

- Chapter 2 -  
Contents of the Gītā Summarized

Arjuna submits to Lord Kṛṣṇa as His disciple, and Kṛṣṇa begins His teachings to Arjuna by explaining the fundamental distinction between the temporary material body and the eternal spiritual soul. The Lord explains the process of transmigration, the nature of selfless service to the Supreme and the characteristics of a self-realized person.

TEXT 1

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम् ।  
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १ ॥

sañjaya uvāca  
tam tathā kṛpayāviṣṭam  
aśru-pūrṇākulekṣaṇam  
viśīdantam idaṁ vākyaṁ  
uvāca madhusūdanaḥ

sañjayaḥ uvāca—Sañjaya said; tam—unto Arjuna; tathā—thus; kṛpayā—by compassion; āviṣṭam—overwhelmed; aśru-pūrṇa-ākula—full of tears; ikṣaṇam—eyes; viśīdantam—lamenting; idaṁ—these; vākyaṁ—words; uvāca—said; madhu-sūdanaḥ—the killer of Madhu.

**Sañjaya said:** Seeing Arjuna full of compassion, his mind depressed, his eyes full of tears, Madhusūdana, Kṛṣṇa, spoke the following words.

Material compassion, lamentation and tears are all signs of ignorance of the real self. Compassion for the eternal soul is self-realization. The word "Madhusūdana" is significant in this verse. Lord Kṛṣṇa killed the demon Madhu, and now Arjuna wanted Kṛṣṇa to kill the demon of misunderstanding

Comment [jh1]: What is true compassion?

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

that had overtaken him in the discharge of his duty. No one knows where compassion should be applied. Compassion for the dress of a drowning man is senseless. A man fallen in the ocean of nescience cannot be saved simply by rescuing his outward dress—the gross material body. One who does not know this and laments for the outward dress is called a *śūdra*, or one who laments unnecessarily. Arjuna was a *kṣatriya*, and this conduct was not expected from him. Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, can dissipate the lamentation of the ignorant man, and for this purpose the *Bhagavad-gītā* was sung by Him. This chapter instructs us in self-realization by an analytical study of the material body and the spirit soul, as explained by the supreme authority, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This realization is possible when one works without attachment to fruitive results and is situated in the fixed conception of the real self.

### TEXT 2

#### श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।  
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*

*kutas tvā kaśmalam idaṁ*

*viṣame samupasthitam*

*anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam*

*akīrti-karam arjuna*

*śrī—bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *kutaḥ*—wherefrom; *tvā*—unto you; *kaśmalam*—dirtiness; *idaṁ*—this lamentation; *viṣame*—in this hour of crisis; *samupasthitam*—arrived; *anārya*—persons who do not know the value of life; *juṣṭam*—practiced by; *asvargyam*—which does not lead to higher planets; *akīrti*—infamy; *karam*—the cause of; *arjuna*—O Arjuna.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this verse Kṛṣṇa dismisses all of Arjuna's reservations thus far. Sañjaya described the basis of Arjuna's

**Comment [jh2]:** Discuss the use of the word *Madhusūdana*

**Comment [jh3]:** How should compassion be applied?

**Comment [jh4]:** An answer to Arjuna's being overwhelmed with compassion (1.27): Where have these impurities/dirtiness come from? (Compassion is a sign of purity.) Summarized from (Tripurari, 2001)

**Comment [jh5]:** Arjuna argues that a noble person cannot enjoy when they have killed their worshipable superiors and family members (1.31-35). Here Kṛṣṇa responds that such is the thinking of those who don't know the higher values of life. Summarized from (Tripurari, 2001)

**Comment [jh6]:** Arjuna expresses fear of sin by fighting (1.36-39). Kṛṣṇa here tells him that not fighting will certainly not lead to the heavenly planets. Summarized from (Tripurari, 2001)

**Comment [jh7]:** Arjuna wants to protect the family dynasty (1.40-45). But Kṛṣṇa says here, but you will lead them to infamy. Summarized from (Tripurari, 2001)

I suppose it could also be argued that Arjuna wants to keep things pure in verses 1.40-45, but with the word *kaśmalam* Kṛṣṇa is already saying you are impure.

**Comment [jh8]:** Why do we care about this?

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

Kṛṣṇa and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are identical. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is referred to as Bhagavān throughout the *Gītā*. Bhagavān is the ultimate in the Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding, namely Brahman, or the impersonal all-pervasive spirit; Paramātmā, or the localized aspect of the Supreme within the heart of all living entities; and Bhagavān, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) this conception of the Absolute Truth is explained thus:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas  
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam  
brahmeti paramātmēti  
bhagavān iti śabdyate*

**Comment [jh9]:** Discuss the three phases and the analogy of the sun that Śrīla Prabhupāda uses

"The Absolute Truth is realized in three phases of understanding by the knower of the Absolute Truth, and all of them are identical. Such phases of the Absolute Truth are expressed as Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān."

These three divine aspects can be explained by the example of the sun, which also has three different aspects, namely the sunshine, the sun's surface and the sun planet itself. One who studies the sunshine only is the preliminary student. One who understands the sun's surface is further advanced. And one who can enter into the sun planet is the highest. Ordinary students who are satisfied by simply understanding the sunshine—its universal pervasiveness and the glaring effulgence of its impersonal nature—may be compared to those who can realize only the Brahman feature of the Absolute Truth. The student who has advanced still further can know the sun disc, which is compared to knowledge of the Paramātmā feature of the Absolute Truth. And the student who can enter into the heart of the sun planet is compared to those who realize the personal features of the Supreme Absolute Truth.

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reservations as "brimming with compassion." (Bg. 1.27) Here Kṛṣṇa dismisses this entire basis, asking Arjuna, "from where has this faintheartedness come?" Kṛṣṇa calls Arjuna's symptoms of fear "faintheartedness" (*kaśmalam*). In response to Arjuna's five-verse speech about winning and losing kingdoms and nobility (Bg. 1.31–35), Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that while speaking about that which is noble, his speech is not befitting a noble person (*anṛyam*). To Arjuna's five verses concerning not acting disgracefully (Bg. 1.36–40), Kṛṣṇa replies that he has attracted infamy (*akīrtikaram*), and to Arjuna's concerns about attaining heaven (Bg. 1.41–45), Kṛṣṇa tells him his speech will not lead him there (*asvargyam*). Arjuna is thus shattered by Kṛṣṇa's opening remarks, which are followed by Kṛṣṇa's remedial measures (Tripurari, 2001).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

Therefore, the *bhaktas*, or the transcendentalists who have realized the Bhagavān feature of the Absolute Truth, are the topmost transcendentalists, although all students who are engaged in the study of the Absolute Truth are engaged in the same subject matter. The sunshine, the sun disc and the inner affairs of the sun planet cannot be separated from one another, and yet the students of the three different phases are not in the same category.

The Sanskrit word *bhagavān*<sup>2</sup> is explained by the great authority Parāśara Muni, the father of Vyāsadeva. The Supreme Personality who possesses all riches, all strength, all fame, all beauty, all knowledge and all renunciation is called Bhagavān<sup>3</sup>. There are many persons who are very rich,

**Comment [jh10]:**  
Aiśvya: wealth  
Viśra: strength  
Yaśa: reputation/fame  
Śrī: beauty  
Jñāna: knowledge  
Vairāgya: detachment

<sup>2</sup> *aiśvaryasya samagrasya  
virasya yasasaḥ śriyah  
jñāna-vairāgyayaś caiva  
ṣaṇṇām bhaga itiṅganā  
(Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.5.47)*

*Bhaga*. Bhagavān and Kṛṣṇa. Kāṣṇa means all-attractive. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam* [SB 1.3.28]. There are other great personalities. Lord Śiva is also sometimes described as Bhagavān. Similarly, Lord Brahmā, Nārada, others are also sometimes described as Bhagavān. But real Bhagavān means Kṛṣṇa. They are Bhagavān partially...

