

Do your best, leave the rest

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Krishna reveals to Arjuna his cosmic form...

Arjuna, having heard that *Ishwara* is everything, suddenly has a new desire. He says, 'How wonderful it would be to see *Ishwara*' ...He asks, 'Can I see *Ishwara* as the totality?' No human being can conceive of the whole totality much less see it with his eyes. Even with the biggest telescope available, what we see is a few million light years away. So how are you going to see the whole universe with your eyes? Moreover, this is only one dimension. According to our rishis, there are 14 dimensions. The latest string theory has admitted the possibility of 11 dimensions, whereas we speak of fourteen. But this was Arjuna's desire and he asks Krishna if he could possibly see *Ishwara*.

Krishna turns around and says, 'You cannot see this with your ordinary eyes. I will give you a divine vision with which you will be able to see.' Sounds like Mandrake the magician. Of course, traditionally, Hinduism believes that there is no real world, all we see is just an illusion. Krishna actually reveals to Arjuna the cosmic form, Arjuna actually sees the 14 dimensions and the entire eleventh chapter is about Arjuna seeing the various things in these 14 dimensions and enumerating them. Among other things, he sees flames erupting from the mouth of the Lord and devouring the whole world until tongues of fire lick and destroy everything in sight. Frightened, Arjuna asks, 'What is this? I thought everything was bright and beautiful...' 'All that is bright and beautiful is me,' answers Krishna, 'but I am also Time. And as Time, I devour all the worlds, I finish off all the worlds. Just as there is creation in time, there is also destruction...'

Krishna tells Arjuna to look...`Look at all the kings assembled here for this battle....Look at them rushing into my mouths like moths rush to a flame.....All of them are getting destroyed. In fact, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and many of the warriors on your side are all fated to be destroyed.' They are already being destroyed by their own karma, he tells Arjuna, so be a *nimmitta* in my hands, an instrument, and do what you are supposed to do because I need an instrument for fate to flow through.

The Lord's plan is not rigid, it is like a matrix. There is scope for my free will, my independent thoughts and desires, and there is scope for what I want in life.

Very interesting idea here. As human beings we don't know what fate has in store for us. For example, the forest has a natural plan of how the forest should grow and it also has a plan for the squirrel (it should help distribute the seeds so new plants can grow). The squirrel also has a plan for itself. It will gather nuts and store them, and in the process some of them will drop and, under conducive conditions, will grow into trees thereby furthering the forests. So the squirrel plans for itself and the forest plans for the squirrel and both of them blend together, both are in harmony, both help each other.

When it comes to human beings, we feel a disconnect with *Ishwara*. We don't even understand if God has a plan for us at all. So what do we do? Krishna tells Arjuna to become an instrument in his hands, and that's fine for Arjuna because he knows now where he fits into the plan. What about each one of us? All of us find ourselves in different situations in life, and in every situation in life the ultimate purpose of all the plans is to enable us to grow. Therefore, if we have a `growing' response, a pro-active response, a response of accepting the situation and responding to it in a manner that we grow, that would be a way of fulfilling God's plan. We are all instruments in the hands of the Lord. In short, if I recognize the larger scheme of things in life, my larger idea of duty and how I am supposed to respond, I will find my place in life. This is what we call as our own *dharma*/duty in all the roles we play and the situations we face

There is a lot of elbow room here and nothing is fixed. If I respond in harmony, if I respond with the attitude of offering everything to *Ishwara* and accepting everything that comes as a consequence of my action as *prasada*, I become an instrument in the Lord's plan. Therefore, if I am meant to fail in a project and I succeed, I am not acting out God's plan. And if, in God's plan, I am supposed to fail in a project and I fail, then I am being successful! But we don't know what is supposed to happen, so we should just give it our best shot and let the plan take care of itself. The Lord's plan is not rigid, it is like a matrix. There is scope for my free will, my independent thoughts and desires, and there is scope for what I want in life. Therefore, function with your priorities, and you are, in fact, a participant in the Lord's plan.

Every one of us is a participant whether we like it or not. Have a warrior mind: Do what needs to be done, don't find excuses why it should not be done. Success or failure is not in my hands, it's in *Ishwara's* hands, but I give it my best shot. Let the Lord take care of the results. Ultimately, God's plan is for all of us to grow as a person psychologically, intellectually, and spiritually, to understand the truth. Though some of my personal plans will definitely not be fulfilled, that's fine, because the ultimate plan of growth and *moksha* will be fulfilled.

Could you please elaborate on `growth'...? What do you mean when you say that we are meant to grow intellectually, spiritually...?

Physical growth takes place as long I survive—if I exercise, I get my nutrition and sleep, I will grow. Some psychological growth happens with socializing. As a child, I wanted to play with balloons, and in my twenties I still play with balloons, the ones that go up in the stock exchange. As far as my desire is concerned, I have come a long way. As a five-year-old, when the balloon burst I cried. When the stock exchange balloon bursts, I also cry. If you look at my reaction to losing in the stock market, I have not grown. I have grown as far as my desires are concerned, but I have not grown as far as my response to fulfillment or non-fulfillment of desires is concerned. As a father, when your five-year-old child's balloon burst, you could be philosophical and say that it's ok, it's a balloon, it's meant to burst. Can we not have

the same attitude when we lose money in the stock market or at least accept that it can happen? If we can do that, it's psychological growth.

Intellectual growth is when I understand the world, the reality of things. Spiritual growth would be about how much of this wisdom I bring into my life, how calm, non-reactive, contemplative, proactive I can be. And ultimately to receive the teachings – *Vedic Wisdom* – *Vedanta* and validate it in my life.

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