

9. Be Good, Do Good, And See Good That Is The Way To God

Do you know why you have been given ears? Is it for hearing all the sounds that are uttered near you? No, the ears have been given to you so that you may listen to songs relating to the glory of God.

Divya Atma Swarupas,

All the creation that you see emanates from the Lord. That the great variety that we see around us is coming only as a result of the change in our own qualities is a truth that is asserted by the sacred texts. Man is sometimes very happy, sometimes he is afraid, and at other times he is courageous. These changes come about in quick succession and in a casual way.

Let us examine the main reason for all these changes. The main reason for all these changes is the change that comes in our own mental attitude. These are manifestations of one's own qualities. Man has three distinct *gunas* or qualities. They are called *sathwa*, *thamo*, and *rajo gunas*. If these three qualities are mixed in a balanced manner, there will be no drastic change in one's nature. Sunlight is composed of seven different colours. When these colours are mixed in appropriate proportions, there will be no change, and the sun will be shining in its natural colour. On the other hand, if there is an imbalance in the manner in which these colours are mixed, then you will find that some special colours show themselves. In the same manner, if the *sathwa*, *rajo*, and *thamo gunas* are mixed in balanced proportions, there will be no big change in what we see around us; but if there is an imbalance, and if one of the qualities has gained the upper hand, then you will find that there are drastic changes.

These *gunas* have certain natural qualities. The quality of *sathwic* nature appears to us as if it is the very essence of peace. The *rajasic* quality appears to us as a mild *jyothi* (light). The *thamasic* quality appears also as a *jyothi* but covered by smoke. In these qualities, on some occasions, depending on how they are mixed, we find that there are some changes. When a mouse for

example, has been saved by a lion from the trouble in which it has found itself, we find later on that the mouse expresses its gratitude to the lion when the lion is in distress.

When Sugreeva found that his own brother took away his kingdom, turned him away into the forest, and took away his wife, he wanted to take revenge and sought the help of Rama. This is a manifestation of his *gunas*. Not only this, many attitudes such as equanimity come out of these *gunas*.

If we add sour buttermilk to sweet milk, we can get tasty butter and curds out of the milk. In the same manner, sometimes bad people join good people and become good in the company of the good people. Men who have good qualities sometimes transmit their good qualities to the bad people who join them. The good people in the world cause good to the bad people in the world also.

The analogy for this is found in the case of an axe, which is a bad one, when used to cut a sandalwood tree. In this case, the fragrance of the sandalwood tree comes to the axe as well. When we mix cold water with warm water, we will have neither cold water nor warm water but we will get a middle temperature. So also, when we mix two qualities, the extremes disappear and we get an intermediate mixture.

It is in this context that we can conclude that the good or the bad, the joy or sorrow, calmness or excitement come to man as a result of the *gunas* in him. For man, it is very essential to see that his qualities are protected. Man should promote an appropriate admixture of his *gunas* for the practice of *sadhana*.

The life of Krishna is not an exhibition for man but it is an ideal example. His life is to be followed by men as a worthy example. His life was intended to be an ideal example to be put before every human being. Krishna told these words to Dhritrashtra on several occasions during the peace negotiations. Not only this, when Uddhava came to conduct the negotiations, it was demonstrated that justice is something which is natural to man. Thus he argued that everyone, when he wants to do his duty, has a right to insist that he should be allowed to perform his duty. In order that man may claim what is rightfully and justly his, he has the right to protect his own responsibilities and to insist on rightfully performing his duty.

The Pandavas never wanted to get anything which they did not deserve and which they did not have the right to ask for, and the Pandavas never tolerated injustice. Krishna told the Kauravas in very clear terms that the Pandavas were always insisting on their right

to both responsibilities and duties. Sometimes we misinterpret it, and we think that he was promoting war. What Krishna did was not warmongering. Krishna was an ideal example, and he always insisted on one's rights and responsibilities.

There is an incident which brings out that he clearly demonstrated and demarcated one's rights and claims. There was always a close and intimate relationship between Krishna and Arjuna. In this context of close friendship and taking advantage of such close friendship, Arjuna went close to Krishna on one night and tried to get answers for some of his doubts. Arjuna asked Krishna, "Have I got the right to get a sacred text like the *Gita* taught by you, especially when I know that I am suffering from ego and when I know that I do not have any superior knowledge? There is the all-knowing Bhishma, who is very wise, and in his presence, I am like a small lamp in the presence of a huge light. Under such circumstances, have I the right to learn the *Gita* from you? What is the meaning of picking me up and teaching me the *Gita*? Perhaps Bhishma was not suitable because he was on the side of the Kauravas, but we have Dharmaraja who is the embodiment of *dharma*, and on all counts, he deserves to be taught the *Gita*, and why is it that he was ignored? There is also my elder brother Bheema who was bypassed? While

these superior persons Bhishma, Dharmaraja, and Bheema were there, why is it that they have been ignored and I, who am immersed in seeking material benefits all the time, have been chosen for this; and do I have the right to be chosen like this?"