What is Bhagavan? Aisvarya. Aisvarya means riches. Nobody can be richer than Bhagavan. We have got our ideas of richness. I may be rich, but you are richer than me. Somebody is richer than you. Somebody is richer than another, another, another. You go, make proceed. When you find out the final richest person, that is Bhagavan. Aisvaryasya sama... Samagrasya. All riches. Not that partial. One may have one thousand, another man, one lakh, one man, one crore, but nobody can say that "I have got all the monies." No, that is not possible. But Bhagavan has all the monies. Aisvaryasya samagrasya virasya. Similarly, strength, bodily strength or power. Aisvaryasya samagrasya virasya yasasaḥ. And similarly, reputation. We are also reputed. But nobody can be reputed than Kṛṣṇa. Just like five thousand years ago He spoke this Bhagavad-gita, and He's so reputed that Kṛṣṇa spoke Bhagavad-gita and still it is running on. Not only in India, but we are traveling all over the world. There are so many editions of Bhagavad-gita. So He's so reputed. So aisvaryasya samagrasya virasya yasasaḥ śriyah (Visnu Purana 6.5.47). And beautiful. The most beautiful. Kṛṣṇa, most attractive. Yasasaḥ sri..., jnana, knowledge, the book of knowledge which He has given, this Bhagavad-gita, there is no comparison. There is no second book in the whole world which contains so full of knowledge. So jnana. And vairagya also. In spite of all the property of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa doesn't care for this material world. He is busy in the spiritual world. Radha-madhava kunjā-bihari. He's busy in Vrndavana. He has many servants. Just big man has got many secretaries, servants, they look after, similarly, in this material world. His representatives -- Brahma, Visnu, Mahesvara -- they are managing the affairs of this whole universe. But He's enjoying in Vrndavana. Jaya radha-madhava kunjā-bihari. He has no concern. He doesn't care what is happening here. But it, it does not mean that He doesn't care, but He has no anxiety how the things are being managed. When it is mismanaged, then sometimes Kṛṣṇa comes in His Vasudeva form. Not the original Kṛṣṇa. Original Kṛṣṇa never leaves Vrndavana. Padam ekam na gacchati. He's always in His abode (Bhagavad-gita 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 7, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Jiva Goswāmī has defined Bhagavān as *bhajanīya-guṇa-viśiṣṭa*, "He whose nature is such that whoever comes

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

very powerful, very beautiful, very famous, very learned, and very much detached, but no one can claim that he possesses all riches, all strength, etc., entirely. Only Kṛṣṇa can claim this because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No living entity, including Brahmā, Lord Śiva, or Nārāyaṇa, can possess opulences as fully as Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is concluded in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* by Lord Brahmā himself that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one is equal to or above Him. He is the primeval Lord, or Bhagavān, known as Govinda, and He is the supreme cause of all causes:

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ  
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
anādir ādir govindaḥ  
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

"There are many personalities possessing the qualities of Bhagavān, but Kṛṣṇa is the supreme because none can excel Him. He is the Supreme Person, and His body is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. He is the primeval Lord Govinda and the cause of all causes." (*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1)

In the *Bhāgavatam* also there is a list of many incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is described as the original Personality of Godhead, from whom many, many incarnations and Personalities of Godhead expand:

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ  
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam  
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam  
mṛḍayanti yuge yuge

"All the lists of the incarnations of Godhead submitted herewith are either

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in touch with him cannot resist feeling moved to worship and adore his charming personality."— This is the explanation/translation of Swāmī B. R. Śrīdhara.

According to Jīva Goswāmī, the word Bhagavān is derived from "Bhagavavān." Śrī Jīva says that the *a* in the syllable *va* is elided enabling the two *v*'s to join and become a single letter. Thus Bhagavavān becomes Bhagavān. It means he who possesses (*van*) *bha*, *ga*, and *va*. *Bha* represents *bhartā*, which implies the power to nourish or maintain. Kṛṣṇa possesses the power to maintain and nourish his devotees. *Ga* stands for *gamayayitā*. It means he who has the power to grant love of God or bring God's devotees to his abode. *Va* stands for the verb *vas*, which means to reside. Bhagavān is he in whom everything resides, and he who resides in the hearts of his devotees (Tripurari, 2001).

### Comment [jh11]:

Jīva: 50 qualities  
Brahmā/Śiva: 55  
Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa: 60  
Kṛṣṇa: 64

### Comment [jh12]:

Therefore K = SPG

### Comment [jh13]:

K is also the original avatara

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

plenary expansions or parts of the plenary expansions of the Supreme Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself." (SB 1.3.28)

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, the source of both the Supersoul and the impersonal Brahman.

In the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Arjuna's lamentation for his kinsmen is certainly unbecoming, and therefore Kṛṣṇa expressed His surprise with the word *kutaḥ*, "wherefrom." Such impurities were never expected from a person belonging to the civilized class of men known as Āryans. The word *Āryan* is applicable to persons who know the value of life and have a civilization based on spiritual realization. Persons who are led by the material conception of life do not know that the aim of life is realization of the Absolute Truth, Viṣṇu, or Bhagavān, and they are captivated by the external features of the material world, and therefore they do not know what liberation is. Persons who have no knowledge of liberation from material bondage are called non-Āryans. Although Arjuna was a *kṣatriya*, he was deviating from his prescribed duties by declining to fight. This act of cowardice is described as befitting the non-Āryans. Such deviation from duty does not help one in the progress of spiritual life, nor does it even give one the opportunity to become famous in this world. Lord Kṛṣṇa did not approve of the so-called compassion of Arjuna for his kinsmen.

### TEXT 3

चौ ब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।  
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ ३ ॥

*klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha  
naitat tvayy upapadyate  
kṣudraṁ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṁ  
tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa*

*klaibyam*—impotence; *mā sma*—do not; *gamaḥ*—take to; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *na*—never; *etat*—this; *tvayi*—unto you; *upapadyate*—is befitting;

**Comment [jh14]:** Kṛṣṇa was surprised

**Comment [jh15]:** Discuss a bit about Aryans

**Comment [jh16]:** Points to discuss:  
Kṛṣṇa disapproves of Arjuna's nonviolence  
(Goswami, 1986)

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*kṣudram*—petty; *hṛdaya*—of the heart; *daurbalyam*—weakness; *tyaktvā*—giving up; *uttiṣṭha*—get up; *param—tapa*—O chastiser of the enemies.

**O son of Pṛthā, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O chastiser of the enemy.**

Arjuna was addressed as the son of Pṛthā, who happened to be the sister of Kṛṣṇa's father Vasudeva. Therefore Arjuna had a blood relationship with Kṛṣṇa. If the son of a *kṣatriya* declines to fight, he is a *kṣatriya* in name only, and if the son of a *brāhmaṇa* acts impiously, he is a *brāhmaṇa* in name only. Such *kṣatriyas* and *brāhmaṇas* are unworthy sons of their fathers; therefore, Kṛṣṇa did not want Arjuna to become an unworthy son of a *kṣatriya*. Arjuna was the most intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa was directly guiding him on the chariot; but in spite of all these credits, if Arjuna abandoned the battle he would be committing an infamous act. Therefore Kṛṣṇa said that such an attitude in Arjuna did not fit his personality. Arjuna might argue that he would give up the battle on the grounds of his magnanimous attitude for the most respectable Bhīṣma and his relatives, but Kṛṣṇa considered that sort of magnanimity mere weakness of heart. Such false magnanimity was not approved by any authority. Therefore, such magnanimity or so-called nonviolence should be given up by persons like Arjuna under the direct guidance of Kṛṣṇa.

### TEXT 4

अर्जुन उवाच

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।  
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ ४ ॥

*arjuna uvāca*  
*katham bhīṣmam aham saṅkhye*  
*droṇam ca madhusūdana*  
*iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi*  
*pūjārḥāv ari-sūdana*

*arjunaḥ uvāca*—Arjuna said; *katham*—how; *bhīṣmam*—Bhīṣma; *aham*—I; *saṅkhye*—in the fight; *droṇam*—Droṇa; *ca*—also; *madhu*—*sūdana*—O killer

**Comment [jh17]:** Pride of a *kṣatriya* and a *brāhmaṇa*

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

of Madhu; *iṣubhiḥ*—with arrows; *pratiyotsyāmi*—shall counterattack; *pūjā-arhau*—those who are worshipable; *ari—sūdana*—O killer of the enemies.

**Arjuna said: O killer of enemies, O killer of Madhu, how can I counterattack with arrows in battle men like Bhīṣma and Droṇa, who are worthy of my worship?**

Respectable superiors like Bhīṣma the grandfather and Droṇācārya the teacher are always worshipable. Even if they attack, they should not be counterattacked. It is general etiquette that superiors are not to be offered even a verbal fight. Even if they are sometimes harsh in behavior, they should not be harshly treated. Then, how is it possible for Arjuna to counterattack them? Would Kṛṣṇa ever attack His own grandfather, Ugrasena, or His teacher, Sāṅdīpani Muni? These were some of the arguments offered by Arjuna to Kṛṣṇa.

