

## SUMMER PROGRAMME

One of the riddles propounded for aspirants to Self-realization begins with these words as they appear in a common English translation: ‘Do you know the end of the field? Without knowing the end of the field, all austerities are fruitless.’ When I recently ventured to put this to the Shankaracharya, he and his followers first looked mystified and then laughed so much that it was some time before he could explain as follows:

S. Here we have the classical example of mistranslation. I myself couldn’t understand the riddle as translated when compared with what Narada had intended it to be! The idea is quite different from what was expressed in English. I would like to explain it to you. The word which has been translated as ‘field’ is KSHETRA. Kshetra, although in one sense it means a field, here it has not that meaning. The idea is taken from one chapter in the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Lord Krishna speaks of the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna. (See Chapter 13 of *Bhagavad Gita*, ‘The body as the play-ground of the Self’.) Kshetra is the field and Kshetrajna is the possessor of the field. Here it is taken in the Cosmic way; Kshetrajna being the Atman and Kshetra being the body and everything within the body, or the cosmos as one single body itself. The Kshetrajna of the whole cosmos being the Creator (Brahma).

So to know the Kshetra is not very important if one does not know the Kshetrajna, the Owner, the Master of the Universe. And here Narada is saying that if you have known the Kshetrajna, the Owner of the field, then all this knowledge of the world, knowledge of the ‘field’, becomes unnecessary. If you are learning the knowledge of the field, your aim should be the Kshetrajna, the ‘end of the field’, the Absolute or the Atman. In this case he is simply stating that discipline by itself is useless. Although without discipline nothing can be achieved (for then you cannot know the Kshetrajna), yet you should not believe that discipline by itself is the end of everything.

So now we will take some of the verses of that 13th chapter of the *Gita* for contemplation after a period of silence day by day:

### 1ST DAY

Arjuna said: ‘The Creator and His Creation, also the knower of the Kshetra (knowledge) and that which ought to be known – tell me of these.’

The Blessed Lord said: ‘This body<sup>†</sup> is called Kshetra (literally ‘field’; the body is so-called because the fruits of an action are reaped in it as in a field) and he who knows it, is called Kshetrajna.’

### 2ND DAY

Myself do thou also know to be the Knower of all fields. This knowledge is considered by Me to be *the* Knowledge: What the body is, what its properties are and modifications, what effects arise from what causes; and also the Knower, who He is and what His powers are, now hear from Me in brief:

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<sup>†</sup>The word embraces not only the physical, but the subtle and causal bodies also.

**3RD DAY**

Desire, and all other psychological functions which some speak of as attributes of consciousness, are merely mental states of the Antahkarana or inner organ (of the causal body) and, being knowable, belong to the Kshetra not to its Knower:

**4TH DAY**

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, uprightness, service to the Teacher (Acharya – one who teaches the means of Liberation), and other great qualities like purity, steadfastness, self-control, and absence of egoism and identification, all these belong to the 'field' or Kshetra.

**5TH DAY**

I shall now describe the Knower (Kshetrajna) – that One which, by knowing, man attains the Eternal, the Eternal, the Supreme. That which exists pervading all, shining by the functions of all the senses, yet outside them, free of the Gunas yet experiencing them.

**6TH DAY**

Without and within all beings, moving all, yet unmoving; because of its subtlety incomprehensible; so far and yet so near; the Light even of lights, beyond the reach of darkness; the one thing to be known, the Goal of all other knowledge, dwelling in the hearts of all.

**7TH DAY**

Thus in the body of man dwells the supreme Self; He who sees and permits, upholds and enjoys; the Highest God and the Highest Self.

He who with the eyes of Wisdom thus sees the difference between matter and Spirit, and knows how to liberate life from the Laws of Nature, himself obtains the final liberation.

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