pashyati sarvatra sarvam ca mayi pashyati, says Krishna.

There is a Will in Nature, which works towards its own perfection; and when we are able to perceive it in its subtlety, Yoga becomes a natural way of living and requires no self imposed effort. This has been stated by Sri Aurobindo as follows: When we look from below desire presents itself to us as a craving of the LIFE FORCE which subtilises in the emotions into a craving of the HEART and is farther subtilised in the INTELLGENCE into a craving, preference, passion of the aesthetic, ethical, dynamic or rational turn of the BUDDHI. This desire is essential to the ordinary man; he cannot live or act as an individual without knotting up all his action into the service of some kind of lower or higher craving, preference or passion. But when we are able to look at desire from above, we see that what supports this instrumental desire is WILL of the SPIRIT. There is a will, tapas, sakti, by which the secret spirit imposes on its outer members all their action and draws from it an active delight of its being, an ANANDA, in which they very obscurely and imperfectly, if at all consciously, partake.**8**

Therefore, the delight of existence does not lie in the fulfillment of the desires and expectations in the gross or subtle form but is revealed in the Spirit itself; yoga means being united with It, experiencing the Ananda of its flow in the entire being, and living in the joy of It. The ego-sense merges in the individual spirit and the universal spirit, so that we live our individuality in the knowledge and delight of a reality that arises from universality and transcendence above it. An entire purity and strength in the physical, vital and the mental parts of the being, a conscious surrender to the Divine Power, ready to receive its bounty and an infinite patience are not only the requirements to be spoken about for Yoga, but, must become the means of existence so that the Ananda carrying Truth, Knowledge, Power, Peace and Beauty descends through the Chakras**9** of the aspirant.

It is the essential quality of things which gives the inner delight, and unless the spirit is lived, no end of worldly possessions can provide true contentment and joy; coming to prejudgments based on undue expectations of how much benefit can be reaped from doing or not doing of every task in hand or from a contact or a relationship is leading to more inhumanity in man than what should accompany the simultaneous growth in his mental and intellectual capacity. Expectations play a big role in relationships and result in a variety of Games which in turn result in creating more ignorance, pain and confusion in life, and, clinical methods of dealing with these problems for the surface mentality and also of mentally understanding them will not take us far. It is true that the play of the ego-sense is behind what is expected from others in relationships, because the consciousness has not risen above the mundane and the ordinary; rituals are taken seriously only for the sake of the superficial being, personal advantages or even these are improperly handled, the child feels insecure or threatened, the adult gets too lonely, the parent is hurt and so on. We get involved in this mishmash, even though we are capable of receiving an abundance of joy from the manifest beauty, power, richness, glory and mystery of creation in the best of its created forms in nature, plant and animal, man and woman. This joy is always received from the spirit of being and becoming and not only from objective possession.

It is immaterial whether the One Transcendent Reality is admitted in so many forms and names-personal-impersonal-and both, which the Gita had already taken cognizance of, in keeping with the revelations in the Vedas; Understanding, knowledge, clarity, forgiveness, truth, self control, calmness, pleasure and pain, existence and non-existence, fear and fearlessness, non-violence, equipoise, contentment, askesis, charity, fame and ill-fame all these and more states of being proceed from the transcendent-Purushottama, says the Gita. This knowledge will become a living realization when attachment to desires and undue expectations stop causing impurities in the being of a person. It is not possible to understand the Divine Lila-the play of creation through mental efforts; there is an inner being within the ordinary outer personality of which we become closely aware by yoga and we then come to know that this inner l personality is expressed as the best part of us in the outer and it is this part which turns to the divine. The subconscient is that which stores up the impressions, feelings, and all that was controlled from emerging in the outer personality. It is only the divine light which illumines this basement cluttered with desires, expectations based on these desires, angers, lusts of the physical vital, or the illnesses, inertia, dullness, pains and fears of the physical mind, vital and body nature. Sri Aurobindo has made his observations on all the parts and planes of our being based on his experiments and experiences in yoga. The subliminal self stands behind and supports the whole superficial man; it has in it a larger and more efficient mind behind the surface mind, a larger and more powerful vital behind the surface vital, a subtler and freer physical consciousness behind the surface bodily existence. And above them it opens to higher superconscient as well as below them to lower subconscient ranges.10

Talking about the psychological studies, as the one taken up by Eric Berne, based on his method of dealing with our transactions with others, it is implied that the Ego States get triggered during these transactions and can be noticed through the speech, reactions, mannerism and body language of the participants. Let us once again read about it in his own words:

1 That every individual has had parents and that he carries within him a set of ego states that reproduce the ego states of those parents(as perceived then) and that these parental ego states can be activated under certain circumstances (extropsychic functioning). Colloquially: “Every one carries his parents around him.”

2 That every individual (including children, the mentally retarded and schizophrenics) is capable of objective data processing if the appropriate ego state can be activated (neopsychic functioning). Colloquially: “Everyone has an adult.”

3 That every individual was once younger than he is now, and that he carries within him fixated relics from earlier years which will be activated under certain circumstances (archaeopsychic functioning). Colloquially: “Everyone carries a little boy or girl around inside him.”11

There is no doubt about the fact that modern psychological method offers interesting and practical ways of not only understanding and changing the surface behavior, but it can certainly be of help, if sincerely and intelligently used, to acknowledge and change much that comes from the subconscious, for most of which we are not to be held responsible; but if, the inner being in us is activated, it will make us more tolerant and universal in our dealings with all; the autonomous adult is ready for yoga if he so decides. It will also dawn on us that the cause of sorrow and pain lies in desires and expectations, and that, these desires and expectations are also connected with the ego, and they are mostly hidden in the subconscious, and the subconscious can be fully lighted up by yoga; it is that which brings peace and liberation in life. But at this point, it must be mentioned that Sri Aurobindo’s use of the word subconscious was not exactly what is meant by it in the modern psychological term; he is being quoted here: But when I use the word [subconscient], I mean always what is below the ordinary physical consciousness, not what is behind it. The inner mental, vital, physical, the psychic are not subconscious in this sense, but they can be spoken of as subliminal.12 All of our habitual actions and reactions come from the subconscious, they are repetitive in nature. It is very difficult to change the subconscious, but we become aware of it and change it through Yoga.

Arjuna, tells Krishna that though his mind’s eye could see the presence of the all pervading Lord in all, he was not able to feel and see the Creator in its power of becoming in the world; in answer, Krishna tells him that: Whatsoever is beautiful, glorious, mighty and forceful-vibhutimat, srimat, urjitam- know that to have sprung from a fragment of His splendour.**13**  Therefore the secret and joy of the spiritual lies in the ability to see the divine everywhere, and to take delight in everything which appears as the best in its class in appearance, skill and becoming. The clogging up of nature with petty desires and expectations causes a false sense of individuality, which does not allow the understanding intelligence-buddhhi to open up into the vastness of a being of which it is capable. The mind keeps hovering around the objects of desires and the ways of controlling them, and therefore, the intelligence cannot be concentrated on a higher law of our becoming. The splendor, of which Krishna speaks, will be seen not just by the physical eye, with which we are bestowed with, but, will be witnessed and experienced by the inner being in us, in harmony with the buddhi, which knows the all pervading power of the spirit through time and space.

But then, from a worldly point of view, how do we act and what do we do, in the absence of desires and expectations? Human desires and expectations or the innocent unawareness of them decide destiny, but the question of what goes on or went wrong in outward life (all was meant for a spiritual awakening, is the realization) will not raise itself once the intelligence has been purified, and the ego-aham bhava and expectations from others to bring happiness and contentment in one’s life have been dissolved by the Higher Light in its power. When the lower nature is replaced by the higher and petty doubts do not disturb the aspirant, but an inner bliss is replenished by the Ananda which pours from above, the soul’s enjoyment is that of the Rasa-the essence-the spirit and the beauty and the truth of it. And such a being always feels and acts in the larger good and delight guided by the inner and the higher light; and is full of gratitude for all the mercies of life. This is the natural outcome of the process of yoga.

Yoga is what binds the autonomous adult with the Divine, irrespective of religious faith. The entire gamut of human nature cannot be dealt with by mental psychology; it has a limited range of its utility. Theories of internal individual psychodynamics have so far not been able to solve satisfactorily the problems of human relationships…….observations on the genesis of games are sparse, writes Berne. What was spiritually realized by our ancient sages, could be of no use to a common life in the real sense of it; therefore the growth of consciousness through yoga is meant for individuals who have transcended a mentality which can hardly be described to those who have not yet achieved it. India has had the benefit of a repertoire of good games in the form of festivals, customs, traditions and rituals, which have originated from the wisdom of the sages and from stories associated with the significance of a quality or a message derived from such wisdom.

The yoga of the Gita can be understood at the mental level by more people if they are inclined to look for the meaning of life more deeply to begin with, even though not in a position to follow it completely. However, the beauty of the spiritual path is enhanced by the fruits one gets to eat on the way and the glimpses of the goal behind the thin veil, even for those who are sincere beginners and, the sunlit-path for those who have trudged over the initial obstacles caused by desires, habits, expectations, and the doer’s pride. It is true that all are not called to it, but a belief in its purity of purpose will be enough for many in more ways than can be imagined for times to come. It is important to understand the problem and origin of desire, because perfection in yoga is contingent on equality-samattva and devotion-bhakti, which get strengthened in the field-Khsetra of life, where we indulge in work and relationships; and it is here that the inter-dependence of works-karma, equality-jnana, and a perpetual state of devotion-bhakti-samarpan-sharanam-namaskuru is realized and practiced.

All the ordinary vital movements are foreign to the true being and come from outside; they do not belong to the soul nor do they originate in it but are waves from the general Nature, Prakriti.

The desires come from outside, enter the subconscious vital and rise to the surface. It is only when they rise to the surface and the mind becomes aware of them, that we become conscious of the desire. It seems to us to be our own because we feel it thus rising from the vital into the mind and do not know that it came from outside. What belongs to the vital, to the being, what makes it responsible is not the desire itself, but the habit of responding to the waves or the currents of suggestion that come into it from the universal Prakriti.14

Therefore, it is not being asserted that there are no problems of anger, disappointment, depression and despair to be faced by the yogi, but he becomes more peaceful and equal through their brief or momentary invasions on his outer personality, instead of making him superficially impulsive, passionate or violent, they rather enhance the inner peace-sa shantimapnoti na kamakami; Says Krishna: He attains peace onto whom all desires-kama enter as waters into the sea (ocean of wide being and consciousness), yet ever motionless—not he who (like troubled and muddy waters) is disturbed by every little inrush of desire.**15** for the latter are those who “hug” their desires-kama. However, the age old trend of the hostile forces of waiting to find fault with the pure and knowledgeable, and to disturb them has become stronger with the rising populations and the power of the media, besides the existent hunger of the lower nature for self-assertiveness.

‘Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?’

‘It was I’, said the prisoner, ‘who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in the freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip’.16

Notes and References:

1 Eric Berne: Games People Play p48Ibid p 9

2 Ibid: p 62

\* By intimacy is meant Spontaneity, and game free candidness.

\*\*Sukha, a rich Sanskrit word means an aggregate of happiness, contentment, peace, and harmony.

\*\*\*Grace-Kripa- is increasingly felt as taking care of all that is needed by an aspirant who is doing yoga.

3 Gita: 7:11

4 Sri Aurobindo: The Hour Of God p43

5 Gita: 14. 6:

6 Rabindranath Tagore: Gitanjali

7 Gita: 2:55

8 Sri Aurobindo: The Synthesis of Yoga p648

9 Chakra in the Hindu Tantric tradition are associated with the awakening of the Kundalini power.

“In the process of our Yoga the centres have each a fixed psychological use and general function which base all their special powers and functionings. The muladhara governs the physical down to the SUBCONSCIENT; the abdominal centre—swadhisthana—governs the lower VITAL; the navel centre—nabhipadma or manipura—governs the larger vital; the heart centre—hridaya padma or anahata—governs the EMOTIONAL BEING; the throat centre—vishuddha—governs the expressive and externalizing mind; the centre between the eyebrows—ajna—governs the dynamic mind, will ,vision, mental formation; the thousand-petalled lotus—sahasradala—above commands the HIGHER THINKING MIND, houses the still higher ILLUMINED MIND and at the highest opens to the intuition through which or else by an overflooding directness the OVERMIND can have with the rest communication or an immediate contact.” Letters on Yoga p365

10 Sri Aurobindo: Letters On Yoga p1606

11 Eric Berne: Games People Play p24

12 Sri Aurobindo: Letters On Yoga p354

13 Gita: 10: 41

14 Sri Aurobindo: Bases of Yoga p61

15 Gita: 2:70

16 Rabindranath Tagore: Gitanjali

# 7

# Liberation

“Set free, especially from oppression”, is the meaning of liberation according to the Oxford Dictionary. In the present world of Science and technology, the mind and intelligence in men and women is expected to be dominated by a scientific attitude, but this has not yet been achieved by the larger sections of humanity as such, even though the weaker sections exploited and suppressed for centuries are being set free from physical, mental and emotional oppression; and this has been an important landmark in the history of mankind. But this liberation shall be complete not only with what is definitely required by balancing the rights and duties by individuals in the family, community and social circles but when each individual also learns to hear the voice within, because self- knowledge is the key to overall human liberation and evolution. This inner liberation is what must come first for the autonomous adult to grow into the truth consciousness which extends beyond the range of mental understanding-buddhi, which is an instrument for receiving and applying it to life. The ancient sages and yogis of India had achieved this liberation and had expressed it with words like Mukta, the freedom achieved from desire, fear and wrath-vigatechhabhayakrodho, to achieve equanimity-samata; Nirvana, the rising above the dualities and live in bliss-Brahmnirvana; Moksha, to have dissolved the individual ego, so as to become egoless or kritasnkarmakrit, the perfect karmayogi.