**Comment [jh18]:** Look at the etiquette!

### TEXT 5

गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्  
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।  
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव  
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ ५ ॥

*gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān*  
*śreyo bhoktum bhaikṣyam apīha loke*  
*hatvārtha-kāmāms tu gurūn ihaiva*  
*bhuñjīya bhogān rudhira-pradigdhān*

*gurūn*—the superiors; *ahatvā*—not killing; *hi*—certainly; *mahā—anubhāvān*—great souls; *śreyaḥ*—it is better; *bhoktum*—to enjoy life; *bhaikṣyam*—by begging; *apī*—even; *iha*—in this life; *loke*—in this world; *hatvā*—killing; *artha*—gain; *kāmān*—desiring; *tu*—but; *gurūn*—superiors; *iha*—in this world; *eva*—certainly; *bhuñjīya*—one has to enjoy; *bhogān*—enjoyable things; *rudhira*—blood; *pradigdhān*—tainted with.

**It would be better to live in this world by begging than to live at the cost of the**

lives of great souls who are my teachers. Even though desiring<sup>4</sup> worldly gain, they are superiors. If they are killed, everything we enjoy will be tainted with blood.

According to scriptural codes, a teacher who engages in an abominable action and has lost his sense of discrimination is fit to be abandoned. Bhīṣma and Droṇa were obliged to take the side of Duryodhana because of his financial assistance, although they should not have accepted such a position simply on financial considerations. Under the circumstances, they have lost the respectability of teachers. But Arjuna thinks that nevertheless they remain his superiors, and therefore to enjoy material profits after killing them would mean to enjoy spoils tainted with blood.<sup>5</sup>

TEXT 6

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो  
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।  
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम-  
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६ ॥

*na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo  
yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ  
yān eva hatvā na jijīviśāmas  
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*

*na*—nor; *ca*—also; *etat*—this; *vidmaḥ*—do we know; *katarat*—which; *naḥ*—for us; *garīyaḥ*—better; *yat vā*—whether; *jayema*—we may conquer; *yadi*—if; *vā*—or; *naḥ*—us; *jayeyuḥ*—they conquer; *yān*—those who; *eva*—certainly; *hatvā*—by killing; *na*—never; *jijīviśāmaḥ*—we would want to live; *te*—all of them; *avasthitāḥ*—are situated; *pramukhe*—in the front; *dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*—the

<sup>4</sup> Desire: Translates the word *kāma*. This word, simply, means “desire,” but often carries the negative sense of “selfish” or “worldly” desire throughout BG (Schweig, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Great souls are to be excused for apparent flaws in character (Tripurari, 2001).

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The status of powerful controllers is not harmed by any apparently audacious transgression of morality we may see in them, for they are just like fire, which devours everything fed into it and remains unpolluted (SB 10.33.29).

**Comment [jh19]:** Here's an example of when it is appropriate to give up a teacher: when they are engaging in abominable activities. In this case they were duty bound to fight for the Kauravas, due to their financial dependence. So they were ethically doing the right thing, but they were unfit to be teachers. So it is possible to be ethically engaged but unfit to teach. (After the battle, Bhīṣma was fit to teach and those instructions are noteworthy.) This brings the question of when do leave a bad position (not properly worded)

sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

**Nor do we<sup>6</sup> know which is better—conquering them or being conquered by them. If we killed the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, we should not care to live. Yet they are now standing before us on the battlefield.**

Arjuna did not know whether he should fight and risk unnecessary violence, although fighting is the duty of the *kṣatriyas*, or whether he should refrain and live by begging. If he did not conquer the enemy, begging would be his only means of subsistence. Nor was there certainty of victory, because either side might emerge victorious. Even if victory awaited them (and their cause was justified), still, if the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra died in battle, it would be very difficult to live in their absence. Under the circumstances, that would be another kind of defeat for them. All these considerations by Arjuna definitely proved that not only was he a great devotee of the Lord but he was also highly enlightened and had complete control over his mind and senses. His desire to live by begging, although he was born in the royal household, is another sign of detachment. He was truly virtuous, as these qualities, combined with his faith in the words of instruction of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (his spiritual master), indicate. It is concluded that Arjuna was quite fit for liberation. Unless the senses are controlled, there is no chance of elevation to the platform of knowledge, and without knowledge and devotion there is no chance of liberation. Arjuna was competent in all these attributes, over and above his enormous attributes in his material relationships.

**Comment [jh20]:** Symptoms of Arjuna's spiritual elevation.

**Comment [jh21]:** Sense control is necessary prerequisite to liberation.

### TEXT 7

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः  
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।  
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे  
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ ७ ॥

<sup>6</sup> Up until this verse, Arjuna has been speaking in the first person singular; here Arjuna speaks in the first person plural, “we,” referring to himself and the leading generals of his army (Schweig, 2007).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ  
pṛcchāmi tvām dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ  
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me  
śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvām praṇanam

kārpaṇya—of miserliness; doṣa—by the weakness; upahata—being afflicted;  
sva-bhāvaḥ—characteristics; pṛcchāmi—I am asking; tvām—unto You;  
dharma—religion; sammūḍha—bewildered; cetāḥ—in heart; yat—what;  
śreyaḥ—all-good; syāt—may be; niścitaṁ—confidently; brūhi—tell; tat—that;  
me—unto me; śiṣyaḥ—disciple; te—Your; aham—I am; śādhi—just instruct;  
mām—me; tvām—unto You; praṇanam—surrendered.

**Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.**

By nature's own way the complete system of material activities is a source of perplexity for everyone. In every step there is perplexity, and therefore it behooves one to approach a bona fide spiritual master who can give one proper guidance for executing the purpose of life. All Vedic literatures advise us to approach a bona fide spiritual master to get free from the perplexities of life, which happen without our desire. They are like a forest fire that somehow blazes without being set by anyone. Similarly, the world situation is such that perplexities of life automatically appear, without our wanting such confusion. No one wants fire, and yet it takes place, and we become perplexed. The Vedic wisdom therefore advises that in order to solve the perplexities of life and to understand the science of the solution, one must approach a spiritual master who is in the disciplic succession. A person with a bona fide spiritual master is supposed to know everything. One should not, therefore, remain in material perplexities but should approach a spiritual master. This is the purport of this verse.

Who is the man in material perplexities? It is he who does not understand the problems of life. In the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.8.10) the perplexed man is described as follows: *yo vā etad akṣaram gārgy aviditvāsmā lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ*. "He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of

**Comment [jh22]:** Abstract form of kṛpaṇa

**Comment [jh23]:** Necessity of accepting a spiritual master.

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

life as a human and who thus quits this world like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self-realization." This human form of life is a most valuable asset for the living entity who can utilize it for solving the problems of life; therefore, one who does not utilize this opportunity properly is a miser. On the other hand, there is the *brāhmaṇa*, or he who is intelligent enough to utilize this body to solve all the problems of life. *Ya etad akṣaram gārgi veditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ.*

The *kṛpaṇas*, or miserly persons, waste their time in being overly affectionate for family, society, country, etc., in the material conception of life. One is often attached to family life, namely to wife, children and other members, on the basis of "skin disease." The *kṛpaṇa* thinks that he is able to protect his family members from death; or the *kṛpaṇa* thinks that his family or society can save him from the verge of death. Such family attachment can be found even in the lower animals, who take care of children also. Being intelligent, Arjuna could understand that his affection for family members and his wish to protect them from death were the causes of his perplexities. Although he could understand that his duty to fight was awaiting him, still, on account of miserly weakness, he could not discharge the duties. He is therefore asking Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spiritual master, to make a definite solution. He offers himself to Kṛṣṇa as a disciple. He wants to stop friendly talks. Talks between the master and the disciple are serious, and now Arjuna wants to talk very seriously before the recognized spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa is therefore the original spiritual master of the science of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and Arjuna is the first disciple for understanding the *Gītā*. How Arjuna understands the *Bhagavad-gītā* is stated in the *Gītā* itself. And yet foolish mundane scholars explain that one need not submit to Kṛṣṇa as a person, but to "the unborn within Kṛṣṇa." There is no difference between Kṛṣṇa's within and without. And one who has no sense of this understanding is the greatest fool in trying to understand *Bhagavad-gītā*.

