

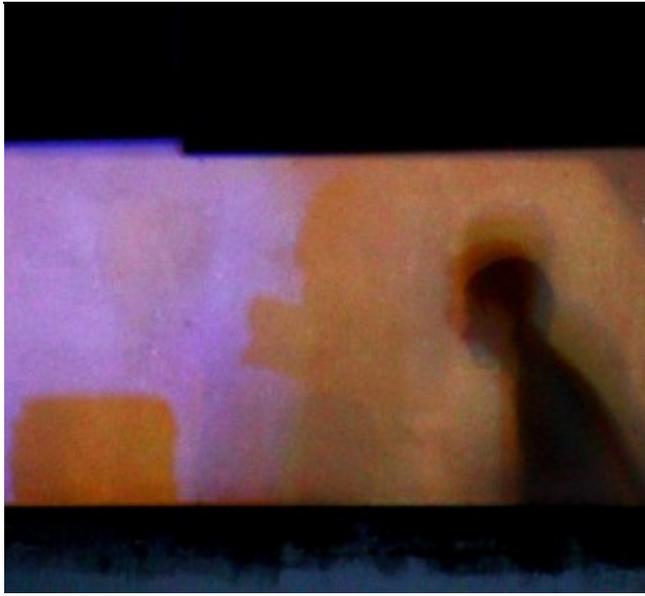
I, the knower and the known

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We take our conceptual selves, our egos to be ourselves....

Further, in the fifteenth chapter, Krishna goes on to say that it is the all-pervading Reality that is manifest as a human being. As we have seen in the eighth chapter on birth and death, what leaves the body is the jiva i.e. the ego, mind, etc.; all-pervading awareness remains as it is.

Sariram yad avapnoti yaccapyutkramatisvarah

Ghrhitvaitani samyati vayurgandhan ivasayat

When he obtains a new body, he goes, taking these (the sense organs and the mind) with him just as the wind (would carry) the fragrance from their sources (the flowers). (Verse 8)

The awareness manifest in the mind along with the mind, etc., will leave what we call the subtle body, the *suksha sharira*. He says that the reality of the I is not seen by everyone, it has to be seen by *jnana-chakshu*. Krishna adds that the I behind the manifested I is what I really am. I'm nothing but all-pervading awareness. As humans, we add layers to our personality. Because of our self-judgement in terms of body, mind, culture, upbringing, who I am associated with, what do I respond to, we create this whole personality which is the conceptual self, the *ahankara* or the ego. This is what we take as 'I' in all cases. The real I is what objectifies/knows all this and has to be seen by the *jnana-chakshu*.

Utkramantam sthitam vapi bhunjanam va gunanvitam

Vimudha nanupasyanti pasyanti jnanacaksusah

The deluded do not see the one who is departing (from the body) or even remaining (in this body), experiencing or endowed with the gunas. Those who have the eye of wisdom, see. (Verse 10)

There's a lot of confusion regarding the eye of wisdom. I've heard people say that your third eye has to be open to see the truth. All that is fine—the third eye stands for intuition, etc., and if you want to develop those things, you can, but that is not what will reveal to you the truth of the Reality. I even had one person come and tell me, 'You cannot see the Reality with the physical eyes.....Krishna gave Arjuna a special eye, that was the opening of the third eye.' That is not true. If you look at the Sanskrit etymology, you will see very clearly what is meant by *jnana-chakshu*. It is '*Jnanam eva chakshu ...*', meaning 'Knowledge itself is the eye'. Wisdom itself is the eye of wisdom. Let me illustrate this with an example. We're all sitting in a room and chatting, and a fair young girl walks in. One person might say, 'Oh, what a fair girl...'. On the other hand, a doctor sitting in the same room may say, 'Poor girl, she looks anaemic...' Both are seeing the same pale skin, but the doctor with his knowledge can understand what the perception is about, because the eye can see only what the mind knows. If the mind doesn't know something, how can the eye recognize that?