The spiritual masters had known Pure Consciousness-Brahman-the Supreme, as all pervading, it is everywhere at the same time, it is timeless and immortal; it is the cause, the means and the release for the individual soul. When the inner quest for a spiritual seeking wakes up, it is the antaratman within which starts leading the person, who is a bundle of samskara and many personalities, which start revealing and purifying themselves to join in the aspiration and rise up as a stream to realize the atman above which presides over the individual and which is at once the universal and the transcendent too. And to arrive at this stage of Oneness is to e liberated. We have to arrive at this stage of liberation through sadhans-all the means at our disposal-the body, senses, mind, intelligence; this is what is called Tapasya-sadhana-askesis. We are bound, engrossed and live in ignorance by the very means which also must liberate us; to understand this and strive for yoga is the aim of human life. This striving is from inside out, the giving up-tyaga of all that is obstructive and unnecessary must become the inner conquest, so that while living in the world and doing works, the yogi ensures that ego, desires, emotional impurities, wrath and restlessness all have to fall off before a state of liberation is achieved even though inner bliss and contentment are felt even before this perfection is achieved, which strengthen the aspirant’s faith and establish him firmly on the spiritual path. It is a difficult task agreed Krishna, when Arjuna pointed out that the restless mind is difficult to control, and answered that with constant practice it is very much possible to achieve Equality-Samata. This is to be done not through contrived or painful effort, because the intelligence supported by the Will above, knows what is of everlasting worth. It is a fact that when this state of liberation is even partially achieved, it manifests as inner bliss and a unity with the Higher Consciousness which are not disturbed by any mental grief.

The autonomous adult is no longer bound to convention, standard patterns of behavior, games, and pastimes; he/ she is aware, open-minded, and candid; alone perhaps but not lonely; he is able to take the right decisions and act on them without fear. Reaching this stage with the help of modern psychological methods is very much possible for the person who seeks this timely aid, But all of these may be frightening and even perilous to the unprepared, wrote Berne, because this person does not play games, he is straight forward, and is not part of the group, he is probably alone and open to criticism, but, he has reached a stage of human development from where he can proceed towards an inner journey or decide on the future course of his life in the world with a deeper awareness of it. But to go further ahead on the road of human journey for the inner quest, which such an individual may feel, it is necessary to be equipped with the requirements for the way. First be sure of the call and of thy soul’s answer. For if the call is not true, not the touch of God’s powers or the voice of his messengers, but the lure of thy ego, the end of thy Endeavour will be a poor spiritual fiasco or else a deep disaster, said Sri Aurobindoabout the law of the way1, and he goes on to say: Strive rightly and thou shalt have; trust and thy trust in the end be justified; but the dread Law of the Way is there and non can abrogate it.2

The autonomous adult has arrived at a definite stage seeing and solving his problems with a mental clarity which many others are not able to; and if he/she is genuinely willing to proceed further believing in knowledge Higher than the mental, the secrets of the next stage will be revealed to him in keeping with the law of the way. Krishna speaks of becoming muktasangah samacara, to become free, muktah, liberated from all attachment and to do works as consecrated to the Divine- the Supreme Power- for the service of creation; therefore works done as sacrifice for the sake of the divine with the knowledge that it is done by prakriti and not by us are free from the ego sense, are not binding in any way; and the freedom from attachment to the fruits of work is the means of becoming mukta-a liberated being; yajna-sacrifice according to the Veda is at the root of creation, sustenance, and destruction. But it has to be borne in mind that, what is being said here is based on truth consciousness and is not meant as a sermon or a ritual to be followed; we are expected to move from truth to truth, liberating ourselves from the trash we carry in us, becoming aware of our gains on the way, as well as of the impurities which still remain to be shed from our being.

Krishna has very beautifully explained the two principles of traditional Sankhya philosophy to Arjuna the essence of which is that, the inner renunciation-Tyaga is needed to live life as a Karmayogi, rather than the outer renunciation-sannyasa; the outer renunciation is of no use without the inner, and may lead to frustration, many other problems, or in game playing; because game playing in this context will mean that the resolution made for self discovery and self realization, has been made not by a fully prepared but by a mind which is still attached to the ways of the lower nature and therefore, such a person will indulge in game playing not only with others but with his own self, because human logic can justify anything; this is indeed dangerous; and, according to Berne, the worst results which a game can lead to are as follows:

The stages in a game are distinguished as follows:

1. A first degree game is one which is socially acceptable in the agent’s circle.
2. A second degree game is one from which no permanent, irremediable damage arises, but which the players would rather conceal from the public.
3. A third degree game is one which is played for keeps, and which ends in surgery, the court room or the morgue.3

It is not at all difficult to see the blatant truth of the above observation because, tradition or religion is still being made use of for creating games not only the purely emotional or the psychological ones which may be just personal and harmless, but there are games which have reached dangerous proportions in many spheres of our society; the purity of character of a person or a thing cannot be put at stake through a twisted appraisal of it by the majority; and given the complicated nature of what is known as culture, which is at once composite as well as exclusive to each region and community, not to speak of the individual differences, a game free society is still a dream, therefore, it is for the autonomous individual that there can be hope, and in this matter the situation is not at all farfetched from the aloneness of our ancient sages and the inaptitude of the masses who were unprepared to imbibe the higher knowledge. The venture for liberation means a gearing up for a game free life, which appears perilous to the ordinary mind. The ulterior motive and the pay off for which a game is played and which sets it apart from procedures and rituals can only be a cause for a moral and intellectual downfall of individuals and not of human progress at all. Therefore, sacrifice-tyaga and renunciation-sannyasa are to be made with an awareness of their purpose and for that, a pure understanding, an intelligent will is required; spiritual transformation is a slow process which needs tremendous patience and it becomes natural to posses this patience once the inner experiences and realizations start becoming concrete. Every time a peak is reached the aspirant has to descend in order to climb again, but each renewed climbing is much lighter footed, surer and swifter than before.

The true essence of sacrifice is not self-immolation, it is self-giving; its object not self-effacement but self-fulfillment; its method not self-mortification, but a greater life; not self-mutilation, but a transformation of our natural human parts into divine members, not self-torture but a passage from a lesser satisfaction to a greater Ananda.4

Sacrifice for liberation, therefore, cannot be carried out by a person who is blinded by selfishness; the actions and thoughts of such a person bring misery and disaster for him and for others in the world; the world goes on because of the selflessness of many at all levels of existence in the entire creation. Krishna speaks about the different forms of sacrifice and austerity, namely, those done in the true spirit of things, or those for the sake of desire and ego, or a blind following of them for superficial and false reasons. The Vedic ritual of Yajna is symbolic of the spiritual truth arrived at by the yogi that all is Brahman, the sacrificial fire, the giver, the doer, and the object. But to arrive at this state of knowledge, an indispensable law of the way that of “discipline and denial” is required to be observed by the aspirant in the beginning; the liberation from the ego and the superficial “I-ness” is the priceless reward of sacrifice, after which it is in the calm Unity with the divine that the liberated being lives and does works. This calm unity and faith in the law of the divine prakriti are the assets which bring lasting peace-param-sukha and bring the strength required to deal with the many challenges on the way to the arduous spiritual journey.

Krishna clearly speaks in detail about the spiritual significance and meaning of sacrifice to Arjuna in the fourth chapter of the Gita and says that: They who enjoy the nectar of immortality left over from the sacrifice attain to the eternal Brahman; this world is not for him who doeth not sacrifice, how then any other world?5 Sacrifice is the law of progress in every field of life; it was a natural way of bringing up children in contrast to the ‘have all to myself’ and immediate gratification kind of influence prevailing in the well to do families of the day.

However, not once does Krishna sound didactical, authoritative or in the least dogmatic during the entire discourse on the yoga of the Gita: Krishna is only the charioteer; he will obey Arjuna’s direction. He bears no arms. If he influences Arjuna it is through his all conquering love which is inexhaustible. Arjuna should think for himself and discover for himself. He should not act from simple and blind beliefs acquired from habit or authority. Inarticulate assumptions adopted inevitably and emotionally have lead to fanatic bigotries and caused untold human misery. It is therefore important that the mind should seek rational and experiential justification for its beliefs. Arjuna must have a sense of integrity, that his ideas are his own and not those imposed on him by his teacher. Teaching is not indoctrination.6

Liberation is a sense of release, a state of being, which begins with the discovery of the inner being who thrives on truth not on false and superficial hollowness, it is therefore achieved by the giving up of all that is false, shallow and makes human existence meaningless and purposeless; the state of being free, is the freedom from the grip of the lower nature, so that the being is now ready to receive the higher consciousness and to act in its light.

In one of his letters to a disciple Sri Aurobindo writes: The sense of release as if from jail always accompanies the emergence of the PSYCHIC BEING or the realization of the SELF above. It is therefore spoken of as liberation or, mukti. It is a release into peace, happiness, the soul’s freedom not tied down by the thousand ties and cares of the outward ignorant existence.7  Here the word “psychic” is not at all meant in the sense of abnormal psychological experiences, but the psychic being is the evolutionary soul behind the heart, the divine spark in us is always there, and it is recognized and brought to the front by an emotional purity, even though emotions in the normal sense are not psychic in nature and can cloud the mental clarity required for spiritual liberation, yet, it is through the deeply felt pure emotion that the psychic being is easily seen and realized for further spiritual progress as an inner aspiration and not as a worldly desire, and comes to the front to dominate the nature of the person who has had the psychic awakening in him/her. Even though the spiritual realm can only be known by those who are aspirants and travellers on this path, it will be of use to quote Sri Aurobindo here because this knowledge is basic to his Integral Yoga, which includes the Yoga of the Gita for a firmer foundation.

The being of man is composed of these elements—the psychic behind supporting all, the inner mental, vital and physical, and the outer, quite external nature of mind, life and body which is their instrument of expression. But above all is the central being( jivatman) which uses them all for its manifestation: it is the portion of the Divine Self; but this reality of him is hidden from the external man who replaces his inmost self and soul of him by the mental and vital ego. It is only those who have begun to know themselves that become aware of their true central being; but still it is always there standing behind the action of mind, life and body and is most directly represented by the psychic which is itself a spark of the Divine. It is by the growth of the psychic element in one’s nature that one begins to come into conscious touch with one’s central being above. When that happens and the central being uses a conscious will to control and organize the movements of the nature, it is then that one has a real, a spiritual as opposed to a partial and merely mental or moral self-mastery.8

The psychic realization and the realization of the Self-Atman, called the spiritual realization are the foundations on which yoga proceeds with an awareness which makes the aspirant move from step to step by rejecting the ways of the lower nature and becoming open to the higher at all times. The spiritual realization leads to perfection of nature with the help of the deep aspiration which comes from the psychic being and the atman sees itself by the atman as the witness, the knowledge, the secret leader, the One who supports, sustains and as well as goes through it all, the all pervading, the One Supreme above, described by Krishna to Arjuna as the Para Purusha, bharta, bhokta, anumanta, Param-Atman, in the thirteenth Chapter of the Gita.

Though the truth of the Self is free of access to all mankind, it is attained only by very few who are willing to pay the price in self-discipline, steadfastness and non-attachment. Though the truth is open to all, many do not feel the urge to seek. Of those who have the urge, many suffer from doubt and vacillation. Even if they do not have doubts, many are scared away by difficulties. Only a few rare souls succeed in braving the perils and reaching the goal.9

As a matter of fact, there is no final goal for human life, one has to go on from peak to peak, it is as much true regarding outward as well as the inner spiritual Endeavour; but, when the inner realization is so real that the outward acts are guided by its light the aspirant has reached a stage from where he does not get caught by the waves of the lower nature, gradually but steadily it recedes away from him, and this is what is meant by liberation. And after this liberation has been achieved the person gets connected with the higher power, all in him is in line with it; he is ready for the next transformation. Therefore, the first liberation is the liberation from attachment, desire, ego, doubt, and the many other ways of the lower nature. Secondly, what happens after a certain stage of inner liberation is that, all the outer happenings, words, encounters, experiences bitter and sweet develop an inner meaning and a greater harmony and equality become the natural rewards bestowed on the spiritual aspirant, and, the joy of receiving grace becomes a way of life. The Gita speaks of sukham atyantikam, the ananda, the bliss which comes through the knowledge by identity. This knowledge is received with a still mind and body during meditation and gradually settles within the liberated being so that it can be felt at will, and finally becomes a natural state of the yogi.