### TEXT 8

न हि प्रपश्या मि ममापनुद्या-  
द्यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।  
अवाप्य भूमावसपलमृद्धं

Comment [jh24]: Discuss kṛpaṇas

राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

na hi prapaśyāmi mamāpanudyād  
yat chokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām  
avāpya bhūmāv asaṣatnam ṛddham  
rājyam surāṇām api cādhipatyam

na—do not; hi—certainly; prapaśyāmi—I see; mama—my; āpanudyāt—can drive away; yat—that which; śokam—lamentation; ucchoṣaṇam—drying up; indriyāṇām—of the senses; avāpya—achieving; bhūmau—on the earth; asaṣatnam—without rival; ṛddham—prosperous; rājyam—kingdom; surāṇām—of the demigods; api—even; ca—also; ādhipatyam—supremacy.

**I can find no means to drive away this grief which is drying up my senses. I will not be able to dispel it even if I win a prosperous, unrivaled kingdom on earth with sovereignty like that of the demigods in heaven.**

Although Arjuna was putting forward so many arguments based on knowledge of the principles of religion and moral codes, it appears that he was unable to solve his real problem without the help of the spiritual master, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He could understand that his so-called knowledge was useless in driving away his problems, which were drying up his whole existence; and it was impossible for him to solve such perplexities without the help of a spiritual master like Lord Kṛṣṇa. Academic knowledge, scholarship, high position, etc., are all useless in solving the problems of life; help can be given only by a spiritual master like Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the conclusion is that a spiritual master who is one hundred percent Kṛṣṇa conscious is the bona fide spiritual master, for he can solve the problems of life. Lord Caitanya said that one who is master in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, regardless of his social position, is the real spiritual master.

kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya  
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya

"It does not matter whether a person is a vipra [learned scholar in Vedic wisdom] or is born in a lower family, or is in the renounced order of life—if he is master in the science of Kṛṣṇa, he is the perfect and bona fide spiritual

**Comment [jh25]:** Mundane/academic knowledge is insufficient to solve the problems of life.

**Comment [jh26]:** The qualifications of a real guru

What are some of the other qualifications?

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

master." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 8.128) So without being a master in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, no one is a bona fide spiritual master. It is also said in Vedic literature:

ṣaṭ-karma-niṣṭho vipro  
mantra-tantra-viśāradaḥ  
avaiṣṇavo gurur na syād  
vaiṣṇavaḥ śva-ṛaco guruḥ

"A scholarly *brāhmaṇa*, expert in all subjects of Vedic knowledge, is unfit to become a spiritual master without being a Vaiṣṇava, or expert in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But a person born in a family of a lower caste can become a spiritual master if he is a Vaiṣṇava, or Kṛṣṇa conscious." (*Padma Purāṇa*)

The problems of material existence—birth, old age, disease and death—cannot be counteracted by accumulation of wealth and economic development. In many parts of the world there are states which are replete with all facilities of life, which are full of wealth and economically developed, yet the problems of material existence are still present. They are seeking peace in different ways, but they can achieve real happiness only if they consult Kṛṣṇa, or the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—which constitute the science of Kṛṣṇa—through the bona fide representative of Kṛṣṇa, the man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

If economic development and material comforts could drive away one's lamentations for family, social, national or international inequities, then Arjuna would not have said that even an unrivaled kingdom on earth or supremacy like that of the demigods in the heavenly planets would be unable to drive away his lamentations. He sought, therefore, refuge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and that is the right path for peace and harmony. Economic development or supremacy over the world can be finished at any moment by the cataclysms of material nature. Even elevation into a higher planetary situation, as men are now seeking on the moon planet, can also be finished at one stroke. The *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms this: *kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti*. "When the results of pious activities are finished, one falls down again from the peak of happiness to the lowest status of life." Many politicians of the world have fallen down in that way. Such downfalls only constitute more

**Comment [jh27]:** Socio-political arrangements cannot solve the true problems of life

However, socio-political arrangements should be there to help structure society to facilitate spiritual life.

causes for lamentation.

Therefore, if we want to curb lamentation for good, then we have to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, as Arjuna is seeking to do. So Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa to solve his problem definitely, and that is the way of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Comment [jh28]:** Arjuna is asking his questions for our benefit. Now we have to follow in his footsteps and act appropriately.

TEXT 9

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।  
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९ ॥

*sañjaya uvāca*  
*evam uktvā hṛṣīkeśam*  
*guḍākeśaḥ parantapaḥ*  
*na yotsya iti govindam*  
*uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha*

*sañjayaḥ uvāca*—Sañjaya said; *evam*—thus; *uktvā*—speaking; *hṛṣīkeśam*—unto Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses; *guḍākeśaḥ*—Arjuna, the master of curbing ignorance; *parantapaḥ*—the chastiser of the enemies; *na yotsya*—I shall not fight; *iti*—thus; *govindam*—unto Kṛṣṇa, the giver of pleasure to the senses; *uktvā*—saying; *tūṣṇīm*—silent; *babhūva*—became; *ha*—certainly.

**Sañjaya said: Having spoken thus, Arjuna, chastiser of enemies, told Kṛṣṇa, "Govinda, I shall not fight," and fell silent.<sup>7</sup>**

Dhṛtarāṣṭra must have been very glad to understand that Arjuna was not going to fight and was instead leaving the battlefield for the begging profession. But Sañjaya disappointed him again in relating that Arjuna was competent to kill his enemies (*parantapaḥ*). Although Arjuna was, for the time being, overwhelmed with false grief due to family affection, he surrendered unto Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spiritual master, as a disciple. This indicated that he

**Comment [jh29]:** Dhṛtarāṣṭra momentarily gets hope.

<sup>7</sup> Sañjaya, by mentioning the name *Hṛṣīkeśa*, controller of the senses, indicates that the Lord will make Arjuna manifest intelligence to engage in the battle. By using the word Govinda, the knower of the *Vedas*, Sañjaya suggests that the Lord will make Arjuna accept his dharma to fight. In this way Sañjaya extinguished the hope which rose in Dhṛtarāṣṭra's heart of gaining the kingdom for his own sons (Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana).

would soon be free from the false lamentation resulting from family affection and would be enlightened with perfect knowledge of self-realization, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and would then surely fight. Thus Dhṛtarāṣṭra's joy would be frustrated, since Arjuna would be enlightened by Kṛṣṇa and would fight to the end.

TEXT 10

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत  
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ १० ॥

*tam uvāca hṛṣīkeśaḥ  
prahasann iva bhārata  
senayor ubhayor madhye  
viśīdantam idaṁ vacaḥ*

*tam*—unto him; *uvāca*—said; *hṛṣīkeśaḥ*—the master of the senses, Kṛṣṇa; *prahasann*—smiling; *iva*—like that; *bhārata*—O Dhṛtarāṣṭra, descendant of Bharata; *senayor*—of the armies; *ubhayor*—of both parties; *madhye*—between; *viśīdantam*—unto the lamenting one; *idaṁ*—the following; *vacaḥ*—words.

O descendant of Bharata, at that time Kṛṣṇa, smiling<sup>8</sup>, in the midst of both the armies, spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna<sup>9</sup>.

The talk was going on between intimate friends, namely the Hṛṣīkeśa and the Guḍākeśa. As friends, both of them were on the same level, but one of them voluntarily became a student of the other. Kṛṣṇa was smiling because a friend had chosen to become a disciple. As Lord of all, He is always in the superior position as the master of everyone, and yet the Lord agrees to be a friend, a son, or a lover for a devotee who wants Him in such a role. But when

<sup>8</sup> Kṛṣṇa's smile further indicates his affection for Arjuna, who remains his friend even as he becomes his disciple. In the Gauḍīya tradition, the disciple sees the guru as a dearest friend. The guru teaches the disciple like a friendly elder. Here Kṛṣṇa's smile indicates the union of friendship and servitude that characterizes Arjuna's love for him. Viśvanṛtha Cakravartī comments that because Arjuna has at this point become Kṛṣṇa's disciple, Kṛṣṇa merely smiles and refrains from chiding him as he did earlier (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Although Kṛṣṇa's speech is directed to Arjuna, it is spoken in the midst of everyone assembled (*senayor ubhayor madhye*), and is therefore a universal message for all to hear (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh30]:** Points to discuss: Arjuna has taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa, now Kṛṣṇa will enlighten him (Goswami, 1986).

**Comment [jh31]:** Read VCT's commentary.

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

He was accepted as the master, He at once assumed the role and talked with the disciple like the master—with gravity, as it is required. It appears that the talk between the master and the disciple was openly exchanged in the presence of both armies so that all were benefitted. So the talks of *Bhagavad-gītā* are not for any particular person, society, or community, but they are for all, and friends or enemies are equally entitled to hear them.

