

Chapter XII. The Gross and the Subtle

Devotee: Swami, at Venkat hill (Venkatagiri), during the Assembly of God, You said some things that I couldn't clearly understand. Can I ask about them now?

Swami: I am happy when people ask Me about things they haven't understood. Of course, you have every right.

Devotee: You said the gross form (*sthula-rupa*) and the subtle form (*sukshma-rupa*), didn't You? These two, are they the characteristics only of the mind (*manas*)? Or are they related to everything?

Swami: They are characteristic of everything; in fact, all the names and forms found in the gross exist also in the subtle stage! Why, the gross is there only to make you understand the subtle!

Devotee: Well then, Swami, we see the gross firmament (*sthula-akasa*); is there also a subtle firmament?

Swami: My dear boy, all this exists in that subtle firmament (*akasa*). The subtle one is as imperceptible and as all-pervading as the gross one.

Devotee: What is its name, Swami?

Swami: It is known as the subtle firmament of the heart (*sukshma-hridayakasa*).

Devotee: How can that be all-pervading?

Swami: Nothing else possesses the extent, the area, the breadth that this firmament of the heart has. See how many scenes, how many feelings, how many conjectures are immersed and imbedded in it!

Devotee: Then do we also have a Sun in that subtle sky?

Swami: Of course! Who said no? Without that, how could there be all this splendour, all this light and wisdom and brightness?

Devotee: What is its name, Swami?

Swami: When the heart is the firmament (*akasa*), naturally, the intellect (*buddhi*) is the Sun that illuminates that sky. The effulgence of the intellect is as bright as the rays of the Sun, so the intellect is the subtle Sun.

Devotee: Then it is possible that the moon is also in the firmament of the heart in subtle form.

Swami: Why do you ask about all these, one by one? Didn't I tell you at the very beginning? Every gross name and form has its corresponding subtle name and form. The moon in its subtle form is love (*prema*), with its cool rays pleasing to the heart. Love is the subtle form of the moon.

Devotee: Excuse me, Swami. The Pandavas and the Kauravas waged a war, didn't they? How are they supposed to have waged the "subtle" war, these "subtle" Pandavas and their opposite number, the "subtle" Kauravas?

Swami: Why do you say "supposed to have waged"? They are waging it even today in the subtle form! In this war, the evil qualities are the Kauravas and the good qualities—truth, righteousness, peace love, and nonviolence (*sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa*)—are the five Pandava brothers. The evil qualities are many, so the Kauravas are also a horde. Each one, under their own firmament of the heart (*hridayakasa*), on their own earthly consciousness, is waging this struggle, every moment.

Devotee: Swami, they say the Pandavas are children of King Pandu, and the Kauravas are the offspring of King Dhritrashtra. In the "subtle" form, how are we to recognise them?

Swami: Both are disputants for the kingship of the self-same heart; they are in everyone as the Unwise Personality and the Wise Personality. The unwise blind ruler is Dhritharashtra; the wise Pandu is the father of all good qualities. Have you understood?

Devotee: But then, Swami, excuse me; in that war there were millions of soldiers and chariots. And the subjects—who are they in this “subtle” conflict?

Swami: Of course, they are all there, in people. The million feelings and thoughts and impressions are the soldiers and subjects. The ten senses (*indriyas*) are the regiments, and the five senses are the chariots. In everyone’s heart a perpetual war is being fought between good and evil, between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Is that clear?

Devotee: Well, who is Lord Krishna in the subtle war; He who was then neutral in that struggle for power?

Swami: Don’t you know? He is the Witness, known as *Atma*. He is the charioteer (*sarathi*) of the chariot of the individual soul (*jiva*).

Devotee: Another question. All these people had Hasthinapura as their capital. In people, which is the Hasthinapura?

Swami: The basis for all these subtle manifestations—these men, chariots, Pandavas and Kauravas—is, as you know, this City of Bones (*Asthinapura*), this body. This skeleton is *Asthinapura*! Both have nine gates. There, both the Kauravas and the Pandavas were born; they played and were trained there; they grew up together there. So also, in this same *Asthinapura*, all the qualities, good and bad, are born and grow, they develop and subside, they watch and hate each other, all in the same body. Are not the warring rulers in this body also the Unwise Personality and the Wise Personality?

Devotee: Yes, Swami. There is an intimate connection between the *Mahabharatha* war and the qualities and conduct of humanity. Really, the relationship is there, without a doubt. What a fine comparison! As you said, this type of warfare is taking place in everyone, even now. Well Swami, when will this war end?

Swami: When will this war end, you ask? When both bad and good qualities fade out and humanity becomes quality-less; only then can people have peace (*santhi*).

Devotee: At that time, this battlefield, this City of Bones (*Asthinapura*), won’t exist, will it?

Swami: When there is a battle, there must be a battlefield. When you have no battle, why bother about a field?

Devotee: Can’t we avoid the battle altogether?

Swami: Why not? Kings develop the spirit of war because they have confidence in their subjects. The subjects encourage the rulers to unleash the hounds of war. Delusions are the subjects, who push the individual into the battle. When there is a paucity of such subjects, war will not be waged. So divest yourself of such subjects as delusions, illusions, and feelings of “I” and “Mine” and you can be at peace, enjoying undisturbed divine peace (*santhi*).

My boy! You can go now! Wait! Let me tell you one thing: entertaining doubts of all kinds is also a delusion! Strive to be free from even this trait! Well, go and come some time later.