That in which the soul knows its own true and exceeding bliss, which is perceived by the intelligence and is beyond the senses, wherein established, it can no longer fall away from the spiritual truth of its being. That is the greatest of all gains and the treasure beside which all lose their value, wherein established he is not disturbed by the fieriest assault of mental grief.10

The “mental thought” is the real challenge to still, because the mental man remains prone to the thoughts which cross his mind, gets trapped, feels the urge to put across his point of view and habitually seeks mental clarification even from those who are not able to do so because of the strong vital, physical and egoistic forces in them; we have to come out liberated from this working of the mechanical nature in us. This state of liberation is an attainment of which the aspirant is fully aware, he/she now experiences the bliss the beauty of which cannot be described in words, all the struggles and problems of life which once troubled him are seen as aids which brought him to this bliss; he has received a priceless gem which is secure within his being and has given him immortality; though he has no option but to behave like anybody else outwardly. How can the intellect know from where this precious gift has come, or that it gives the best results in a state of surrender to the omnipresent Divine? The intellect is a tool we are provided with, to each one in different shape, scope and size; it gets sharpened with the Light and Power from above; the final liberation is achieved by a conscious giving up of oneself, of the ego to the divine; and to remain connected with the eternal source of abiding peace and joy.

Krishna could not coerce Arjuna, the autonomous adult, to follow what has been said to him; his replies to the questions which Arjuna had asked of him are clear, precise and universal in appeal; having spoken to Arjuna with divine patience and compassion, he tells him to reflect on his words fully-vimreshya asheshena, and then do as he so decides-yatha icchasi tatha kuru. And Arjuna discovers that he is ready to receive the divine word and to act on it because all the doubts of the mental man in him have been cleared and the darkness of his soul has been lifted. The liberated being emerges in the light from above and aspires for greater light to prevail in his life on earth and all his actions here; an evolutionary movement and not a destructive downward falling is the aim of the precious human life on earth. The aspirant is liberated from the movements of the lower nature, its errors, impurities, fears, disturbances and reactions; he becomes aware of the working of the modes of nature-prakriti, is able to witness its play and willingly places himself under the cool showers of divine grace-kripa for a complete freedom and transformation. The autonomous adult, the natural child and the controlling parent are in harmony lead by the psychic being in the light of the purusha, the higher consciousness.

Now that I have revealed to you the wisdom

Which is the secret of secrets, I enjoin you

To ponder it fully and then act as you will.11

Notes and References:

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1 Sri Aurobindo: The Hour of God p5

2 Ibid p7

3 Eric Berne: Games People Play p64

4 Sri Aurobindo: The synthesis of Yoga p101

5 Gita: 4:31

6 S. Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvad-Gita p376

7 Sri Aurobido: Letters On Yoga p1001

8 Ibid pp 301-02

9 S. Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvad Gita 2:29

10 Gita 6:21, 22

11 The Bhagvad Gita A revelation, a translation in verse by Dilip Kumar Roy: 18:63

# Transcendence

Be beyond the range or grasp of human sense experience, reason, belief, etc, surpass—that is Transcendence; the evolution of the individual is the enlargement of consciousness in which is also contained the ignorance it has left behind; consciousness is that into which the individual soul grows to become the universal and then unfolds into the limitless absolute consciousness. This spiritual experience is at once humbling and awesome, dumb founding and beyond the range of speech end intellect to describe or to know. Indian metaphysics is an attempt to describe reality which includes the spiritual experience of the all encompassing, all pervading Brahman. The fact that, the wisdom of those individual sages of ancient India is still being lived and verified today shows that the spiritual consciousness is still waiting to be unveiled for the integral evolution of humanity: Man, in his ignorance identifies himself with the material sheaths that encompass his true self. Transcending these, he becomes one with Brahman, who is pure bliss.1 And this just quoted knowledge of the Upanishads, is restated in the words of Sri Aurobindo as follows: It is self evident [in the OVERMINDconsciousness] that both the INDIVIDUAL and the COSMOS come from a transcendent REALITY which takes form in them: the mind and life of the individual being, its self in nature must therefore be a partial self-expression of the cosmic Being and, both through that and directly, a self expression of the transcendent Reality.2 In the evolution of consciousness, the over mind is the highest plane below the Supramental. Sri Aurobindo explains the levels of consciousness by dividing them into two halves—the higher of SAT, CHIT, ANANDA, and the lower half of mind, life, matter; the over mind is the line in between the highest and the lower half. The Overmind will receive the Supermind consciousness as the result of the evolutionary process which takes place in gradations in Integral yoga. “Truth-consciousness” is the term given to the Supermind.

There are many spiritual experiences which go by the name of nirvana, a loss of individual identity into the oneness of the cosmic or the transcendent awareness; and a state of Samadhi, which is a state of being united, a self-gathering of the being in a higher consciousness, but these must and cannot be the topics for consideration here; Nirvana, according to the Gita, is the dissolution of the limitations created by the ego; all spiritual experiences have to be consolidated into making the aspirant close to the One Reality above us, so that all in the being flows from that Unity without any contradiction, with a spontaneity which is directed towards the welfare and ultimate good of all. The individual being that attains Nirvana also transcends the lower Nature- apara prakriti and moves on to an inner unity with the Highest Nature-Para Prakriti, inherent in the Para Purusha, the Supreme Consciousness.

To come back to ordinary life situations, human behavior and relationships, the social animal that man is, his need to relate with others is very much there even though he grows in knowledge and wisdom which not only sustain him but give him solutions for a more peaceful living. Each one of us lives as a centre around which the world moves, the microcosm in the macrocosm; and relationships have assumed more importance in spite of the growing individualistic independence, nuclear families, and technological assistance. The more man overcomes, the more he is forced by Nature to look back and around him for newer solutions; but what remains steady is the spiritual field, the lasting light, peace, and joy, forever available to man to enable him to deal with the outward movements and changes in life on earth; therefore, what is transcended in the field of consciousness is of a lasting value and not only stands no comparison with what is gained in the material field, but must be lived as a spirit in material life.

The need of the hour is to make life on earth more integral by realizing and practicing truth from inside out and not from the outside in; but since, technology is ruling and mass movements are more forceful than ever before, the individual too, must not suppress the voice of the spirit within him and must make a beginning by looking inwards to discover the source of everlasting beauty in the Lotus of the heart. Knowledge is of things, acts, and relations. But wisdom is of Brahman alone; and, beyond all things, acts, and relations, he abides forever. To become one with him is the only wisdom**.3** The higher knowledge is that of Brahman-the changeless reality, all else including the knowledge of the scriptures is lower knowledge, says the Upanishad.

Coming back to a modern psychological method called Transactional Analysis again, which too ultimately forces the aware person to look inwards for introspection and solutions for problems in behavior and relationships, and to take suitable decisions; and therefore, a transcendence of what has been overcome takes place, compelling the individual to look for a more lasting source for sustenance, growth and meaning, than what is contingent on relationships alone. Transcendence means an experience of that which is more than myself, a reality outside of myself, that which has been called The Other, The All, or God.4 And then: Berne says in Games People Play, “Awareness means the capacity to see a coffee pot and hear the birds sing in one’s own way, and not the way one was taught” Tillich speaks of experiencing God or grace in his own way, and not the way he has been taught. Every preprogrammed idea of what God is gets in the way of experiencing God. This is why I contend that an important aspect of the religious experience of intimacy is the exclusion of the Parent.5 Let it be clear here that the Parent means the Ego state which develops from what the growing child has received from his/her parents, and which was drilled into her in an effort to guide or suppress the adult in her, which develops out of an independent time for awareness and observation in the little person’s life, and, in most cases what was thus drilled was what they, the parents themselves were drilled with and which was never questioned by them. Large populations of men and women still behave from the Child Ego State as adapted and dependent, and naively trust the parent ego state which takes advantage of the situation, at times as a dangerously contaminated personality, who plays Games in order to exploit the Child ego state for selfish pay offs. This is one reason out of the many which explains the saga of not only not addressing genuine practical problems of life but adding on to them for reasons of pay offs or for not willing to take responsibility, to find escape in ritual rather than following the true message which has been kept on hold for too long or has been erased from the active field. Many superficial reasons and explanations can naturally be given even by those who are in a position to act for the larger good of a people-Loksangraha, as the Gita calls it- traditions, customs, and procedures are cited, a variety of blaming games engross many a number of us, complete with raising fingers, slogans, pin-pointing this and that, rising tempers and fists, and confusion; the power of the Ego and of means to strengthen them get displayed in abundance as against the skill and methodology for the welfare of the people who place their trust in their representatives; this is in complete contrast to the wisdom of the land, which suggests the giving up of ego and desire and the use of the sword of knowledge which cuts through doubts and ignorance before any task in life is taken up; and the blind aping of Western achievements to show developmental results at the cost of severe deprivation in the major areas of human progress is neither in the true spirit of Science nor based on the deep understanding of life gained through spiritual knowledge in India.

The autonomous adult will not discard all of that which comes from the Parent by behaving like a rebellious child, but would have developed the deep sense of discrimination which would enable him not only to nourish himself with the crème of traditional knowledge, but to understand and apply it in the larger perspective of the problems of life; this will be done by transcending the game playing tendencies of the lower nature which are so different from the pure and natural games played by children as a natural part of their all round development and which never cease to be of natural use to the adult in us, who retains the pure child like qualities of awe, wonder, curiosity, adventure, trust, friendship, laughter and fun.

Krishna says, that the yogi transcends the lower nature by developing non-attachment through the practice of self-control-sanyama and meditation-dhyana, he is freed from the grip of anger, desire and passion, and lives in a state of inner happiness and Nirvana in the Brahman. The synthetic yoga of the Gita takes into its fold, the major aspects of human growth needed to move towards everlasting peace, one has to remain in a state of yoga while doing works for the good of others and nirvana does not mean a cessation of works.

When the soul is no longer attached to the touches of outward things, then one finds the happiness that exists in the Self; such a one enjoys an imperishable happiness, because his self is in yoga-brahmyogyuktatman, by yoga with the Brahman.

He who has the inner happiness and the inner ease and repose and the inner light, that yogi becomes the Brahman, brahmanirvanam.

Sages win Nirvana in the Brahman, they in whom the stains of sin are effaced and the knot of doubts is cut sunder, masters of their selves, who are occupied in doing good to all creatures- sarvabhuta hite ratah.

When a man has known Me as the enjoyer of sacrifice and tapasya, the mighty lord of all the worlds, the friend of all creatures-suhridam sarvabhutanam, he comes by the peace.6

A transcendence of the lower Nature-apara prakriti is not only mandatory for Yoga, but is a natural result but is a natural consequence of the spiritual endeavour and in the context of the present times it is the emerging means of survival of the Autonomous Adult and imparts him with an enhanced skill and ability for doing works in the world; because not only a tolerance is bestowed on him but he is made to live in Unity which is at once transcendent, universal and individual.

The synthesis of knowledge, work and devotion stands out clear in the entire teaching of yoga in the Gita, yet it is interpreted again and again as if the three are independent of each other and Nirvana means the dissolution of a being into the larger Brahman and not the doing of works. It is the extinction of ego, attachment, desire-kama, and anger, which results in the transcendence of the lower nature and the unity with the higher consciousness; living life in Brahmanirvana results in doing works for the good of all. Sri Aurobindo puts it across thus: Thus Nirvana is clearly compatible with world-consciousness and with action in the world. For the sages who possess it, are conscious of and in intimate relation by works with the Divine in the mutable universe; they are occupied with the good of all creatures, sarvabhutahite.

….The power of the Karmayoga comes in again; the knowledge of the active Brahman, the cosmic supersoul, is insisted on among the conditions of the peace of Nirvana.7

Berne’s words, there is hope for individual members...are encouraging indeed for the autonomous adult to emerge and carry along those of his kind, till Mother Nature in her Highest wisdom decides on the hour of Transformation, in spite of the rising numbers of the hostile beings; by hostile beings here, is meant those who are against the divine truth—they support the egoistic strength and the struggle for its dominance in the world. This was visualized by Sri Aurobindo and inspired him to rewrite the wisdom of those ancient scriptures of India and bring out their spiritually realized truth for the contemporary mind, which must either be individually verified through meditation and/ or followed through faith which is still there, but which will be strengthened by the newer light in which it will be seen from the rising levels of consciousness by the aspirant, so that, work and responsibilities are carried on in keeping with the dharma, swadharma and swabhava progressively for the welfare of all in the spirit of Unity with the One Supreme above and in all, as says Krishna.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad there appears the account of how Bhrigu respectfully approaches his father Varuna to learn about Brahman-the Reality and is told to meditate; every time when he feels doubtful about the knowledge he thus attained, he is advised to meditate more for meditation is Brahman; and finally Bhrigu discovers the Joy that is Brahman. No sermon was given by Varuna, the Parent to the Child Bhrigu but he was expected to learn naturally and become an emancipated Adult, helped by the Parent. Transcendence cannot be reached by mere preaching or even teaching, it comes by direct experiencing, by becoming it. Krishna too, tells Arjuna, that, the seeker after the knowledge of Yoga goes beyond the range of Vedas and Upanishads. Therefore, in answer to the still asked question, that how is it possible for the individual to transcend it all while still living on earth, is that, spiritual life is essentially an inner living and it is very much possible to live in an inner freedom while on the outside it looks no different from the rest; this happens because the inner being has been connected to the universal and the transcendent spirit and lives in the knowledge, satisfaction, quietude and bliss of it, it receives the word from the higher consciousness, is surrendered to it and seeks Its manifestation in outer life; the knowledge that all is done by Nature-Prakriti and the modes of Nature-Guna are at work in each individual being grows and gets perfected in the seeker all the time and, as Consciousness grows, a transcendence takes place simultaneously, which comes as a relief, a solid experience of peace and bliss and Grace.