### TEXT 11

श्रीभगवानुवाच  
अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।  
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११ ॥

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*aśocyān anvaśocas tvam*  
*prajñā-vādāṁś ca bhāṣase*  
*gatāsūn agatāsūṁś ca*  
*nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*

Begins section 2:  
Don't be foolish. Fight  
because there is no  
death for the soul.  
(*jñāna/sankhya yoga*)

**Comment [jh32]:** Points to discuss:

Arjuna has forgotten the eternality of the soul; as a result he is foolishly lamenting over the destruction of material bodies

Kṛṣṇa, as spiritual master, quickly points out Arjuna's ignorance (Goswami, 1986)

**Comment [jh33]:** Kṛṣṇa is giving Arjuna the ABCs of spiritual life.

*śrī—bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; *aśocyān*—not worthy of lamentation; *anvaśocaḥ*—you are lamenting; *tvam*—you; *prajñā—vādān*—learned talks; *ca*—also; *bhāṣase*—speaking; *gata*—lost; *asūn*—life; *agata*—not passed; *asūn*—life; *ca*—also; *na*—never; *anuśocanti*—lament; *paṇḍitāḥ*—the learned.

**The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief<sup>10</sup>. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead<sup>11</sup>.**

<sup>10</sup> In *Paramātmā-sandarbhā*, Jīva Goswāmī points out the parallelism between this verse and Kṛṣṇa's concluding verse in chapter 18 (Bg. 18.66). These two verses mark the beginning and end of Kṛṣṇa's instructions to Arjuna, and thus one can surmise the essence of the entire text from them. In both verses Kṛṣṇa instructs, "Don't lament, don't worry" (*na anuśocanti/mā śucaḥ*). Mental energy expended on worrying would be better spent in remembering Bhagavān, our maintainer and protector and the perfect object of love (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> One may question why remorse for the loss of loved ones is not deemed appropriate, for such behavior is seen even in great souls. Kṛṣṇa anticipates that Arjuna might argue in this direction in the face of the strong possibility that his dear ones will depart, and he says they should not be lamented for. Knowledgeable persons (*paṇḍitāḥ*) know that the departed have merely gone elsewhere, as they do even in embodied life. Although

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

The Lord at once took the position of the teacher and chastised the student, calling him, indirectly, a fool. The Lord said, "You are talking like a learned man, but you do not know that one who is learned—one who knows what is body and what is soul—does not lament for any stage of the body, neither in the living nor in the dead condition." As explained in later chapters, it will be clear that knowledge means to know matter and spirit and the controller of both. Arjuna argued that religious principles should be given more importance than politics or sociology, but he did not know that knowledge of matter, soul and the Supreme is even more important than religious formularies. And because he was lacking in that knowledge, he should not have posed himself as a very learned man. As he did not happen to be a very learned man, he was consequently lamenting for something which was unworthy of lamentation. The body is born and is destined to be vanquished today or tomorrow; therefore the body is not as important as the soul. One who knows this is actually learned, and for him there is no cause for lamentation, regardless of the condition of the material body.

### TEXT 12

नत्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपा”।  
न चैव नभविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ १२ ॥

*na tv evāham jātu nāsam  
na tvam neme janādhīpāḥ  
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ  
sarve vayam ataḥ param*

*na*—never; *tu*—but; *eva*—certainly; *aham*—I; *jātu*—at any time; *na*—did not; *āsam*—exist; *na*—not; *tvam*—you; *na*—not; *ime*—all these; *jana-adhipāḥ*—kings; *na*—never; *ca*—also; *eva*—certainly; *na*—not; *bhaviṣyāmaḥ*—shall exist; *sarve vayam*—all of us; *ataḥ param*—hereafter.

great persons are seen to lament at times, this is merely the expression of their manifest (*prārabdha*) karma exhausting itself, while they themselves know better and remain situated in knowledge of the nature of the self. The manifest karma of great souls expires without diminishing their greatness. Although lamentation may be unavoidable, great souls teach us to pass through it without identifying with it. When we witness the passing of our good and bad karma without reacting to it, we progress in spiritual life (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh34]:** Points to cover:  
Kṛṣṇa confirms the eternal individuality of Himself and all other living beings

Kṛṣṇa's statement does not support the Māyāvādī's interpretation of the individual soul's oneness with the Supreme Soul

The Gītā has meaning only if we follow the example of the great ācāryas and accept Kṛṣṇa as the supreme individual soul, who is giving instructions to His forgetful parts and parcels. (Goswami, 1986)

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be<sup>12</sup>.

**Comment [jh35]:** A lot of philosophical discussion re religion and the existence of God involves creation, a creator and what initially existed. KC philosophy is above this because there is no creation; ultimately everything always exists, although it isn't always manifest. Our "creations" can be seen as recombinations of already existing elements.

In the *Vedas*, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* as well as in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the maintainer of innumerable living entities, in terms of their different situations according to individual work and reaction of work. That Supreme Personality of Godhead is also, by His plenary portions, alive in the heart of every living entity. Only saintly persons who can see, within and without, the same Supreme Lord can actually attain to perfect and eternal peace.

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām  
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān  
tam ātma-sthaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās  
teṣām śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām  
(Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13)*

The same Vedic truth given to Arjuna is given to all persons in the world who pose themselves as very learned but factually have but a poor fund of knowledge. The Lord says clearly that He Himself, Arjuna and all the kings who are assembled on the battlefield are eternally individual beings and that the Lord is eternally the maintainer of the individual living entities both in their conditioned and in their liberated situations. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the supreme individual person, and Arjuna, the Lord's eternal associate, and all the kings assembled there are individual eternal persons. It is not that they did not exist as individuals in the past, and it is not that they will not remain eternal persons. Their individuality existed in the past, and their individuality will continue in the future without interruption. Therefore, there is no cause for lamentation for anyone.

The Māyāvādī theory that after liberation the individual soul, separated by the covering of *māyā*, or illusion, will merge into the impersonal Brahman and lose its individual existence is not supported herein by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority. Nor is the theory that we only think of individuality in the

<sup>12</sup> Here Kṛṣṇa implies that there are two types of souls: God himself and the living beings, such as Arjuna and the other kings assembled. Kṛṣṇa informs us that the soul's individuality exists in all three phases of time—past, present, and future—as well as in the liberated status beyond the influence of time (Tripurari, 2001).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

conditioned state supported herein. Kṛṣṇa clearly says herein that in the future also the individuality of the Lord and others, as it is confirmed in the *Upaniṣads*, will continue eternally. This statement of Kṛṣṇa's is authoritative because Kṛṣṇa cannot be subject to illusion. If individuality were not a fact, then Kṛṣṇa would not have stressed it so much—even for the future. The Māyāvādī may argue that the individuality spoken of by Kṛṣṇa is not spiritual, but material. Even accepting the argument that the individuality is material, then how can one distinguish Kṛṣṇa's individuality? Kṛṣṇa affirms His individuality in the past and confirms His individuality in the future also. He has confirmed His individuality in many ways, and impersonal Brahman has been declared to be subordinate to Him. Kṛṣṇa has maintained spiritual individuality all along; if He is accepted as an ordinary conditioned soul in individual consciousness, then His *Bhagavad-gītā* has no value as authoritative scripture. A common man with all the four defects of human frailty is unable to teach that which is worth hearing. The *Gītā* is above such literature. No mundane book compares with the *Bhagavad-gītā*. When one accepts Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary man, the *Gītā* loses all importance. The Māyāvādī argues that the plurality mentioned in this verse is conventional and that it refers to the body. But previous to this verse such a bodily conception is already condemned. After condemning the bodily conception of the living entities, how was it possible for Kṛṣṇa to place a conventional proposition on the body again? Therefore, individuality is maintained on spiritual grounds and is thus confirmed by great *ācāryas* like Śrī Rāmānuja and others. It is clearly mentioned in many places in the *Gītā* that this spiritual individuality is understood by those who are devotees of the Lord. Those who are envious of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead have no bona fide access to the great literature. The nondevotee's approach to the teachings of the *Gītā* is something like that of a bee licking on a bottle of honey. One cannot have a taste of honey unless one opens the bottle. Similarly, the mysticism of the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be understood only by devotees, and no one else can taste it, as it is stated in the Fourth Chapter of the book. Nor can the *Gītā* be touched by persons who envy the very existence of the Lord. Therefore, the Māyāvādī explanation of the *Gītā* is a most misleading presentation of the whole truth. Lord Caitanya has forbidden us to read commentations made by the Māyāvādīs and warns that one who takes to such an understanding of the Māyāvādī philosophy loses all power to understand the real mystery of the

**Comment [jh36]:** Why does SP harp so strongly on Māyāvādīs?

Difference between Māyāvādī and an impersonalists.