Another example. An American friend of mine came to Mumbai and he wanted to have an Indian meal. I thought I would treat him to a typical Maharashtra meal and so I took him to a student's house. They put out their traditional very low seats for the meal, about two inches from the ground, and put a plate in front of the seat. Now this man who comes from a country where there is no such thing as a two-inch high seat, put his plate on the seat and said, 'You eat on very low tables...' The eye can see only what the mind knows. Similarly, self-knowledge is the means for *moksha*, and when Krishna says '*Jnana-chakshu*', he means 'Knowledge is the eye of wisdom'. If you have the knowledge, you will see the Reality. 'Seeing' here means 'knowing clearly.'

As humans, we add layers to our personality. Because of our self-judgement in terms of body, mind, culture, upbringing, who I am associated with, what do I respond to, we create this whole personality which is the conceptual self, the *ahankara* or the ego. This is what we take as 'I' in all cases.

Yatanto yoginascaimam pasyantyatmanyavasthitam

Yatanto pyakrtatmano nainam pasyantycetasah

The yogins, who are making effort, see this self obtaining in the buddhi. Those who minds are not mature and who do not have viveka, do not see this (atman) even if they are making effort.

(Verse 11)

Krishna also says, 'Those who make the appropriate effort, who live a life of karma-yoga will see the truth very clearly.' In short, Krishna advises us to live a life of karma-yoga i.e. *ishwara arpana buddhi* (to offer all actions to Ishwara), *prasada-buddhi* (to accept all results as prasada or God's grace), etc., and he also advises us to expose ourselves to this knowledge on a regular basis. Then there is no reason why one will not know the truth. So you could either prepare your mind with karma-yoga or you could also be born with this attitude. In the absence of these two qualifications, exposure to the truth may help you to understand it but you may not be able to own the truth, you may not be able to make it yours. On the other hand, if you have a prepared mind but you don't expose yourself to the truth, you still won't get it because the means of knowledge is absent in your life. Therefore, both are necessary—a prepared mind and self-knowledge.

Krishna then goes on to say, 'It is me, myself...I'm not only manifest as an individual, I'm also manifest as the whole universe. In fact, I manifest myself as the sun and the moon, which nourishes the earth and the plant kingdom, etc. By my energy, I nourish the plant kingdom and the plants are eaten by human beings. Therefore, the human being himself is nourished by me. So I am both, the eater and the eaten, both are manifestations of me, I'm manifest as every human being'.

Yad adityagam tejo jagad bhasayate khilam

Yaccandramasi yaccagnau tattejo viddhi mamakam

May you know that the brilliance that obtains in the sun and illumines the entire world, that which is in the moon, and which is in the fire, belongs to me. (Verse 12)

Sarvasya caham hrdi sannivisto

Mattah smrtirjnanam apohanam ca

Vedaisca sarvairaham eva edyo

Vedantakra vedavid eva caham

I have entered the hearts of all. From Mr (have come) memory, knowledge, and forgetfulness. I alone am the one to be known by all the Vedas and I alone am the author of the Vedanta (Vedanta-sampradaya) and the knower of the Vedas. (Verse 15)

Your memory, your knowledge, your wisdom, all is dependent on I-awareness. Krishna goes on to say, 'I'm the one who is known in all the Vedas....Whatever is to be known in the Vedas is me, myself.' In the first section of the Veda, you will know that the Reality is *Ishwara, karma-phala-daata, karma-dikshaha*, the one who rules *karma*, is invoked through *karma*. And in the last section, you will know *Ishwara* as the Reality, as the awareness, as consciousness. He also says, I'm the one who has initiated this knowledge in the whole world, this self-knowledge otherwise known as Vedanta or Vedic wisdom. 'I have initiated it and the one who knows it is also me. Therefore, I'm both the knower and the known, the eater and the eaten'. That is why this chapter is often chanted before a meal in ashrams, etc.

At the time of death, what is the difference between the person who has the wisdom and the person who doesn't have it?

A person who doesn't have the wisdom will have a break from human life and will be born again. The person who has the knowledge remains as all-pervading awareness, free from the problems of finitude or limitation.

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