Transcendence is relative, as is everything perceived and understood by the individual, beginning with the senses, the ego, the mind, intellect, and then, the individual atman, the Universal, and the Higher. When the senses are under control, the intelligence is firmly established, wholly given up to the higher Self in yoga in calm self knowledge, says Krishna, then the one who is established in yoga gains skill in works; and both yoga and works enhance each other.Transcendence is achieved as the Sadhaka conquers and moves from peak to peak which naturally entails going down to go higher up every time and it is always possible to look back on something which has been transcended by the individual soul- the jivatman, as it discovers its real source in the higher and then, the highest. Krishna gives us the knowledge of the Triple Purusha (spiritual beings):

There are two Purusha (spiritual Entity) in this world the Kshara (mutable and personal) and the Akshara (immutable and impersonal); The Kshara is all these existences, the Kutastha (the higher consciousness) is called the immutable.

But other than these two is that highest spirit called the Uttama Purusha-Paramatman-Ishwara (Supreme Self), which enters the three worlds and up bears them,

The Supreme-Purushottama, transcends the mutable and the immutable in the world and the Veda.

Krishna further speaks to Arjuna about the knowledge He has just revealed to him: Thus by me the most secret Shastra (supreme teaching and science) has been told, O sinless one-Anagha (Arjuna). Absolutely to know it is to be perfected in understanding and successful in the supreme sense, O Bharata (Arjuna).8

The Transcendent-Paramatman-Purushottamma, pervades and holds the mutable- kshara and the immutable-akshara; Nature in its dual aspects, the lower-apara prakriti and the higher-para Prakrti emanates from Him; this spiritual truth cannot be grasped by mental powers but is experienced by yoga. This is the highest spiritual realization through which the Divine Unity, Equality, and knowledge enters the individual soul, life, and mind, and, manifests as selfless works in the world. The soul in the ever changing cosmos is kshara; akshara is the eternal spirit, unchanged and immobile, the immutable in the mutable. When the soul turns to this immutable, the cosmic movement falls away from it and it reaches its unchanging eternal existence. These two are not irreconcilable opposites, for Brahman is both one and many, the eternal unborn as also the cosmic streaming forth.9  The infinite being, consciousness, power and bliss; manifestation of the Highest Power, God; the ultimate Truth, Perfection, and Beauty- Satyam Shivam Sundaram , manifests Itself as Sachchidananda, Existence, Consciousness, and Delight, in the perfected spiritual seeker. This state is achieved when the Spiritual seeker rises beyond the ego and the limitations or the boundaries even of the cosmos and experiences the Supreme as the all emanating, holding it all unto It, all is in It, It is in all, yet not in it. It creates, sustains and destroys, but is not still in it, it is the Transcendent, yet all pervading, It is everywhere at the same time.

…..there are three terms of the one existence, transcendent, universal and individual, and that each of these always contains secretly or overtly the two others. The Transcendent possesses itself always and controls the other two as the basis of its own temporal possibilities;………..the human being is here on earth the highest power of the third term, the individual, for he alone can work out at its critical turning point that movement of self –manifestation which appears to us as the involution and evolution of the divine consciousness between the two terms of the IGNORANCE and the KNOWLEDGE.10

Notes and References:

1 Taittiriya Upanishad, taken from ‘The Upanishads Breath of the Eternal’, by Prabhavananda and Frederic Manchester

2The Life Divine p309

3 Mundaka Upanishad

4 Thomas A. Harris: I’M OK-YOU’RE OK p226

5 Ibid p231

6 Gita: 5:21, 24, 25, 29

7 Sri Aurobindi: Essays on the Gita pp 237& 239

8 Gita: 15: 16, 17, 18, 20

9 S. Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvadgita p332

10 Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine pp 385-86, from the Chapter Titled: The Eternal and the Individual

# 9

# Transformation

A thorough change in character, behavior, or personality is possible if the individual being indeed aspires for it and focuses on such a change entirely; but the question is about the measure of this transformation; science and mysticism are the two fields of evolutionary activity, one in matter and the other in the subtle; but the modern human life on earth has been influenced tremendously by science and by material thought and vision; an intoxicated short sightedness has played havoc with the environment and the very survival of earth on one side, and on the other, has empowered the lower propensities and the egotistic destructive forces in humanity by waking up even those sub human elements-naradhama, dushkritin, asuram bhavam asita, as the Gita describes them- who could remain dormant for the better. Therefore, if we are to decide which out of these two seemingly parallel fields contains the secrets of human growth consistent with peace, wisdom, harmony, and goodwill, the spiritual field is the richer of the two. We are bestowed with life, body, mind, and soul by the Creator, a spirit has been housed in life, it is all around us, above us and beyond, the spiritual reality is as much there as the reality of matter; evolution cannot take place in one field alone, there has to be the unity; but this Unity is far from being contingent on conferences, arguments, discussions and debates which take place for it as events where Games are played and then each participant goes his way with a pay off or without it, or just procedures and rituals are indulged in.

It is more than obvious that the rapid transformation of physical life has not been balanced by the spiritual- and for a vast majority even the mental, and, the thoughts or ideals of times in human history, which brought forth the emergence of various religions, are becoming obsolete in spirit and prominent as Ego states; religion is being used for the purpose of identity by birth and “yoga” is being spoken about as something to be used for relief from illness, stress and tension. Liberated persons have to empower themselves to prevent further damage to the quality of a precious human life; and the autonomous adult who has chosen the path of yoga has to continue and take it to the end irrespective of the time taken in the process, because truth, bliss, unity, and immortality gained and perfected on the way are not time bound as they would be in the intellectual sense. Logic has come to defy even science in more bewildering ways than just the anomalous behavior of water, and reason is being used to justify indulgence in the satisfactions of the lower nature in man; the emancipated individual therefore, has to go beyond reason and intellect which is made possible by yoga.

Therefore, the need for a higher and a more meaningful life will require an effort: The effort involves a quest for the Truth that underlies existence and the fundamental Law of its self expression in the universe—the work of metaphysical philosophy and religious thought; the sounding and harmonizing of the psychological methods of discipline by which man purifies and perfects himself—the work of psychology, not as it is understood in Europe, but the deeper practical psychology called in India Yoga; and the application of our ideas to the problems of man’s social and collective life.1

Philosophy, metaphysics and yoga kept the controlling parent and the adapted child alive in India--this parent was rooted deep in the behavioral patterns made strongly visible by the procedures and rituals based on various religious philosophies throughout the length and breadth of the vast country with so much geographical, racial, and linguistic variety, which found its larger unity in a central belief and the Sanskrit language. But the fact is that, this parent remained unquestioned for too long, generation after generation it gradually contaminated the adult and the child, and it itself became more critical, because it could not balance itself with a strong adult and the natural child; therefore, it is now confused within and open to rebuke from outside. It is being hoped that the autonomous adult will complete itself by adopting the natural and spontaneous child, and by understanding the values of the parent through careful examination and appreciation of its roots which have stood the test of time through many a storm, turmoil, and upheaval; to get rid of the thought and philosophy which have been behind the formation of the Parent cannot be the method of the aware and intimate adult, as well as that of Science, but the right course of action is to value the effort made by our Sages which has kept us alive and living in its essential beauty in spite of the contamination and adulteration which it has gone through; we need an increasing number of autonomous adults and if they cannot be made through an educational system dominated by commercial, economical and political forces, then it is hoped that many individuals who hear the call of the spirit will heed to listen to it at leisure and follow it, and, in that case they will have to trudge the path which was made for us by those great souls in the history of human growth, before coming out into a new dawn of their own discovery and making.

Strangely enough, the individualistic spiritual, as well as the collective religious practices passed on from generation to generation in India had also resulted in the recommended divisions of human life into brahmcharya-self discipline, a living away from the comforts of home and the observance of celibacy for students, because along with the many subjects taught for living life with the knowledge of the material and the physical aspects, the pupils were groomed in universal values and trained for developing the ability for spiritual inquiry and the study of the Shashtras which were the repositories of it, and then it was the world exposure as grihasta, house holder, followed by sannyasa-giving up worldly involvements, van prastha-going into seclusion for a peaceful life and the period for living as the free social man; and though basically individualistic, societal organization and pressure naturally overtook the individual in many ways. However, the evolving customs, traditions, literature, arts, music and dance forms became richly reflective of many aspects of spiritual quest and experiences. And today we have a composite, extremely complicated, and hugely populated India, inhabited with all kinds, beliefs and varieties of people, problems, noise and chaos, but a moving spirit which is unique to it. This living spirit-the soul has to be understood, respected, lived and nurtured, not by burdening it with the blind, uneven materialistic ideas and as well as, not imposing on it the little understood fanatical views of the puritans, because they are both envelopers of the spirit.

Spirituality doesn’t appear suddenly to save from mid age crisis, to fill the loneliness in old age, or as a stress reliever at any age, as has become the pragmatic, as well as the ignorant way of viewing it, it is neither a commodity available for buying nor a package tucked away, in order to be opened in old age; it is a way of life, it is Yoga, it needs to be practiced not as a pastime but as life itself, it is a transformation which has to be experienced. It is true that each person will take to it in keeping with his/her inclination, capacity, or life situation, but, a general acceptance of human values like simplicity, honesty, candidness, responsibility, strength of character, discipline, tolerance, etc, and the importance given to them by the individual in his life in spite of much opposition, is definitely a part of yoga. Soul, mind, life and body form the human personality; humanity shall find its true potential when the soul is included in its growth right from the beginning along with life, body and mind.

The yoga of the Gita builds up from the essence of Vedanta and culminates in the synthesis of work, knowledge, and love for the Divine as the Art of living and provides a foundation for the evolution of mankind and the individual. The Gita must be approached for spiritual guidance, which is based on deep practical psychology, called Yoga of the understanding, intelligent will, works, meditation, inner renunciation, knowledge, equality, transcendence, and complete surrender to the Highest Power. An ordinary human being according to Krishna, must perform his/her work in keeping with the demand of time, with clear understanding and composure in consonance with his true nature-- the dharma of his own existence and not by imitating other’s dharma for superficial reasons which does not lead to harmony and peace. No work is ever perfect, says Krishna; but whatever work we do in the world must be done in harmony with our true nature and as an offering to the divine. The Divine worker is the one who possesses a calm equality, impersonality, peace, joy, and freedom. It is through the practice of meditation-dhyana, that all doubts and fears are dispelled and one attains to peace, light, and bliss; the knowledge dawns, that, the one who witnesses, gives consent, upholds the work of Nature-Prakriti and enjoys it, the Supreme Lord-Para Purusha is seated in this body.

Human nature-swabhava, explains Krishna, manifests itself as three modes-guna in us: Sattwa, is that which is light and knowledge and makes us value and seek them; Rajas, is that which propels towards action based on greed, desire, and restlessness; Tamas, is that which causes darkness, inertia, negligence and delusion. We become what we do because of the Gunas; our attitude, inclinations, faith, habits, preferences, sacrifices and all our actions in life are done by the gunas; but to become aware, to be able to witness Nature, to give up the lower for the higher Nature, the Endeavour to rise in the likeness of the Divine consciousness, by transcending it all, is Yoga. And the Master of Yoga is none other, but the Supreme Divine Power. The evolutionary and the transforming aims of the Super Nature-yogkshemam vahamyaham in us become obvious to the aspirant after a certain stage, and then onwards, Yoga also appears as a participating Endeavour of the Universal Spirit.