Then Krishna drew Arjuna close to him affectionately and said, "You are thinking that I, in my divine compassion, am doing you some favour. This is not true. You are not able to recognise the great human qualities, and you think I am doing you a favour. This is not correct. As you said, Bhishma is a very learned man; but in spite of his wisdom and in spite of his recognising that the Pandavas are the embodiment of truth and they follow *dharma* and his accepting that the Kauravas follow *adharma*, he has gone and joined the side of Kauravas. What is the meaning of this? I do not like this riding two horses at the same time. I do not agree to this. You people have been regarding Bhishma as a great man. I do not agree with this attitude of yours. A Mahatma is one in whom the thought, word, and deed harmonise completely. A person in whom the thought is one, word is another, and deed is yet another cannot be called a great man. He will be called a *duratma* (an evil person). He is unable to recognise the meaning and the significance of his action when, on the one hand, he says that the Pandavas are good people

and that victory is going to be on the side of good people and yet leads the army of the Kauravas, whom he acknowledges as bad people.

Now, we will come to the aspect of Dharmaraja. He is one who has no forethought, and he will always repent after his action. Repentance is a very natural quality. So, what is exceptionally great in him? Repentance is a common quality seen in many people and it is seen in him also. He always talks of justice and righteousness. These do engage his attention always. He is not recognising the duty at the right point of time. An individual, who does not recognise his immanent duty, has no right to listen to such a sacred text as the *Gita*.

As regards your brother Bheema, he only has animal or physical strength; but he does not possess the intellectual or the mental strength. You are characterised by forethought, more than repentance. As a forethought, you have already asked me how you could kill your kith and kin; and even if the kingdom is won after so much bloodshed, how you could enjoy it. You said that it is better to beg and eat rather than get a kingdom by killing your relatives. Thus, you have forethought. You are not the person who runs after the kingdom. You have no such desire to rule over a kingdom. You have

recognised your duty. What is troubling you till now is the aspect of your right. To some extent you are thinking about what is just and what is not just. Man's duty is to be able to pursue justice and sacrifice everything in order to behave in a just manner. Man who recognises his sacred duty has the right to listen to this sacred text of the *Gita*."

Today, the biggest drawback in human beings is that men are not recognising what is just, and men are not recognising their right and the duty which they have to perform. Man is always hankering after something which is not his own and which is not rightfully his. Man is struggling to acquire various things in an unjust manner. Man is pushing away his real duty and is simply thinking of his present convenience.

Krishna's example and ideal is to make you recognise your duty. His second ideal is to show people that for the sake of justice, they should be willing to sacrifice everything, even life. (For the sake of justice, even life must be sacrificed.) In this context, it is necessary for us to understand the inner meaning of the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna. When Krishna was conducting negotiations for peace, Arjuna was very apprehensive and he asked Krishna, "The

Kauravas are not going to accept peace in any way, so why are you conducting these negotiations and spending so much time in negotiating for peace which is not going to come about anyway?"

Krishna explained that an individual who stands by and watches *dharma* being overcome by *adharma* and truth being destroyed by falsehood is better dead than alive. One should not remain passive when injustice pushes aside justice. To that Arjuna asked, "Is it possible to get *Amritha*, the immortal liquid, from poison? Is it possible to put flowers in a raging fire? What is the use of talking of peace in these impossible conditions? The Kauravas have such a narrow vision; are they going to come and accept our peace offers? It is better that you stop here. Is it possible to bring the north pole and the south pole together? This is an impossible task, and we should undertake the war as everything is ready for the war."