*Gītā*. If individuality refers to the empirical universe, then there is no need of teaching by the Lord. The plurality of the individual soul and of the Lord is an eternal fact, and it is confirmed by the *Vedas* as above mentioned.

TEXT 13

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।  
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ १३ ॥

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe  
kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir  
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

*dehinaḥ*—of the embodied; *asmin*—in this; *yathā*—as; *dehe*—in the body; *kaumāram*—boyhood; *yauvanam*—youth; *jarā*—old age; *tathā*—similarly; *deha-antara*—of transference of the body; *prāptiḥ*—achievement; *dhīraḥ*—the sober; *tatra*—thereupon; *na*—never; *muhyati*—is deluded.

**As the embodied soul<sup>13</sup> continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age<sup>14</sup>, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.**

Since every living entity is an individual soul, each is changing his body every moment, manifesting sometimes as a child, sometimes as a youth, and

<sup>13</sup> In this verse, the word *dehinaḥ* is singular. However, Kṛṣṇa is not saying that there is only one soul appearing to be embodied as many, but rather a particular class of souls, those presently deluded in material life. Were this not so, it would contradict the plural usage in the previous verse (*sarve vāyam*). Although Kṛṣṇa is clearly speaking about the soul in these verses, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī offers an interpretation in an effort to establish Advaita Vedānta, in which he says that *sarve vāyam* (all of us) in verse 12 refers to the “multiplicity of [material] bodies previously mentioned (Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, and the other kings—*aḥam*, *tvam*, *janādhipāḥ*).” This forced reading contradicts the explicit teaching in the *Gītā* as to the eternality of Kṛṣṇa’s form (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Kṛṣṇa implies that no one laments when a child’s body is replaced by an adult body. Nor do they cry when an adult body changes into an old-age body. Even if some do lament in this latter case, Bhīṣma and Droṇa, upon dying in battle, will get young bodies. Therefore, either from the material or spiritual point of view, Arjuna has no cause to lament. Even so, Arjuna’s mind is disturbed due to its being attached to sense objects in the form of his relatives’ bodies. Thus Kṛṣṇa next distinguishes the self from the subtle mental/emotional body (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh37]:** Points to discuss:

Discuss the soul’s change of bodies

Bhīṣma and Droṇa will achieve better situations in their next lives; therefore, Arjuna shouldn’t lament for them.

Since the soul is unchangeable, logically Kṛṣṇa and the individual souls must be individuals eternally. (Goswami, 1986)

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

sometimes as an old man. Yet the same spirit soul is there and does not undergo any change. This individual soul finally changes the body at death and transmigrates to another body; and since it is sure to have another body in the next birth—either material or spiritual—there was no cause for lamentation by Arjuna on account of death, neither for Bhīṣma nor for Droṇa, for whom he was so much concerned. Rather, he should rejoice for their changing bodies from old to new ones, thereby rejuvenating their energy. Such changes of body account for varieties of enjoyment or suffering, according to one's work in life. So Bhīṣma and Droṇa, being noble souls, were surely going to have spiritual bodies in the next life, or at least life in heavenly bodies for superior enjoyment of material existence. So, in either case, there was no cause of lamentation.

Any man who has perfect knowledge of the constitution of the individual soul, the Supersoul, and nature—both material and spiritual—is called a *dhīra*, or a most sober man. Such a man is never deluded by the change of bodies.

The **Māyāvādī** theory of oneness of the spirit soul cannot be entertained, on the ground that the spirit soul cannot be cut into pieces as a fragmental portion. Such cutting into different individual souls would make the Supreme cleavable or changeable, against the principle of the Supreme Soul's being unchangeable. As confirmed in the *Gītā*, the fragmental portions of the Supreme exist eternally (*sanātana*) and are called *kṣara*; that is, they have a tendency to fall down into material nature. These fragmental portions are eternally so, and even after liberation the individual soul remains the same—fragmental. But once liberated, he lives an eternal life in bliss and knowledge with the Personality of Godhead. The theory of reflection can be applied to the Supersoul, who is present in each and every individual body and is known as the *Paramātmā*. He is different from the individual living entity. When the sky is reflected in water, the reflections represent both the sun and the moon and the stars also. The stars can be compared to the living entities and the sun or the moon to the Supreme Lord. The individual fragmental spirit soul is represented by Arjuna, and the Supreme Soul is the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They are not on the same level, as it will be apparent in the beginning of the Fourth Chapter. If Arjuna is on the same level with Kṛṣṇa,

**Comment [jh38]:** More harping on Māyāvādis

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

and Kṛṣṇa is not superior to Arjuna, then their relationship of instructor and instructed becomes meaningless. If both of them are deluded by the illusory energy (*māyā*), then there is no need of one being the instructor and the other the instructed. Such instruction would be useless because, in the clutches of *māyā*, no one can be an authoritative instructor. Under the circumstances, it is admitted that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, superior in position to the living entity, Arjuna, who is a forgetful soul deluded by *māyā*.

### TEXT 14

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।  
आगमापयिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४ ॥

*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya*  
*śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ*  
*āgamāpāyino 'nityās*  
*tāṁs titikṣasva bhārata*

*mātrā*—*sparśāḥ*—sensory perception; *tu*—only; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *śīta*—winter; *uṣṇa*—summer; *sukha*—happiness; *duḥkha*—and pain; *dāḥ*—giving; *āgama*—appearing; *apāyinaḥ*—disappearing; *anityāḥ*—nonpermanent; *tān*—all of them; *titikṣasva*—just try to tolerate; *bhārata*—O descendant of the Bharata dynasty.

**O son of Kuntī, the nonpermanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance and disappearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, O scion of Bharata, and one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.**

In the proper discharge of duty, one has to learn to tolerate<sup>15</sup> nonpermanent appearances and disappearances of happiness and distress. According to Vedic injunction, one has to take his bath early in the morning even during the month of Māgha (January-February). It is very cold at that time, but in spite of that a man who abides by the religious principles does not hesitate to take his bath. Similarly, a woman does not hesitate to cook in the

<sup>15</sup> Tolerance is a virtue that is required no matter how one lives (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh39]:** Points to cover:

Everyone experiences difficulties in performing his prescribed duties. Those difficulties must be tolerated.

By adhering to one's prescribed religious duties, tolerating happiness and distress, one can advance in knowledge and devotion and become eligible for liberation (Goswami, 1986).

**Comment [jh40]:** Yes, but now we have controlled climates.

kitchen in the months of May and June, the hottest part of the summer season. One has to execute his duty in spite of climatic inconveniences. Similarly, to fight is the religious principle of the *kṣatriyas*, and although one has to fight with some friend or relative, one should not deviate from his prescribed duty. One has to follow the prescribed rules and regulations of religious principles in order to rise up to the platform of knowledge, because by knowledge and devotion only can one liberate himself from the clutches of *māyā* (illusion).

The two different names of address given to Arjuna are also significant. To address him as Kaunteya signifies his great blood relations from his mother's side; and to address him as Bhārata signifies his greatness from his father's side. From both sides he is supposed to have a great heritage. A great heritage brings responsibility in the matter of proper discharge of duties; therefore, he cannot avoid fighting.<sup>16</sup>

TEXT 15

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।  
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५ ॥

*yaṁ hi na vyathayanty ete  
puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha  
sama-duḥkha-sukhaṁ dhīraṁ  
so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate*

*yaṁ*—one to whom; *hi*—certainly; *na*—never; *vyathayanti*—are distressing; *ete*—all these; *puruṣaṁ*—to a person; *puruṣa-ṛṣabha*—O best among men; *sama*—unaltered; *duḥkha*—in distress; *sukhaṁ*—and happiness; *dhīraṁ*—patient; *saḥ*—he; *amṛtatvāya*—for liberation; *kalpate*—is considered eligible.