Sri Aurobindo’s vision and Yoga go further than the Yoga of the Gita, because the spiritually perfected man aspires for a transformation to the superman level in keeping with Nature’s law of evolution: …the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence; the pouring of the power of the spirit into the physical mould and mental instrument so that man may develop his manhood into that true super manhood which shall exceed our present state as much as this exceeds the animal state from which science tells us that we have issued. These three are one; for man’s unity and man’s self-transcendence can come only by living in the spirit.2

A unity with the Supreme Power is attained after realizing the psychic purity within and the Spirit above through the practice of Yoga, and then, an openness to Grace from above takes it further through the mental, vital, and physical planes of our being, as well as the subconscient and inconscient planes, and, by raising us to the overmind plane through the gradations of the higher mind and from there to the supermind, the self-determining Infinite consciousness; the Highest is The Supreme --the unmanifest and the manifest at the same time, Sachchidananda. Sri Aurobindo has explained the levels of consciousness by defining the gradations of mind above the human mind namely, the liberated intelligence, intuitive mind, and illumined mind as higher mind, and then, the overmind with its own gradations; it is the overmind which will transform the individual aspirant by performing the bridging between the supermind and the lower nature in us. The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo aims at ‘bridging the gulf between mind and supermind’ through a continuous growth of consciousness which takes place by the descent of the Higher consciousness and the ascent of the lower into the higher : there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher light, Knowledge, power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconscious; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation,--there must take place as a crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental consciousness into our entire being and nature.3

This bridging of the gulf between the mind and the supermind is a process which is the natural outcome of practicing Yoga- the union with the divine, the Supreme Power above us, and this process demands a complete quiet serving as a vacuum, a channel for the higher power manifest as Ananda to pour into the being of the aspirant; complete purity, equality, and surrender required are what make Yoga a process and not an end.

May quietness descend upon my limbs,

My speech, my breath, my eyes, my ears;

May all my senses wax clear and strong.

May Brahman show himself unto me……….

Om… Peace—peace—peace.4

The autonomous adult, the free mental being, will become a drishta and anumanta-perfect witness of Nature and a guide, when the chaitya purusha-the psychic being within, is in line with the atman-the central being above, which in turn realizes its oneness with the Universal Spirit-Akshara. But having realized this unity, something else remains with which the higher nature pines to unite, and that is the Purushottama; to have this knowledge is to adore this One Supreme Power in every way. The aspiration of the psychic being and the growing knowledge- the truth consciousness, are meant for a transformation of human existence on earth: Supramental gnosis is a twofold Truth-Consciousness, a consciousness of inherent self-knowledge and, by identity of self and world, of intimate world-knowledge; this knowledge is the criterion, the characteristic power of the gnosis.5

Purusha is consciousness and Prakriti is the manifesting energy, Nature; as long as the consciousness remains enveloped in nature it does not wake up to its own being, but when it becomes aware of itself not only as the witness of prakriti but also of its involvement in it, it unites itself with the higher consciousness. This change in consciousness brings about the change in nature too from level to level along with the broadening and rising consciousness. Krishna speaks of the three purushas to bring in clarity for the purpose of his yoga, but there are many purushas in one personality; there is a purusha or consciousness each in the physical, vital and mental. The lower nature or the apara prakriti is in the kshara and the higher nature or para prakriti is in the akshara; the Purushottama has the power of Prakriti in itself-which emanates from It both in the manifest and in what is unmanifest to us. When the lower prakriti leaves the swabhava, because the consciousness has risen, but the being is trapped in the limitations imposed by life on it, the psychic personality aspires for a transformation in keeping with the level of consciousness it touches; the crudeness and the loud ignorance around appear as myth to it, it surrenders itself before the highest, for only its openness to grace from above will bring about a change and will equip the being with the necessary knowledge, strength and equality needed to live with this inner change on earth. This is reason enough for the person to live a quiet and secluded life, while at the same time he is also ready for work as demanded by life, but karma in the traditional meaning of it has fallen away from him; the aspiration for a transformation to divine perfection and its outward expression keeps burning within.

As for the Purusha it is there on all planes; there is a mental Purusha, manomaya, leader of life and body, as the Upanishad puts it, a vital, a physical purusha; there is the psychic being or Chaitya Purusha which supports and carries all these as it were. One may say that these are projections of the jivatman put there to uphold Prakriti on the various levels of the being. The Upanishad speaks also of a supramental and a Bliss Purusha, and if the supramaental and the Bliss Nature were organized in the evolution on earth we could become aware of them upholding the movements here.

As for the psychic being, it enters into the evolution, enters into the body at birth and goes out of it at death; but the jivatman, as I know it, is unborn and eternal although upholding the manifested personality from above.6

To aspire and continue practicing yoga for the manifestation of the superman, when there is still so much to lament about human nature--in spite of the advancing technology which continues to transform physical life on earth, and democracies which give us so much freedom and leisure to pursue our potentials—may seem like a crazy ideal to many, but it is the most natural outcome of yoga today and, is something in harmony with the evolution which Nature seeks in us. Spiritual life is lived inwardly, even if it reaches the depths and heights not visible on the outside; the force of the spirit will work inside out and be revealed in life itself, it is the essence of the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the purpose of his Yoga. Much in the human form appears as obsolete and burdensome anyway, and there are many who aspire for a transformation to a higher level of becoming, lifted away from the clutches of the lower passions and routine habits of the nature. As for the progress made in the material field by Science and its method as seen by Sri Aurobindo in the early twentieh century, the following is what he had written:

Three things will remain from the labour of the secularist centuries; truth of the physical world and its importance, the scientific method of knowledge,--which is to induce Nature and Being to reveal their own way of being and proceeding, not hastening to put upon them our own impositions of idea and imagination, adhyaropa,--and last, though very far from least, the truth and importance of the earth life and the human endeavour, its evolutionary meaning. They will remain, but will turn to another sense and disclose greater issues. Surer of our hope and our labour, we shall see them all transformed into light of a vaster and more intimate world-knowledge and self-knowledge.7

The progressive trend in mind and matter achieved by Pure Science and technology will bring peace and harmony on earth when it unites with the deeper, the higher, the all pervading and all prevailing Spirit in its power, order and immortality. This vision of evolution, of human ascent to the higher and the higher descent in us for the same purpose carves out the path of Yoga for us which gives meaning to this most precious human life on earth; the grasping of this meaning of life is the beginning of Yoga and the decisive step on the path of the journey before us. To know our true nature and its origin, of our being and becoming is the spiritual adventure to be gone through assisted by the intelligent will as prescribed by Krishna; and even though an understanding of the many mental formations and of human relationships is of use for clarity and harmony in life, it has to be the gradation of the higher, the illumined, the intuitive and the over-mind which sets the rhythm of the inner experience in evolution and must manifest in a way which cannot be described in words. And if we say that, the inability to describe the inner experience is a problem, we do so because we wish to bring it to the ordinary level of understanding; and, in this respect the working of the numerous tools which technology provides for day to day life cannot be explained to the lay person even though a scientific and mathematical process is available somewhere. However, this is just a way of putting forward an argument and hardly serves the purpose; what must matter is that the way of the spirit demands purity for which liberation from greed, passions, egotism and the like is required; it therefore becomes an individual quest and experience though, the resultant gradations are the same and can be understood by other aspirants.

The autonomous adult as understood through the vocabulary provided for Transactional Analysis by Eric Berne, based on the Ego States of a mental psychological method, the synthetic yoga of the Gita with its metaphysical inclusions, and its deeper vocabulary enumerative of the moral, spiritual and the meaning of human life aspects, based on a complete yogic psychology, culminating into profound everlasting peace and the doing of divine works-karmayoga on earth for all round prosperity, victory, welfare and the eternal law-shree, vijaya, bhuti, dhruva niti, and the Integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo with a new and more precise vocabulary and expression given in the English language to the crème of the ancient spiritual knowledge of India, which takes off from here, are essentially one consolidated effort towards the need for a Transformation to bring in a harmonious and victorious life for humanity on earth.

If there is a Being that is becoming, a Reality of existence that is unrolling itself in Time, what that being, that reality secretly is, is what we have to become, and so to become is our life’s significance.8

Notes and References:

1 Sri Aurobindo: Ideal and Progress p50

2 Ibid p51

3 Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine p891

4 Kena Upanishad

5 The Life Divine p1008

“The description of gnosis applies to all consciousness that is based upon TRUTH of being and not upon the IGNORANCE or Nescience.”

Ibid p 968

6 Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga p276

7 Sri Aurobindo: EVOLUTION p35

8 Sri Aurobindo: The Life Divine p 1016

# 10

# A Universal Worker-The Karma Yogi

The deeply psychological method used by Krishna in the Gita takes into its fold the entirety of human nature; work, knowledge, and the doer of work are of three kinds according to the dominance of the three qualities or modes-Guna of nature-prakriti in each one, namely the sattwic-in the light of truth; rajasic-based on desire, passion, action; and tamasic-dominated by darkness, inertia; he described them in great details therein. The secret of the meaning and the purpose of life lies in the knot of the ego, the loosening of this knot is the beginning of awareness and knowledge, and from here onwards work begins to expand knowledge which in turn enlarges the spirit in which all work is done, and then, embracing the two is devotion for the Highest Power and the three grow to become one in union-Yoga with the Universal and the Higher Spirit; this Union becomes stronger and firmer in proportion to the disappearing ego sense-the ‘I’ness-Ahankara and enriches itself with the descending light, peace, and bliss.

Krishna while teaching the yoga of the Gita to Arjuna is absolutely clear that the ways and methods of reaching the Divine, sacrifice and works are to be left to individuals, because the modes of nature work differently for all; and therein lies the great timeless catholicity of the Gita; Khsetra and Prakriti or Field and Nature are different for each one of us seemingly effected by birth, time, environment, personality, geography, and so on, the one who takes cognizance of the field is the knower of the Field-Khsetrajna-Atman-Purusha. But then, what is the object of this knowledge? What is there to be known and how to go about to gain this knowledge? How is it that the knower is also the object of knowledge? The answer to this question becomes a necessity because, how else will karma-yoga proceed without it? What does Krishna mean by telling Arjuna that he who knows Purusha and Prakriti with her qualities is not born again? The Supreme self is seated in the body and is gradually revealed to us when we start looking inwards, first by becoming self- aware with the help of the ego and then getting intimate and one with it when the ego disappears. The knower of the field is the Supreme Creator himself, all gets done and upheld by his Power, all comes from the Universal Energy, but as long as the ego lives strong in us we feel ourselves as the doer or the creator. The mind and intelligence have their limitation and to stand humbled and to lie surrendered to the One above is the only wisdom available to us.

What is note-worthy here is that Krishna makes a clear admission of the then existent knowledge and leaves it at that by saying that, this is what the Sages have said in many inspired verses in the Vedas and the Brahma Sutras which give us the rational and philosophic analysis **1**, because He is enriching Arjuna with a practical method of being in yoga with the Divine, by bringing in the minimum of philosophical analysis; all methods of uniting with the Divine are to be respected, ekam sadvipra bahudha vadanti-“what exists is One sages call it by different names” had been declared in the Vedas much earlier and it was the favourite quote used by Swami Vivekananda in his lectures on Vedanta. This knowledge is gained and made stronger by practicing yoga, and what dawns clear and precise from Krishna’s teaching is the truth, that the divine worker has come to live in Oneness with all, he has given up the egoism of the doer, is not impelled by narrow desire, lives in inner contentment and peace, and he is therefore equanimous, rooted in equality. Another thing to bear in mind is that, the Gita’s emphasis on equality, egolessness, non-attachment, knowledge and Unity again and again as the dialogue proceeds further, does not appear as repetitious but rather comes through as very natural and useful to the spiritual aspirant, because at every level of a growth in consciousness newer discoveries and challenges to be conquered appear in nature as more subtle forms of ego, attachment, intolerance and ignorance. A synthetic growth of knowledge, devotion, and divine works is made by Karma-yoga alone, because even after liberation-nirvana-mukti, as long as we (atman) are in the body ignorance and limitations remains and what happens after leaving the body we shall know or become for ourselves when the time comes. But to move from light to greater light, inner peace, security and immortality is the adventure which yoga provides us with.

Spiritual knowledge is indeed very difficult to express in words, but it is very much there with all its rewards; it grows steadily, new light keeps dawning, the invisible forces are felt with more awareness, and what the Sages and those who have realized this truth of our being have said hits us with more meaning than the reality of the physical world or rather, this reality is included with the spiritual destiny which is seen as unfolding before the spiritual eye. Krishna takes all aspects of life in keeping with the differences of nature and provides us with karma-yoga, which will not move up the ladder of the consciousness without knowledge and devotion- the body, mind and soul have to grow together, to put it in ordinary language; the process goes up in a spiral and to know it as such is what purifies the aspirant. Work in the world, as well as, our personal living of human life will not be progressive unless they are founded on character-charitra, the dharma of our being and becoming, the values, responsibilities and convictions; the balance of the three ego states of TA, parent, adult and child has to be maintained.

The object of spiritual knowledge in Krishna’s words is: I will declare the one object to which the mind of spiritual knowledge must be turned, by fixity in which the soul clouded here recovers and enjoys its nature and original consciousness of immortality,--the eternal supreme Brahman called neither Sat-existence nor Asat-non existence. 2 The eternal Supreme Brahman is called neither real nor unreal, it is in existence as well as in non-existence, and yet it transcends the two; therefore it is in transcendence of life that the divine can be known. Is it easy to live life by transcending it, while having to live and deal with all its dualities around? And this is what has been made practical by Krishna in his synthetic yoga where work, knowledge and devotion must strengthen each other, even though, it is living in the deep knowledge of this unity of consciousness with the Transcendent is what brings immortality, a deeper surrender to the Supreme is a natural accompaniment, and the purity required will increase in the midst of works in the world, where we are constantly being tested for a more complete freedom from ego and attachment; this spiritual journey becomes an adventure for the freely advancing soul.