When we listen to these words of Arjuna and contemplate on how Arjuna regarded peace as an impossible achievement, we can understand how much Krishna had done and to what lengths he went in order to negotiate for peace. But many writers and citizens of India have characterised Krishna as one who never cared for peace, not recognising the efforts that he

made for peace. They thought that he was wanting to promote war. This is not right. Arjuna, who regarded peace as impossible said just before the battle began, "How am I going to kill so many people who are my relatives! This is impossible. My head is reeling, let us abandon the battlefield and go home." Here Krishna took the contrary view, and admonished Arjuna, "You have come into the battlefield like a hero and now you talk like a coward. Battle is not something which has come suddenly at this moment. There is a long background for this and the preparations have been going on for a whole week. You have all taken out your rusty weapons, cleaned them, and made them ready. All the arrows, which gathered cobwebs, have been cleaned. You have asked for the help of all your relations in the battle. Having made all these preparations, what is the meaning of all this talk of going back home without fighting? If you had told me this earlier, I would not have taken all this trouble. This is disgraceful. You are turning into a coward. You must fulfil your duty and not become a coward."

Here Krishna taught Arjuna how he should be prepared to fulfil his duty. Here we see a conflict. Till then Krishna was trying to negotiate peace and avoid war; but at that critical juncture, the same Krishna, who

wanted to avoid war, is telling Arjuna that he must take part in war.

We must understand the inner meaning of this. In the first instance, Krishna wanted to establish peace and as a result of that he wanted no loss of life in the world. Thus he wanted to give prosperity to the world. This was Krishna's first attempt. Later as time went on, he was insisting on justice and right and was telling the Pandavas that, in the context of one's justice and right, one should fulfil one's duty. Thus, in the performance of one's own duty and acceptance of one's right, we see an ideal example in Krishna's life. It is very necessary for young students like you to understand the inner significance of Krishna's using words like "duty", "justice" and "right".

Today students read a large number of books which are totally unnecessary. They read a large amount of useless literature which does not give them any ideals. Instead of pursuing true education which gives you knowledge and *Vidya* (wisdom), you are simply pursuing material information and becoming *vithyarthi*. A few minutes ago, talking about education, one of our speakers gave you the essence of what true education should be and gave some good examples of it. Truly, if we look around the country, we will get a doubt whether there is any education which can be called true education

at all and whether any individual can be called a teacher in the true sense of the word.

I will give an example of what really happened in one of our universities. Today's teachers are such that they are not willing to go into a class which they are to teach. This particular teacher put the tape recorder on, and he himself went to the staff room and was sleeping. On that day, as the lesson was given on a tape recorder, the students took down notes and they went home. On the second day again, the teacher brought the tape recorder, started the tape and left the classroom. Some of the students also brought their tape recorders, and they left their tape recorders to record what the teacher was saying through the tape, and they also left the class. By some good fortune, the principal happened to walk into the class that day and, to his surprise, found only tape recorders on all the tables; and there were no students at all. There was neither the teacher nor the student. If the education is like that, can we call it education at all?

Therefore, in order that you may develop yourselves into ideal citizens, it is essential for you to understand and comprehend the basic aspects of our civilisation. In the first instance, it is very necessary for you to understand the qualities which enable you to be

called human beings. Morality, truth, and sacredness of your heart and pursuit of self are the qualities which you should have; and these are the things which will entitle you to be called a man. We can assert, without any fear of contradiction, that the man who has lost fear of sin and love of God is only a man in form; and at the core, he is not a human being.

God's *leelas* and actions are very surprising, and an ordinary man cannot easily understand them. In that context, when God himself comes down in the form of an *Avatar* and preaches the essentials, many people who do not understand, begin to misinterpret his words and actions, and the true meaning completely disappears from the minds of everyone. *Avatars* come to propagate truth, to proclaim truth, and to make you practise truth. There is an incident in the *Mahabharatha* to illustrate this. In the open assembly, the Kauravas, who were very evil-intentioned people, wanted to put Droupadi to shame. Her powerful and heroic husbands were sitting on one side. When Droupadi was being humiliated, she realised that her husbands could not rescue her and she was asking and praying for help from Krishna. However much and however intensely she prayed to Krishna, he was not to be seen at all. In many ways, she was describing Krishna and his greatness. She addressed him as one who lives in Dwaraka, as one who lives in

Mathurapuri and so on, but there was no response. In utter disgust and as a last resort, she addressed Krishna as *Hrudayavasi*, i.e., one who lives in one's own heart. In the very next moment, Krishna appeared on the scene and protected her in the required manner and saved her honour.

After all the trouble was over, when they were sitting and talking like brother and sister, she asked Krishna why he had not responded to her many prayers when she was being humiliated in the Kauravas assembly. Krishna asked her in what manner she had addressed him. She replied that she had addressed him as one who resided in Dwaraka. Then Krishna said, "Oh, sister, what a mistake it was. How far was Dwaraka and how could I respond to your call especially because your call had to go so far and I had to come from there. You also say that you addressed me as Mathurapurivasi. Even Mathurapuri was very far and it would have taken a long time for me to respond to your call. You were in Hastinapura and you wanted to call me from Mathurapuri. How is that possible? Then you had also addressed me as Gokulavasi. Even Gokula was very far away and it would have taken time for me to respond. But when you addressed me as *Hrudayavasi*, as the dweller in your heart, I readily responded and came to your rescue."