**O best among men [Arjuna], the person who is not disturbed by happiness and distress and is steady in both is certainly eligible for liberation<sup>17</sup>.**

<sup>16</sup> By addressing Arjuna in terms of both sides of his noble family heritage (Kaunteya and Bhārata), Kṛṣṇa strongly suggested that Arjuna should take the noble path of tolerance in relation to dualities, knowing them to be mere fluctuations of the mind (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> For the first time in this great treatise Kṛṣṇa mentions self-realization, which takes one beyond material happiness and distress (Tripurari, 2001).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

Anyone who is steady in his determination for the advanced stage of spiritual realization and can equally tolerate the onslaughts of distress and happiness is certainly a person eligible for liberation. In the *varṇāśrama* institution, the fourth stage of life, namely the renounced order (*sannyāsa*), is a painstaking situation. But one who is serious about making his life perfect surely adopts the *sannyāsa* order of life in spite of all difficulties. The difficulties usually arise from having to sever family relationships, to give up the connection of wife and children. But if anyone is able to tolerate such difficulties, surely his path to spiritual realization is complete. Similarly, in Arjuna's discharge of duties as a *kṣatriya*, he is advised to persevere, even if it is difficult to fight with his family members or similarly beloved persons. Lord Caitanya took *sannyāsa* at the age of twenty-four, and His dependents, young wife as well as old mother, had no one else to look after them. Yet for a higher cause He took *sannyāsa* and was steady in the discharge of higher duties. That is the way of achieving liberation from material bondage.

### TEXT 16

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।  
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

*nāsato vidyate bhāvo*  
*nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ*  
*ubhayor api dṛṣṭo 'ntas*  
*tv anayos tattva-darśibhiḥ*

*na*—never; *asataḥ*—of the nonexistent; *vidyate*—there is; *bhāvaḥ*—endurance; *na*—never; *abhāvaḥ*—changing quality; *vidyate*—there is; *sataḥ*—of the eternal; *ubhayor*—of the two; *api*—verily; *dṛṣṭaḥ*—observed; *antaḥ*—conclusion; *tu*—indeed; *anayor*—of them; *tattva*—of the truth; *darśibhiḥ*—by the seers.

**Those who are seers of the truth have concluded that of the nonexistent [the material body] there is no endurance and of the eternal [the soul] there is no change. This they have concluded by studying the nature of both<sup>18</sup>.**

<sup>18</sup> The spirit of this verse is that Kṛṣṇa is chiding Arjuna for not being a seer himself. Indeed, Arjuna is confused by this verse. Thus in the following verse Kṛṣṇa gives him practical examples of what he means by the

**Comment [jh41]:** The body constantly changes, whereas the soul remains always the same—thus begins Kṛṣṇa's instructions for the removal of our ignorance

Eventually one must come to realize that everything emanates from Kṛṣṇa, and that everyone has an eternal relationship with Him as His servant (Goswami, 1986).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

There is no endurance of the changing body. That the body is changing every moment by the actions and reactions of the different cells is admitted by modern medical science; and thus growth and old age are taking place in the body. But the spirit soul exists permanently, remaining the same despite all changes of the body and the mind. That is the difference between matter and spirit. By nature, the body is ever changing, and the soul is eternal. This conclusion is established by all classes of seers of the truth, both impersonalist and personalist. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (2.12.38) it is stated that Viṣṇu and His abodes all have self-illuminated spiritual existence (*jyotīṃṣi viṣṇur bhuvanāni viṣṇuḥ*). The words *existent* and *nonexistent* refer only to spirit and matter. That is the version of all seers of truth.

This is the beginning of the instruction by the Lord to the living entities who are bewildered by the influence of ignorance. Removal of ignorance involves the reestablishment of the eternal relationship between the worshiper and the worshipable and the consequent understanding of the difference between the part-and-parcel living entities and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One can understand the nature of the Supreme by thorough study of oneself, the difference between oneself and the Supreme being understood as the relationship between the part and the whole. In the *Vedānta-sūtras*, as well as in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the Supreme has been accepted as the origin of all emanations. Such emanations are experienced by superior and inferior natural sequences. The living entities belong to the superior nature, as it will be revealed in the Seventh Chapter. Although there is no difference between the energy and the energetic, the energetic is accepted as the Supreme, and energy or nature is accepted as the subordinate. The living entities, therefore, are always subordinate to the Supreme Lord, as in the case of the master and the servant, or the teacher and the taught. Such clear knowledge is impossible to understand under the spell of ignorance, and to drive away such ignorance the Lord teaches the *Bhagavad-gītā* for the enlightenment of all living entities for all time.

### TEXT 17

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

realand unreal (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh42]:** It is not that we remove ignorance, but that we add Kṛṣṇa.

**Comment [jh43]:** Points to discuss:  
Everyone can perceive the soul through its symptom—consciousness

Analyze the difference between a living body and a dead body

By contemplation one may understand the presence of the soul, but only by hearing from spiritual authorities can one understand the constitution of the soul (Goswami, 1986).

विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ १७ ॥

*avināśi tu tad viddhi  
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam  
vināśam avyayasyāsyā  
na kaścit kartum arhati*

*avināśi*—imperishable; *tu*—but; *tat*—that; *viddhi*—know it; *yena*—by whom; *sarvam*—all of the body; *idaṁ*—this; *tatam*—pervaded; *vināśam*—destruction; *avyayasyā*—of the imperishable; *asyā*—of it; *na kaścit*—no one; *kartum*—to do; *arhati*—is able.

**That which pervades the entire body you should know to be indestructible. No one is able to destroy that imperishable soul<sup>19</sup>.**

This verse more clearly explains the real nature of the soul, which is spread all over the body. Anyone can understand what is spread all over the body: it is consciousness. Everyone is conscious of the pains and pleasures of the body in part or as a whole. This spreading of consciousness is limited within one's own body. The pains and pleasures of one body are unknown to another. Therefore, each and every body is the embodiment of an individual soul, and the symptom of the soul's presence is perceived as individual consciousness. This soul is described as one ten-thousandth part of the upper portion of the hair point in size. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) confirms this:

*bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya  
śatadhā kalpitasya ca  
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ  
sa cānantyāya kalpate*

"When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul." Similarly the same version is stated:

<sup>19</sup> In this verse, Kṛṣṇa rejects the idea that consciousness is momentary (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh44]:** What is the size of the soul?

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*keśāgra-śata-bhāgasya  
śatāmśaḥ sādṛśātmakaḥ  
jīvaḥ sūkṣma-svarūpo 'yaṁ  
saṅkhyātīto hi cit-kaṇaḥ  
[Cc. Madhya 19.140]*

"There are innumerable particles of spiritual atoms, which are measured as one ten-thousandth of the upper portion of the hair."

Therefore, the individual particle of spirit soul is a spiritual atom smaller than the material atoms, and such atoms are innumerable. This very small spiritual spark is the basic principle of the material body, and the influence of such a spiritual spark is spread all over the body as the influence of the active principle of some medicine spreads throughout the body. This current of the spirit soul is felt all over the body as consciousness, and that is the proof of the presence of the soul. Any layman can understand that the material body minus consciousness is a dead body, and this consciousness cannot be revived in the body by any means of material administration. Therefore, consciousness is not due to any amount of material combination, but to the spirit soul. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.9) the measurement of the atomic spirit soul is further explained:

*eṣo 'ṅur ātmā cetasā veditavyo  
yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā saṁviveśa  
prāṇaiś cittaṁ sarvaṁ otaṁ prajānāṁ  
yasmin viśuddhe vibhavaty eṣa ātmā*

"The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of air (*prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna* and *udāna*), is situated within the heart, and spreads its influence all over the body of the embodied living entities. When the soul is purified from the contamination of the five kinds of material air, its spiritual influence is exhibited."

The *haṭha-yoga* system is meant for controlling the five kinds of air encircling the pure soul by different kinds of sitting postures—not for any material profit, but for liberation of the minute soul from the entanglement of the material atmosphere.

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

So the constitution of the atomic soul is admitted in all Vedic literatures, and it is also actually felt in the practical experience of any sane man. Only the insane man can think of this atomic soul as all-pervading *viṣṇu-tattva*.

The influence of the atomic soul can be spread all over a particular body. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, this atomic soul is situated in the heart of every living entity, and because the measurement of the atomic soul is beyond the power of appreciation of the material scientists, some of them assert foolishly that there is no soul. The individual atomic soul is definitely there in the heart along with the Supersoul, and thus all the energies of bodily movement are emanating from this part of the body. The corpuscles which carry the oxygen from the lungs gather energy from the soul. When the soul passes away from this position, the activity of the blood, generating fusion, ceases. Medical science accepts the importance of the red corpuscles, but it cannot ascertain that the source of the energy is the soul. Medical science, however, does admit that the heart is the seat of all energies of the body.