The eternal Brahman to be known is at once Transcendent and the Universal, all exists in Him and is supported by Him, the changeable, mutable play of Prakriti and the imperishable, immutable behind it are contained in Him- in Brahman; the All that is the One. And, the knowledge of the One above us, around us and within us is gained by yoga through meditation, knowledge and works. When the seeker perceives the diversity of existence abiding in the One and emanating from the One, he attains to Brahman, says Krishna. This knowledge comes by an inner meditation through which the eternal Self becomes apparent to us in our self-existence. Or it comes by the yoga of the sankhyas (jnana yoga). Or it comes by the yoga of works. Others, who are ignorant of these paths of yoga may hear of the truth from others and worship; and they too cross beyond death by their devotion to what they have heard.3

The yoga of Knowledge isJnana yoga, which leads to renunciation, or it may also be added here that, an outer renunciation-sannyasa, is traditionally emphasized in order to achieve it; the Gita lays stress on the inner renunciation rather than on the outer; the inner must naturally find its expression in the outer. Works done with the spirit of inner renunciation, as a sacrifice to the divine in us make us get out of the bonds of ego and attachment, gradually and steadily, the understanding goes on becoming clearer, surrender to the divine power becomes a natural state, which makes us more and more receptive to the divine ananda, the higher knowledge and consciousness, the intelligent will works in harmony with the divine in all in the world and the non-manifest too is known by the soul, even though it is on the basis of what is manifest that we continue to live our bodily life. All that which appears as a fall, failure, insult and rejection to the ordinary perception is taken with the inner knowledge and equality, as a prasada-blessing of the Lord which makes us grow stronger, wiser, purer and deeper in surrender to the divine, and we become more receptive to all that cascades down from above to replace the errors and impurities of the lower nature in us, making us more perfect in our works in the world.

Man is a twofold, contradictory being, free and enslaved. He s godlike, and has in him the signs of his fall, that is, descent into nature. As a fallen being, man is determined by the forces of prakriti. He appears to be actuated solely by elemental forces, sensual impulses, fear and anxiety. But man desires to get better of his fallen nature. The man studied by objective sciences as biology, psychology and sociology is a natural being, is the product of the processes which take place in the world. But man as a subject, has another origin. He is not a child of the world. He is not nature. He does not belong to the objective hierarchy of nature, as a subordinate part of it. Purusha or Kshetrajna cannot be recognized as an object among other objects or as a substance. He can only be recognized as subject, in which is hidden the secret of existence, a complete universe in an individual form.4

It is true devotion from the heart that makes us united with the divine, and leads to immortality, irrespective of the method used. First, there must be a will to gain knowledge which will reveal itself when we begin to know our nature with the help of the intelligence, but this intelligence is not our own in the egoistic sense, therefore it has to be such that has been purified, is not clouded by ego, emotions, bias and attachments; the boundaries of birth, status and personality created by nature amidst which the ego grows strong should have dissolved; the person we think we are due to the embodied ego must get merged in the impersonal from where knowledge springs forth and this can be done by inner meditation, by the path of knowledge, by path of works or by faith and devotion. This knowledge which brings peace and immortality to the aspirant shall be revealed when the Rajasic nature which produces attachment-moha, anger-krodha, unsatiating desires-kama, the impulse to take on work-pardhamat, which appears better to the restless mind and impure buddhi, but which is not in keeping with ones nature or capacity-swadharma, swabhava is conquered by the intelligence in the light of the higher will-atman. This immortality is gained by the dissolution of the limited ego and its chain of births into the consciousness of the unborn and undying, the Eternal, the Lord, the ever free. But it is enjoyed by a free and divine becoming in the universe and not outside the universe; for there it is always possessed, but here in the material body it is to be worked out and enjoyed by the divine Inhabitant under circumstances that are in appearance the most opposite to its terms, in the life of the individual and in the multiple life of the universe.5

Transactional Analysis makes the discovery of the aware-intimate-spontaneous-autonomous adult in us through the analysis of the ego states at work during our transactions with each other; and, such a one can firmly place his/her foot on the way to the Yoga of the Gita if he so decides, and even if he doesn’t take such a decision he will surely attain to the One Truth through another path. For Krishna in the Gita teaches Arjuna to revere all paths because these are taken according to one’s nature and the faith one has; the enlightened ones do not unsettle the minds of others who are attached to their actions, but they encourage them to do works. Outwardly, the liberated person performs actions as others do, but what matters is the spirit in which an action is done and not just the action; an action done not as a sacrifice is a bondage, work done as a worship is done in freedom; a Universal worker acts with good-will for all and Krishna emphasizes on the spirit with which work is performed: As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows should act without attachment, having for his motive to hold together the peoples.6

In the land of the Upanishads and the Gita, pastimes, rituals, procedures, and games are prevalent, and therefore, though the autonomous adult is rarely seen, he is very much there too; and amazingly, the scriptures too are much in use for pastimes, rituals, procedures, and games which are in vogue all the time, but the scriptures are indeed there not only for study and for spiritual guidance, but also, for transcendence through meditation and yoga, said Krishna; and secondly, there are still many who are either of yogic stature or those who live by the sanskara in them as dutiful, tolerant, and wise souls; and also, a firmly rooted wisdom still thrives in traditional rituals and procedures, and even though ,the Sattwika or the autonomous adult no longer feels the need for such practices, he/she will not only be non- critical of those who indulge in these practices but may even participate in them with spirit of unity and love-lokasangraham, there will be no fanaticism or ill will or purely supercilious or self-assertive motive involved ; it is hoped that the spirit carrying this wisdom will get stronger than the vibration of the lower nature which is manifesting all around as a new culture.

Before proceeding further it is but appropriate to quote Sri Aurobindo so as to perceive the wide approach of the philosophical/deeply psychological insight of Krishna’s Gita as much as is necessary to maintain the link with the purely mental psychology of Berne’s TA, because ,The Gita is not just a religious exposition, it has the spiritual message for those who have the quest to know and live life in its deeper meaning: Our object, then, in studying the Gita will not be a scholastic or academical scrutiny of its thought, nor to place its philosophy in the history of metaphysical speculation, nor shall we deal with it in the manner of the analytical dialectician. We approach it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish its essential and living message, that in it on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare**. 7** Sri Aurobindo has reassured the modern mind about something which was nearly lost to it, and which, Krishna too at the outset, as well as throughout his dialogue with Arjuna had emphasized even while briefly mentioning the prevailing philosophies and trends to drive home the message for Arjuna which is purely spiritual.

The parent, child, and adult ego states in Transactional Analysis are to behavioral psychology devised by Berne, as tamas, rajas, and sattwa the three principles-Guna-modes of nature are to spiritual evolution, clearly elaborated by Krishna in the Gita. The mental man looks for a harmonious relationship with those he cares for, and tries to take the help of a psychiatrist under stressful circumstances, but, for the autonomous adult it will not be possible to find a deeper solution within the mental, physical, and material spheres, the solution must come from the higher realms of consciousness as enumerated by the Gita, but then, the solution presents itself to those who are not only ready to receive it but are prepared and inclined to practice it with faith and sincerity.

Not only a growth of all that is sattwika, which means knowledge, light,peace, is required for perfection, Krishna goes on to say, but to transcend the three modes of nature-guna to become trigunatita must be the outcome, and the aspirant soul must witness itself as equal(aware), egoless(spontaneous), and, surrendered(intimate) to the Highest Power-the Divine at all times. Sri Aurobindo differentiated the mental, vital, and the physical parts in us which must undergo purification and upliftment as the result of his yoga, and, these are to his yoga as the adult, child, and parent are to TA in terms of a vocabulary easy to practice and talk about. But first, it is necessary to grasp the meaning the Gita attaches to the modes of nature-guna: Man meets the battle of life in the manner most consonant with the essential quality most dominant in his nature. There are, according to the Sankhya\*\* philosophy accepted in this respect by the Gita, three essential qualities of modes of the world energy and therefore also of human nature, sattva, the mode of poise, knowledge and satisfaction, rajas, the mode of passion, action and struggling emotion, tamas the mode of ignorance and inertia. Dominated by tamas, man does not so much meet the rush and shock of the world- energies whirling about him and converging upon him as he succumbs to them, is overborne by them, afflicted, subjected; or the most, helped by the other qualities, the tamasic man seeks only somehow to survive, to subsist so long as he may, to shelter himself in the fortress of an established routine of thought and action in which he feels himself to a certain extent protected from the battle, able to reject the demand which his higher nature makes upon him, excused from accepting the necessity of farther struggle and the ideal of an increasing effort and mastery. Dominated by rajas, man flings himself into the battle and attempts to use the struggle of forces for his own egoistic benefit, to slay, conquer, dominate, enjoy; or, helped by a certain measure of the sattwic quality, the rajasic man makes the struggle itself a means of increasing inner mastery, joy, power, possession. The battle of life becomes his delight and passion partly for his own sake, for the pleasure of activity and the sense of power, partly as a means of his increase and natural self-development. Dominated by sattva, man seeks in the midst of the strife for a principle of law, right, poise, harmony, peace, satisfaction. The purely sattwic man tends to seek this within, whether for himself alone or with an impulse to communicate it, when won, to other human minds, but usually by a sort of inner detachment from or else an outer rejection of the strife and turmoil of the active world –energy; but if the sattwic mind accepts partly the rajasic impulse, it seeks rather to impose his poise and harmony upon the struggle and apparent chaos, to vindicate a victory for peace, love and harmony over the principle of war, discord and struggle. All the attitudes adopted by the human mind towards the problem of life either derive from the domination of one and other of these qualities or else from an attempt at balance and harmony between them.8

All actions carried out by men, which they consider as free, are governed by the scriptures, desires, or faith; Krishna speaks of three kinds of faith according to the quality of Nature which dominates in them sattwa, rajas or tamas. The effect of the modes of nature-guna on knowledge, work, the doer of the work, as well as on reason, persistence and pleasure are enumerated by Krishna to Arjuna in the Gita; and not only that, Krishna goes on to mention how the guna affect a person’s taste in food, sacrifice-tyaga, charity-dan or giving of gifts, temperament and askesis-tapasya. It is obvious that the sattwic nature is superior, but even this is influenced by a rigid sense of duty, for the sake of a personal faith, therefore the knowledge that all is done by the Guna of Prakriti in us raises us above the guna towards transcendence and immortality, because it lights up the subtle and hidden or obscure corners where the ego goes into hiding only to come out in justification of a behavior reflective of intolerance and even anger which may sometimes sweep a sattwika nature, even though for a very short time.

The Gita thus, speaks of transcending the modes of nature-to become trigunatita, which will appear as preposterous to the mental man, the Gita tells us to carry out all actions in keeping with swadharma-the law of the inner-being and swabhava-ones true nature, and then, lays emphasis on going beyond the Guna of Prakriti-modes of nature to live and act in the world, how is that possible?

Yes, it is very much possible and is for the ultimate good of the world. We have to grow in the likeness of the Perfection of the Divine nature-sadharmya by first liberating ourselves from the delusion of the ego and the sense of attachment caused by it to attain self-knowledge and a spiritual knowledge which opens into the higher consciousness making us united with and at the same time surrender to the One Consciousness, which is the everlasting source of all that is manifest and unmanifest to us. And then, while living in unity with the entire creation through this One Unity and living in the Peace of this growing Knowledge, we are there for Divine works in the world; and even here, for the egoless and enlightened soul, the doing and the not doing of works as it is ordinarily seen by others, has a deeply comprehensive meaning; even when thick into work, the liberated person is not bound, because he is free from the ego and the modes of Nature, on the other hand, not doing work is also karma, because even here the working of the qualities of nature is going on.**9**

When viewed from the psychological method of Transactional Analysis, all of us posses the parent, child and adult in our personality, but to grow into an autonomous adult at the mental and behavioural level, an understanding, accepting and balancing of these ego states in ones personality will be required; the deeper yogic psychology of Gita points out the three modes of nature-guna we all posses and the effect of the excess of a guna on us. The adult to adult transactions—which may be called sattwic, are based on straight forwardness and hence, produce the best results; transactions based on concealed motives-rajasic, always create pain; and those carried out blindly without any knowledge of human nature-tamasic result in dullness and confusion; and the consequences will be the same in work, as they are in behavior.

Now sattwa leads, having overpowered rajas; now rajas, having overpowered sattwa and tamas; and now tamas, having overpowered sattwa and rajas.

It is said that the fruit of works rightly done, is pure and sattwic; pain is the consequence of rajasic works, ignorance is the result of tamasic action.10

What are the signs of gunatita-the man who has risen above the three guna? What his action and how does he surmount the guna? It becomes a natural question to ask. And this is what Arjuna asks of Krishna, and the reply in short is that, such a person is aware of the rising of a particular guna and its operation, with a clear understanding; he has gained an immutable inner calm and quietude, equipoise and equality; such a person has a spiritual existence, performs eternal Dharma and lives in bliss and happiness, because he lives in the divine consciousness. It is clear here, that the sattwika swabhava, which may be called the nature of the autonomous adult is attached to its own mind-sets, opinions or standards of life and its direction as seen by him, and a non-fulfillment of these or the absence of these in others disturb him in a mental way which is a hindrance for spiritual progress and consequently, for perfection of works in the world as a karmayogi. However, it is not an easy task to know ones true nature, the complete swabhava and swadharma, the mystery of it keeps unfolding itself through the trials and tribulations of not only a life time but many lives, as the yogi continues to live in a higher consciousness all the time.