If you write a letter to Puttaparthi, it will go to Puttaparthi, but not to Bangalore, where I will be staying sometimes. In the same way, if Krishna was addressed as *Dwarakavasi* when he was really a *Hrudayavasi*, he will not receive the prayer. In order to show the devotees true faith and determination, God sometimes does such things. So, at no time is a camp address more important than the permanent address. Then Krishna said, "I will now give you the correct address, listen to it. Where my devotees sing my glory, there I am permanently installed and that is my correct address." The *Mahabharatha* contains such beautiful stories as if it were written in jasmine flowers.

It is not right to keep such sacred meanings aside and go after some misinterpretations given by misinformed people. The ideals which we have to follow, the rights that we should claim, and the duties that we have to perform are all contained in the *Mahabharatha* and are good examples. Sometimes God's *leelas* are quite surprising. As a result of such surprise actions, many doubts arise in the minds of men. There is one small example for this. On one occasion, the battle of *Mahabharatha* was very fierce and was taking place in all the corners of the battlefield. In one direction, Aswatthama had prepared the *Padmavyuha*. On another side Bhishma was preparing

for a terrific fight. On the other side, there were other warriors preparing for war. Karna was standing ready for a fight. On the side of the Pandavas, some of the brothers undertook to fight Karna. Dharmaraja and Sahadeva took the other direction and were preparing to give battle. Arjuna was preparing to fight with other heroes. In this way, the battle became fierce in all the four directions. At home, in the camp, was young Abhimanyu. Dronacharya sent a message to Abhimanyu that *Padmavyuha* was ready and that it must be fought against. When a message is sent inviting one to come and fight in a battle, it is not right to refuse the challenge. If he had refused to answer the challenge, he would bring disrepute to his father; and in order that such disrepute does not come to his father, he readily accepted the challenge.

Abhimanyu thought that if he refrained from going to war because he was a young lad and because he did not have his father's permission, his father might be annoyed with him and say that he had brought disrepute to the family by not accepting the challenge. In this conflict of ideas in his own mind, he came to the conclusion that whatever may happen, he was going to safeguard the reputation of his father; and he went to the *Padmavyuha* and lost his life. Of course, Krishna knew that Abhimanyu went into the battle and lost his life.

Arjuna and Krishna came back together and even as they approached the camp, Arjuna felt uneasy and saw bad omens. Arjuna was feeling that Abhimanyu, who usually would come to receive him, had not come that day. There were bad omens and Arjuna felt that there was something wrong. Even from there, Krishna started preaching *Vedanta*. He said, “The body is impermanent, it is made of the five material elements; and the body is sure to fall one day or the other; and the permanent aspect is the *Atma*.” He also preached about all the relationships and said that a wife is not even known to the husband before marriage, and a son is not related except by marriage. We should never give any regard to such bodily relationships; and any moment, death may occur. One must be prepared to shed one’s body at any time.

While teaching such *Vedantic* truths to Arjuna, Krishna asked him whether these were true or not; and on this Arjuna replied that it was the truth and, in fact, one does not know when one is going to die; and he accepted this as truth. Krishna even asked him if he was saying that these were the truths from the bottom of his heart, believing in them, or whether he was saying that they were the truths simply because Krishna was saying so. Neither Krishna nor Arjuna were people who would simply speak without conviction. Arjuna

was not the kind of person who would support what Krishna said unless he felt from the depths of his heart that it was true. Krishna then said, “If you accept all this as truth from the depth of your heart as your own conviction, suppose you now get the news that your son Abhimanyu is dead, are you going to weep or accept it in line with the *Vedanta* that you have now accepted as the truth?” Arjuna was thrown into confusion and he asked Krishna if Abhimanyu was safe or not. Then Krishna said, “Arjuna, your son Abhimanyu has attained the heaven where heroes of the war go.”