This eternal dharma being performed by the yogi who has transcended the modes of natures- the gunan atitya, though not always possible to understand by common mentality, is perfectly known to the one who has risen above the lower nature, it is done in oneness with the divine consciousness, in eternal goodness. It is spontaneity, in the language of TA which has risen above the ordinary nature to become one with the divine nature and has developed into righteousness on its own account-dhruva niti, eternal law of the Highest Nature-Para prakriti. One has to understand about action-karma as well as to understand about wrong action-vikarmana and about inaction-akarmana one has to understand; thick and tangled is the way of works-gahana karmano gati, says Krishna.11 and this is understood by the one who is in yoga with the divine, having been liberated from the personal egoism of the doer and attachment with the fruit of the work.

What are the signs of divine action or inaction for that matter? There have been many men and women of talent and intelligence who after spending a life time doing extraordinary, good intentioned work with dedication and selflessness, have felt deluded and depressed towards the end of it all, giving up work with a sense of futility, or because of the feeling that they did not get their due, and so on. Why should it happen like that, coming to grief and disillusion at the end of it? Krishna has the answer for it: He, who in action-karma can see inaction-akarma and can see action still continuing in cessation from works, is the man of true reason and discernment among men-buddhiman manushyesu; he is in yoga and a many-sided universal worker-yukta kritasna-karma-krit. Whose inceptions and undertakings are all free from the will of desire-kam sankalp varjita, whose works are burned up by the fire of knowledge, him the wise have called a man of learning-pandita.12

The Yogi becomes an instrument of the Divine; he is able to witness his work, behavior, and the surroundings with an equal mind--calm, equanimous, freed from any ill-will--and without an inner involvement in anything for personal possession or gain. A person who gives up work which needs to be done and for which nature has equipped him with the qualities-guna, does so because of the ignorance caused by the ego-aham bhava, he has not yet understood the truth that it is nature in us which does the work, and not doing work is itself a karma because nature is still at work in him; and then, when a man of knowledge is doing works he feels and knows that it is not he but nature which is doing the work because he has been liberated from ego and attachment. Such a man never comes to grief at the end of it all, on the contrary, gets wiser and more peaceful through the thick and thin of it; and his devotion for the higher Power grows all the time, even while watching the irony-vidambana of life all around.

Krishna’s words spoken to Arjuna are not just meant to deliver him from a dilemma he faces or simply to raise his morale, at a time when the armies on both sides stand facing each other, ready for war after all the peace talks and attempts for compromise have failed; it is a complete message in itself for the individual and all humanity to follow for the evolution which must take place in spite of and amidst all the conflicts and problems of life. And evolution cannot take place by making one-sided strides in the physical and material fields for making life physically luxurious and by bringing the objects of enjoyment for the senses within easy access such as would be possible by winning the war--though it becomes imperative for a war to be fought and this in fact, is the dilemma Arjuna is faced with at the time--; all is contained in nature, and to live in harmony with it an askesis-a practice of self-discipline and balance-tapasya too, is required to develop a Unity with the higher Intelligence and Consciousness ; this Unity is achieved by yogic practice- sadhana; and this Unity, Krishna said, could be achieved through a synthesis of the yoga of work-karma, the yoga of knowledge-jnana and the yoga of devotion-bhakti; all the three enhance each other and give life the meaning and the purpose which is all fulfilling and immortalizing.

It is equality that is meant by yoga- samatvam yogah uchyate; and Yoga is skill in works-yogah karmasu kaushalam; says Krishna: Fixed in Yoga do thy actions, having abandoned attachment, having become equal in failure and success; for it is equality that is meant by Yoga. Works are far inferior to Yoga of the intelligence; desire rather refuge in the intelligence; poor and wretched souls are they who make the fruit of their works the object of their thoughts and activities. One whose intelligence has attained to unity, casts away from him even here in this world of dualities both good doing and evil doing; therefore strive to be in Yoga; Yoga is skill in works.**13**

It is but natural that the intellect and reason must decide upon the choice of work done by the individual, each one of us is bestowed with intelligence which is unique to us, a tool provided by nature with which to control our senses and the mind, but this intelligence gets clouded by emotions, desires and passions which give rise to anger, impatience and intolerance; the first step therefore, is to cleanse the mind and intelligence by making them quiet and letting them receive light from above. Works done when the intelligence is thus purified and united with the pure consciousness- atman above lead towards the ultimate welfare of all. Therefore, the skill in works-karmasu kaushalam, which originates from Yoga means that such work will be accomplished which shall bring the overall welfare of all; such welfare which is of assistance for the evolution of the individual as well as of those concerned, even if it is judged otherwise from the ordinary point of view.

To put it in the language of Transactional Analysis again: the autonomous adult is able to watch, comprehend, and remove the contamination in the Adult, Child, and Parent Ego States which create imbalance in his/her relationships during transactions; he is then able to make up his mind for the future course of action; but the answer lies in the realm of the higher consciousness beyond the ordinary mentality. Berne’s emphasis on the ability of the individual to objectively see the working of the three Ego states in his/her personality and that of others during his transactions with others and to get out from the constraints imposed by the Ego states which are responsible for the problems which arise in human relationships is based on his research and clinical practice and is definitely useful till a certain limit, but then, the mental man having become the autonomous adult is very likely to become dejected, depressed and lonely looking for a worthy pastime and a good game. And besides, the danger of exploiting others may even increase after one learns to ‘tackle’ the ego states in others.

Therefore, that state of the being by which the Yogin differs from the ordinary man, is that by which he rises from the foundation of a perfect equality to the consciousness of the one existence in all and embracing all and lives in that existence and not in the walls of his body or personal temperament or limited mind. Mind and life and body he sees as small enough things which happen and change and develop in his being. Nay, the whole universe is seen by him as happening within himself, not in his small ego or mind, but within this vast and infinite self with which he is now constantly identified. All action in the universe he sees as arising in this being, out of the divine Existence and under the stress of the divine Truth, Knowledge, Will and Power. He begins to participate consciously in its working and to see all things in the light of that divine truth and governance; and even when his own actions move on certain lines rather than others, he is not bound by them or shut to the truth of all the rest by his own passions and preferences, gropings and seekings and revolts. It is evident that such an increasing wideness of vision must mean an increasing knowledge. And if it be true that knowledge is power, it must mean also an increasing force for works. Certainly it would be not so, if the yogin continued to act by the light of his individual reason and imagination and will; for the intellect and all that depends on it can only work by virtue of rigid limitations and exclusive determinations. Accordingly, the continued activity of the unillumined intellect and its servants conflicts with the new state of consciousness and knowledge which arises out of this larger existence, and so long as they remain active, it cannot be perfect or assured; for the consciousness is being continually pulled down to the lower field of ego-habit by the claim of their narrow workings. But the yogin ceases, progressively, to act by the choice of his intellectual or emotional nature. Another light dawns, another power and presence intervenes, other faculties awake in the place of the old human-animal combination.**14**

This then, is what is meant by Krishna’s message given to Arjuna, made transparent by Sri Aurobindo for the modern mind; it was addressed to Arjuna, the representative of the best of men, the great warrior and the evolved man of his time, called the best of Bharatas and tiger of men by Krishna; and in the light of this knowledge Arjuna found himself ready to do works in the world guided by the Divine Word. But millenniums later humanity has not come up to his level of spiritual evolution, though the mental man has touched new heights in science and commerce, and a transformation in the physical and material spheres has swept the rich and the poor alike. At a time when the achievements of Science and Technology and their effects on human life appear more real to the present generation- which is soon going to accept robot as if it too is a part of reality and is also getting ready to accept the results of Virtual Reality Technology- than Nature from which it all appears and which is the only reality that can be known, cherished and sought after by human soul, even though Scientists have now started feeling the need for an inner soul like intelligence in computers. Man who himself is a machine in the hands of a Creator has started imagining himself in the role of a Creator; will this be progress or doom for a soulless humanity on earth? Krishna told Arjuna that: The Lord is seated in the heart of all beings, turning all beings mounted upon a machine by his Maya. In him take refuge in every way of thy being and by his grace thou shall come to the supreme peace and eternal status.15 Peace and happiness which have been the eternal pursuits of mankind cannot be sacrificed for the sake of something which is of no intrinsic inner value, because happiness is to be found within through a self knowledge which is of more value than any outward seeking of the senses and mind.

“Yoga is skill in works” doesn’t just mean being a skilled worker or a clever professional in the contemporary sense, which of course , is important too and requires the concentration, discipline and hard work expected for a purpose, though such a worker or professional if liberated from the ego and the sense-mind would develop the skill of works meant by Krishna; it is not the kind of work which is meant but it is work done in the yogic spirit of the universal being: therefore without attachment perform ever the work that is to be done-satatam asaktah karyam karm samachara; for by doing works without attachment man attains to the highest.16 What is note worthy in the Gita, is the fact that, no moral or altruistic sermon is being given, no threat is being used, no rigid rule is being stressed upon, no routine is being prescribed, because the message is the everlasting need for an evolving, progressive humanity, that of doing selfless works and of a spiritual union with the highest and all his creation.

Yoga, therefore, demands liberation from the impurities and weaknesses in nature, so that stability, equanimity, equality, universality and devotion are founded firmly in it, even though the growth in consciousness is continuous throughout life. It becomes clear to the spiritual aspirant after a certain stage that deliverance from the limitations imposed by nature can be attained only by placing himself at the feet of the Divine for the necessary “becoming”. The inner being in us has to live and not just the outer which makes us go round and round in ignorance and pain, and yoga cannot be given up once the greater light starts dawning and the “bliss of ignorance” becomes a burden which needs to be shed. The mental being stands in control above the rest of the nature, till it discovers that too much involvement of it in the play of life results in more scattering and not in a binding which it desired at the outset. The force created by desire, the vital force creates more ignorance, confusion and destruction if it is not balanced and controlled by the mental; a relativity is always working, and, the mental too has to be balanced by a higher force.

The psychic being is the soul, the Purusha in the secret heart supporting by its presence the action of the mind, life and body. The vital is the pranmaya purusha spoken of in the Taittiriya Upanishad, the being behind the Force of life; in its outer form in the ignorance it generates the desire- soul which governs most men and which they mistake often for the real soul.

The Atman is the Self or Spirit that remains above, pure and stainless, unaffected by the stains of life, by desire and ego and ignorance. It is realized as the true being of the individual, but also more widely as the same being in all and as the Self in the cosmos; it has also a self-existence above the individual and cosmos and it is then called the Paramatman, the supreme Divine Being. This distinction has nothing to do with the distinction between the psychic and the vital: the vital being is not what is known as the Atman.

The vital as the desire-soul and desire-nature controls the consciousness to a large extent in most men, because men are governed by desire. But even in the surface human nature the proper ruler of the consciousness is the mental being, manomayah purusha prana sarira neta of the Upanishad. The psychic influences the consciousness from behind, but one has to go out of the ordinary consciousness into the inmost being to find it and make it the ruler of the consciousness as it should be. To do that is one of the principle aims of the yoga. The vital should be an instrument of the consciousness and not its ruler.

The vital being is not the I—the ego is mental, vital, physical. Ego implies the identification of our existence with outer self, the ignorance of our true self above and our psychic being within us.17

India the land where such spiritual heights have been reached, is still thriving on the treasure of the past which has given it rich traditions, but the Nurturing Parent and the Adapted Child Ego States have grown in such a way that the Adult has to begin from character building in order to become autonomous in the real sense. As each and every player comes forward to participate in the game called Public/political Life, the competition for exploitation grows fiercer because the pay off keeps growing in size and comes out better the more the Others are criticized, and if nothing else is available it’s the British who are to be blamed for each and every mess, the easiest thing to do is to play the game to rouse the lower instincts in others for your own pay off; this is the Game being played in the name of freedom and democracy. And the word karmayogi too is being used in a casual manner to project a person in order to lay claim over his material achievements rather than the spiritual or even the human, which may be sufficiently present, insufficient, or even missing. And there is much in family and community life which thrives on myths created by the forces of the increasingly self-justified rajas and tamoguna, and because of which double standards, exploitation, crimes, dishonesty, servility and corruption is creating anarchy all around.

It must be pointed out that besides the three modes-guna of prakriti which are present in each one of us in different proportions and which can be seen and understood in the higher knowledge, as the ego states can be seen and understood by the mental person, and which can be transcended by the one who is in yoga, the Gita also speaks about the distinction between two kinds of beings Deva and Asura, perhaps the two extremes of ordinary human nature in this world, it is like drawing attention to the black and white as two ends with shades of grey in between, and the number of the latter, the asura is becoming prominently large and noticeable with the rising populations and shrinking of our world. The Devic guna are sattwic and divine, where as the Asuri are the opposite in nature; and Krishna describes them in detail for Arjuna. Some verses, describing the asura are being quoted, as follows: They say that the world is not true, not founded in truth, without a Master, not brought about in regular sequence-aparasparsambhutam; what else is its cause but passion-kama? Holding fast to this view, these lost souls of feeble understanding, of cruel deeds, rise up to cause harm and destruction in the world. Resorting to insatiable desires, arrogant, drunk with pride, they delude themselves persisting in false and obstinate aims and move around in the world with impure resolutions of their longings. Obsessed with innumerable worries till the end of their life, they believe in gratification of desires and lusts-kamopabhogaparama as the only aim of life. Bound by hundreds of ties of desire, given over to lust and anger, they strive to amass hoards of wealth, by unjust means, for the gratification of their desires.18

Krishna also speaks of the lowest status of soul-nature, and holds desire, wrath and greed-kama, krodha and lobha, which take man to such destruction, but such details are a bit outside the limitations of this book. However, the following words written by Sri Aurobindo in this context, the trend of Karma, are deeply expressive, meant for a soul-understanding and worthy of inclusion here: But the evolution of soul in Nature is an adventure of which Swabhava and the Karma governed by the swabhava are the chief powers; and if an excess in the manifestation of swabhawa, the self-becoming of the soul, a disorder in its play turns the law of being to its perverse side, if the rajasic qualities are given the upper hand, cultured to the diminution of sattwa, then the trend of Karma and its results necessarily culminate not in the sattwic height which is capable of the movement of liberation, but in the highest exaggeration of the perversities of the lower nature. The man, if he does not stop short and abandon his way of error, has eventually the Asura full-born in him, and once he has taken that enormous turn away from the Light and Truth, he can no more reverse the fatal speed of his course because of the very immensity of the misused divine power in him until he has plumbed the depths to which it falls, found bottom and seen where the way has lead him, the power exhausted and misspent, himself down in the lowest state of the soul nature, which is Hell. Only when he understands and turns to the Light, does that other truth of the Gita come in, that even the greatest sinner, the most impure and violent evil-doer is saved the moment he turns to adore and follow after the Godhead within him. Then, simply by the turn, he gets very soon into the sattwic way which leads to perfection and freedom.19

We therefore, come back full circle to the individual who may be seeking an escape from this life of ignorance, a Nirvana into peace and tranquility, and why not? He has to earn it by an effort and growth towards Divinity, in the opposite direction to the movement of so many others who look for a peaceful life while continuing to succumb to greed all the time. And humanity may be blessed if those few who achieve Nirvana, decide to continue Yoga while working selflessly for the welfare of all, and, for them Sri Aurobindo has left the legacy of his experience with his Integral Yoga which seeks a complete Transformation by bringing down the Divine Consciousness not only the static but also the dynamic to all the parts of the being mental, vital, physical, the subconscious and the inconscient: Nirvana is the beginning of the higher Truth, as it is the passage from the ignorance to the higher truth. The ignorance has to be extinguished in order that the Truth may manifest.**20**

During the course of yoga the inner eye keeps growing in sharpness as the descending light from above increases in range and intensity, and the once invisible impurities from the different planes of our being get magnified and rise up for purification or expulsion; the rigid mental perception of ourselves, of our surface being keeps us in a state of oblivion and even complacency till we reach an advance stage in yoga and remains as a hindrance for further progress; this is one reason why perseverance and faith come across as important tools on this path.

Men do not know themselves and have not learned to distinguish the different parts of their being; for these are usually lumped together by them as mind, because it is through a mentalised perception and understanding that they know or feel them; therefore they do not understand their own states and actions, or, if at all, then only on the surface. It is part of the foundation of yoga to become conscious of the great complexity of our nature, see the different forces that move it and get over it a control of directing knowledge. We are composed of many parts each of which contributes something to the total movement of our consciousness, our thought, will, sensation, feeling, action, but we do not see the origination or the course of these impulsions; we are aware only of their confused and pell-mell results on the surface upon we can at best impose nothing better than a precarious shifting order.

The remedy can only come from the parts of the being that are already turned towards the light. To call in the light of the Divine consciousness from above, to bring the psychic being to the front and kindle a flame of aspiration which will awaken spiritually the outer mind and set on fire the vital being, is the way out.21

The above letter written to a disciple by Sri Aurobindo sums up the range and the method of his yoga and brings out the real meaning and force of the Upanishadic quest for Light, Truth and Immortality; it is by becoming “That”-Sat and not through a mental acceptance that this thirst of the spirit can be quenched; the complex reality of our being is placing itself bare for this becoming in this yoga; the subconscious plane is getting churned up along with the physical, vital and mental, as if to bring the inconscient to life for a complete transformation. In the subconscient there is an obscure mind full of obstinate sanskaras, impressions, associations, fixed notions, habitual reactions formed by our past, an obscure vital full of the seeds of habitual desires, sensations and nervous reactions, a most obscure material which governs much that has to do with the conditions of the body.22

When we, as a result of spiritual practice-sadhana, become conscious of the fact that more than often our reactions to outside touches, thoughts, habits, speech and mannerisms are mechanical repetitions and not what we would have wanted them to be, it is time for the cleansing of the subconscious. It is dark and very old, a store house of all that has been controlled and pushed away from nature, though it does send out something good too; it needs to be lit up and sorted out. The subconscient is to be penetrated by the light and made a sort of bed-rock of truth, a store of right impressions, right physical responses to the Truth. Strictly speaking, it will not be subconscient at all, but a sort of bank of true values held ready for use.23

After the subconscient it is but natural to touch upon what is meant by the inconcsient and the reason for its inclusion in the Integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, which is that of evolution of Consciousness and the Spirit: …for we find in the end that all the dispositions of the world can only have been arranged by the working of a supreme secret intelligence. The being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as a Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Conscious-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a supramental consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. 24

The Supramental, which means Truth Consciousness, must descend in the aspiring soul and take possession of its being, so as to become manifest in earth life as the new stage of evolution, there is no other answer to the Aspiration which has opened itself to this transformation alone. The goal is too idealistic? Yes. It’s a dream larger than life? Yes. Is it imagination running wild? May be, yes! It is vision as vast as infinity? Yes. But yoga is something which has to be done, a method has to be followed, treading on the razor’s edge has to be continued in spite of the falls and bleeding which will stop troubling the aspirant once he is firm on the sun-lit path. Great Scientists, Writers, Warriors and Sages have sacrificed so much to leave behind legacies on which humanity thrives; Krishna speaks about sacrifice to Arjuna in the last eighteen verses of the fourth chapter of the Gita to bring out the inner significance of it; all work has to be done in union with the Divine so that it enhances knowledge which destroys all doubts, attachments and limitations caused by work. What is important is to work for the ideal, the dream, the vision; it gives knowledge, makes the yogi grow deeper into a higher consciousness, and ,works done from this vastness of vision do not bind but get done for a much larger cause, for the universal good, and therefore, they are the infinite source of the everlasting peace-param shanti.

And, is the labour on the path of yoga wasted even if it does not show the complete results? Krishna’s answer is in the negative, and no coercion is required either, there is a time for everything; and right efforts never go waste; and what is so done always counts in the economy of the universe, wrote Sri Aurobindo**25** in answer to the doubt raised by a disciple with respect to the results of his yoga. The Gita brings out the essence of the spirit of Karma yoga, of work done when the heart, will and intelligence are united with the Universal and the Transcendent Consciousness; to align ourselves with the highest Consciousness and Power, is to be one with the evolutionary will. The Gita has carried forth the illumined knowledge of the Veda and the Upanishads, so as to impart it the catholicity and practicality which the growing reason of man demands from a scripture which stands the tests of time and reminds reason to call for the Higher Truth to save itself from its cold, crude, crass, anchorless and divergent ways. As a matter of fact, there is no need for a mentality to probe into the Historicity of the Gita, because the symbolic Nar and Narayana, come alive as Arjuna and Krishna, the Autonomous Adult and the Higher Consciousness; the inner Soul-antaratman in unison with the Spirit-ataman above is ready to receive the Divine word in its light and power, which is the beginning of transformation of the being, becoming, works and expressions of the seeker. The Divine is All, Mother, Father, Friend, Guide, and Charioteer of the carriage of life. The spiritual consciousness arises, grows and expands into the Universal-Para and the Supreme Transcendence, called Purushottamma in the Gita; and human life becomes a conscious Yoga, a synthesis of an ever growing knowledge-jnana,Devotion-bhakti, and Work-karyam karma. The Yogmaya of the Divine creates the universal and individual phenomena; what we are and will become individually is contingent on Swabhava-Nature, through a cycle of births or evolution; and we as the created can only live in awe, admiration and surrender to the Creator, why then, should there be ego, arrogance, greed, anger, and exploitation of others? Krishna, the Highest Wisdom is telling Arjuna, the autonomous adult to give these up for good and enjoy the bliss, beauty and mystery of life and all creation; and perform works-kritasnnkarmkrit as a Yogi.

The Gita as the crème of the Upanishads preserves their knowledge of the deep soul force, the mental clarity, the need for the physical force and the higher truth which must balance these two, the gratitude and reverence for Nature which must be felt at all times, peace and harmony for earth and all living beings as expressed and emphasized in the Veda. A verse from the Veda is being quoted here to let us have an inkling of the spirit of human evolution and non-violence which can come from the soul and not from human reason by itself, which supposedly has grown as never before, and to understand, that, the fountainhead of the animated spirit of unity in diversity, which is the most beautiful and lasting face of India, in spite of the numerous problems which, ironically, can be solved not by the blatant display of a superficial collective pride, but when the soul of India is brought in front to lead us and the asuri forces are not allowed to dominate; the poverty caused by these forces is as much in the soul as in the material: O Brihaspati, O Indra, increase in us together and may that your perfection of mind be created in us; foster the thoughts bring out the mind’s multiple powers; destroy all poverties that they bring who seek to conquer the Aryan.26

What is of importance and noteworthy about the Gita’s teaching is that its object is to bring about a spiritual transformation in the seeker so as to make his life in the world personally and universally meaningful and useful; it therefore does not dictate any outside rules of dos and don’ts, and rightly so, because such rules are all changeable with time and prone to imposed adherence and dogma, what is of value is the everlasting, sanatana, and not the appearances which are mutable and momentary. Therefore, no outward traits of the karma yogi are emphasized; and the inner signs are such that they are recognizable to the person who is practicing yoga, doing sadhana, and to others who too have the inner discriminating eye of the soul. However, there are four qualities of the universal worker, karma yogi, which stand out prominent in the synthesis of the Gita’s yoga, and these are, first, the right knowledge of purusha and its prakriti in himself and in all, which leads to the giving up of the egoism of the doer, secondly, he would have attained the freedom from all personal desire, of the fruit of work for own selfish ends, thirdly, he lives in the inner joy and contentment which comes not only because of the fourth state mastered by him, that of equality, equipoise, equanimity with which he deals with the dualities of nature present in the world, but due to the seeing and feeling of the Divine presence within and in all of creation; a complete surrender and love for the Divine is what enhances these inner qualities which get manifested outwardly too depending on Grace. The actions of the Autonomous Adult must be such, that, they have no chain of consequences for him in the world, because they are performed in the spirit of Yoga with the Divine, in harmony with the immortal law of the Higher Nature in him/her.

One who is liberated, free from all

Attachments and whose mind is founded in

Self-knowledge, when such an illuminate

Does works as a sacrifice they are all dissolved,

(His actions forge no chain of consequences).27

Notes and References:

1 Gita 13: 4

2 Ibid 13: 12

3 Ibid 13: 24, 25

4 S Radhakrishnan: The Bhagvadgita, Chap 13, p309

5 Sri Aurobindo: The Upanishads p73, Isha Upanishad

6 Gita 3: 25

7 Sri Aurobindo: Essays on the Gita p11

8 Ibid, pp53-54

9 See Gita 4: 16-23

10 Ibid 14: 10, 16

11 Ibid 4:17 is quoted here.

12 Ibid 18-19

13 Ibid 2: 48, 49, 50

14 Sri Aurobindo: Ideal and Progress pp 17-18

15 Gita: 18: 61,62

16 Gita: 3: 19

17 Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga pp299-300

18 Gita: 16: 8, 9,10,11,12

19 Sri Aurobindo: Essays on the Gita pp 473-474

20 Sri Aurobindo: Letters on Yoga p59

21 Ibid p 233

22 Ibid p353

23 Ibid p 1594

24 Ibid p 44

25 See p 1637 of Letters on Yoga

26 Sri Aurobindo: The Secret of the Veda 4.50 p 305

“One of the leading principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge and the true knowledge of the Gods. This wisdom was, they thought, unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary human mind or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits. Hence they favoured the existence of an outer worship, effective but imperfect, for the profane, an inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language in words and images which had, equally a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers. The Vedic hymns were conceived and constructed on this principle.”

Ibid p6

27 Dilip Kumar Roy: The Bhagvad Gita 4: 23