As soon as Arjuna heard this, he never waited for a moment and immediately accused Krishna of having destroyed a whole family. He said, “O, Krishna! what have you done to the Pandavas who had great faith in you and surrendered to you? A situation has come where there is no continuation for the dynasty of the Pandavas? He was thus accusing Krishna all the way till they reached Hastinapura. The situation at that time was such that whatever reply Krishna gave and whatever philosophical truth he may have communicated, it would have had no effect on Arjuna. So, Krishna simply listened to all the abuses that were being showered on him. While Arjuna was accusing him in many ways, Krishna realised that it was not an opportune moment

for him to retort; and he was silent all the way. Whatever questions one may ask and whatever doubts may be expressed, in order that an appropriate answer may be given, a suitable time should come. *Avatars* will never reply unless such suitable time comes. In an *Avatar*, there will never be a situation in which you can find fault with Him. The individual who accuses an *Avatar* will be hurting himself in his eyes with his own finger. God is always a non-interfering witness. He will simply look at things which take their own course. That is the reason why God is always described as one who has no qualities and attributes in an ordinary human manner. After reaching home, they found that all the relations were very sad and were weeping because Abhimanyu had died. But neither sorrow nor pleasure can ever be permanent.

Sorrow cannot remain all the time and happiness cannot remain for all the time. After sorrow, happiness must come. Pain and pleasure always come together and it is not possible for anyone to separate them from each other. Pleasure alone, isolated from pain can never be seen. When pain fructifies, such pain will be called pleasure. Therefore, between pain and pleasure, we talk of some pleasure and some sorrow. As time went on, Subhadra was feeling very sad. At that time, Uttara was in the family way and was approaching the time of

her delivery. But the son, who was born to Uttara, was almost lifeless. The situation at that time was such that Droupadi had become old and Subhadra also was approaching old age. The only way in which the dynasty of the Pandavas could be propagated was by the birth of a son to Uttara. The Pandavas were anxiously waiting for the news concerning the delivery of Uttara's baby. Only if a son was born, would it be good news for the Pandavas.

Such grief-stricken Pandavas were sitting anxiously and Droupadi brought a practically lifeless son to the Pandavas, and she also broke down in tears. The day on which Aswatthama and Arjuna fought with each other they used weapons of great power and potency, which were responsible for the damage to the pregnancy of Uttara. Today when we use an atom bomb, it is reported that pregnancy is destroyed in the wombs of mothers. This is not something which has been recently found out. It was known even in those days. Today, all the power is only that of a machine. If we let loose a bomb, there is no way in which it can be retracted. The damage is permanently caused; but in those days, it was more the power of the *manthras*. When once this *manthra* has been used, it could also be retracted if so desired. But today, if a bomb is used there is no way of retracting. When the Pandavas looked at the sight of

a lifeless son, they were greatly stricken, and they did not know what to do.

Dharmaraja immediately sent Arjuna to bring Krishna to the place. Krishna came there and found the Pandavas in great sorrow. As a cat enjoys the situation when it is a matter of life and death for the mouse, Krishna was smiling when the Pandavas were literally steeped in misery. He was talking in a very light manner and asked Dharmaraja and Arjuna why they were so sorry and glum. At this, Droupadi brought the cradle in which the lifeless baby was kept and placed it before Krishna and asked him why he had done this tragic thing to their family. Krishna took the cradle into his hand, and he started looking at the baby and describing it in nice terms by comparing the nose to that of Abhimanyu and the face to that of Arjuna.

Dharmaraja took up the cue and said, “Yes, even his breath is like that of Abhimanyu.” Then Krishna exclaimed, “Why, is there no life in the baby?” and he started to shake the baby vigorously, and the baby started to cry. At that instant, the pleasure and joy of the Pandavas knew no bounds and Arjuna exclaimed, “Oh, Krishna, the protector of our family!” They praised him in that manner.

Krishna smiled and came to Arjuna and said, “Be aware of whatever you are saying. Now, you say that I am responsible for the continuance of your family. That day you described me as one who completely destroyed your family, and today you are praising me as one who is a protector of your family. Was that the truth or is this the truth?” Although Arjuna had forgotten what he had said, Krishna did not forget, and he reminded Arjuna about the old incident. “All that we do, either good or bad, knowingly or unknowingly, will always produce a result. So it is necessary for us to do good so that the consequences will also be good. When one is born out of a mother’s womb, one does not come with a garland. You do not have, even as a specimen, a chain of gold around your neck. There is only one chain around your neck. All the *karma* that you have done in your previous births constitute the only gold chain round your neck. But that necklace is something which is not visible. In order that we do not have a chain of bad actions around our neck when we are born, it is necessary for us to recognise, as a primary lesson of the *Mahabharatha*, that we should do good deeds in our daily lives. It is in this context that it is said, “*Do good, Be good, and See good.*” That alone will take you to Madhava!”