Such atomic particles of the spirit whole are compared to the sunshine molecules. In the sunshine there are innumerable radiant molecules. Similarly, the fragmental parts of the Supreme Lord are atomic sparks of the rays of the Supreme Lord, called by the name *prabhā*, or superior energy. So whether one follows Vedic knowledge or modern science, one cannot deny the existence of the spirit soul in the body, and the science of the soul is explicitly described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the Personality of Godhead Himself.

### TEXT 18

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।  
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥

*antavanta ime dehā<sup>20</sup>*  
*nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ*

<sup>20</sup> The plural bodies (*ime dehāḥ*) in this verse refer to the physical and subtle mental bodies mentioned in verses 13 and 14, respectively. According to the *śruti* (*uktāḥ*), both of these are subject to destruction (*antavantaḥ*). The embodied soul, on the other hand, is indestructible (*anāśinaḥ*) (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh45]:** Points to cover:  
Since the material body will sooner or later be destroyed and since the soul can never be destroyed, Arjuna should not, on bodily considerations, hesitate to fight (Goswami, 1986).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*anāśino 'prameyasya*<sup>21</sup>  
*tasmād*<sup>22</sup> *yudhyasva bhārata*

*anta—vantaḥ—perishable; ime—all these; dehāḥ—material bodies; nityasya—eternal in existence; uktāḥ—are said; śarīriṇaḥ—of the embodied soul; anāśinaḥ—never to be destroyed; aprameyasya—immeasurable; tasmāt—therefore; yudhyasva—fight; bhārata—O descendant of Bharata.*

**The material body of the indestructible, immeasurable and eternal living entity is sure to come to an end; therefore, fight, O descendant of Bharata.**

The material body is perishable by nature. It may perish immediately, or it may do so after a hundred years. It is a question of time only. There is no chance of maintaining it indefinitely. But the spirit soul is so minute that it cannot even be seen by an enemy, to say nothing of being killed. As mentioned in the previous verse, it is so small that no one can have any idea how to measure its dimension. So from both viewpoints there is no cause of lamentation, because the living entity as he is cannot be killed nor can the material body be saved for any length of time or permanently protected. The minute particle of the whole spirit acquires this material body according to his work, and therefore observance of religious principles should be utilized. In the *Vedānta-sūtras* the living entity is qualified as light because he is part and

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<sup>21</sup> Kṛṣṇa describes the soul as immeasurable (*aprimeyasya*), yet it is mentioned elsewhere that the individual soul is one ten-thousandth the size of the tip of a hair (*Śve. Up. 5.9*). However, these two statements are not contradictory, for no one can measure one ten-thousandth of the tip of a hair. The Upaniṣadic measurement of the soul is not to be taken literally. Furthermore, *aprimeyasya* refers to the soul's being incomprehensible. It cannot be measured in our mind due to its being beyond mind rather than a product of it. *Māyā* (illusion) also means to measure. The soul cannot be measured with the limited instrument of the mind. Thus it is implied here that it can only be known through scripture or revelation (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> The soul being immeasurable and indestructible, Arjuna has nothing to fear. Therefore (*tasmād*) he should not desist from battle, but rather follow his dharma. Without performing one's dharma, the difficult subject matter Kṛṣṇa is explaining cannot be easily understood. Commitment to performing one's dharma is also a form of knowledge. It purifies the heart, enabling one to understand practically the nature of the self. In general terms, Kṛṣṇa's order to fight here means to perform one's own dharma, which for Arjuna was to act as a warrior.

At this point Arjuna is left with the thought that although he should not grieve for anyone lost in the battle, the sins arising from killing others will still be his. There is no rule that says one will be free from the sin of killing another as long as he does not grieve for their loss. Thus Kṛṣṇa addresses this issue in the next verse, echoing the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.19) (Tripurari, 2001).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

parcel of the supreme light. As sunlight maintains the entire universe, so the light of the soul maintains this material body. As soon as the spirit soul is out of this material body, the body begins to decompose; therefore it is the spirit soul which maintains this body. The body itself is unimportant. Arjuna was advised to fight and not sacrifice the cause of religion for material, bodily considerations.

### TEXT 19

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।  
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९ ॥

*ya enam vetti hantāraṁ  
yaś cainaṁ manyate hatam  
ubhau tau na vijānīto  
nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate*

*yaḥ*—anyone who; *enam*—this; *vetti*—knows; *hantāram*—the killer; *yaḥ*—anyone who; *ca*—also; *enam*—this; *manyate*—thinks; *hatam*—killed; *ubhau*—both; *tau*—they; *na*—never; *vijānītaḥ*—are in knowledge; *na*—never; *ayam*—this; *hanti*—kills; *na*—nor; *hanyate*—is killed.

**Neither he who thinks the living entity the slayer nor he who thinks it slain is in knowledge, for the self slays not nor is slain.**

When an embodied living entity is hurt by fatal weapons, it is to be known that the living entity within the body is not killed. The spirit soul is so small that it is impossible to kill him by any material weapon, as will be evident from subsequent verses. Nor is the living entity killable, because of his spiritual constitution. What is killed, or is supposed to be killed, is the body only. This, however, does not at all encourage killing of the body. The Vedic injunction is *mā hiṁsyāt sarvā bhūtāni*: [Bg. 9.4] never commit violence to anyone. Nor does understanding that the living entity is not killed encourage animal slaughter. Killing the body of anyone without authority is abominable and is punishable by the law of the state as well as by the law of the Lord. Arjuna, however, is being engaged in killing for the principle of religion, and not whimsically.

**Comment [Jh46]:** Point to cover:  
Although the soul cannot die, still, unauthorized killing of the material body is condemned (Goswami, 1986).

TEXT 20

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-  
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।  
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो  
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २० ॥

na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin  
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ  
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo  
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre

na—never; jāyate—takes birth; mriyate—dies; vā—either; kadācit—at any time (past, present or future); na—never; ayam—this; bhūtvā—having come into being; bhavitā—will come to be; vā—or; na—not; bhūyaḥ—or is again coming to be; ajaḥ—unborn; nityaḥ—eternal; śāśvataḥ—permanent; ayam—this; purāṇaḥ—the oldest; na—never; hanyate—is killed; hanyamāne—being killed; śarīre—the body.

**For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.**

Qualitatively, the small atomic fragmental part of the Supreme Spirit is one with the Supreme. He undergoes no changes like the body. Sometimes the soul is called the steady, or *kūṭa-stha*. The body is subject to six kinds of transformations. It takes its birth from the womb of the mother's body, remains for some time, grows, produces some effects, gradually dwindles, and at last vanishes into oblivion. The soul, however, does not go through such changes. The soul is not born, but, because he takes on a material body, the body takes its birth. The soul does not take birth there, and the soul does not die. Anything which has birth also has death. And because the soul has no birth, he therefore has no past, present or future. He is eternal, ever-existing, and primeval—that is, there is no trace in history of his coming into being. Under the impression of the body, we seek the history of birth, etc., of the soul. The soul does not at any time become old, as the body does. The so-called old man, therefore, feels himself to be in the same spirit as in his childhood or

Comment [jh47]:

- 1.The development of the body depends on the presence of the soul
- 2.Discuss the example of the sun. (Goswami, 1986)

Comment [jh48]: 6 kinds of transformations:

- 1.Birth
- 2.Remains
- 3.Growth
- 4.Offspring
- 5.Dwindles
- 6.Dies

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

youth. The changes of the body do not affect the soul. The soul does not deteriorate like a tree, nor anything material. The soul has no by-product either. The by-products of the body, namely children, are also different individual souls; and, owing to the body, they appear as children of a particular man. The body develops because of the soul's presence, but the soul has neither offshoots nor change. Therefore, the soul is free from the six changes of the body.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.18) we also find a similar passage, which reads:

*na jāyate mriyate vā vipāścīn  
nāyaṁ kutaścīn na babhūva kaścīn  
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo  
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

The meaning and purport of this verse is the same as in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but here in this verse there is one special word, *vipāścīn*, which means learned or with knowledge.

The soul is full of knowledge, or full always with **consciousness**. Therefore, consciousness is the symptom of the soul. Even if one does not find the soul within the heart, where he is situated, one can still understand the presence of the soul simply by the presence of consciousness. Sometimes we do not find the sun in the sky owing to clouds, or for some other reason, but the light of the sun is always there, and we are convinced that it is therefore daytime. As soon as there is a little light in the sky early in the morning, we can understand that the sun is in the sky. Similarly, since there is some consciousness in all bodies—whether man or animal—we can understand the presence of the soul. This consciousness of the soul is, however, different from the consciousness of the Supreme because the supreme consciousness is all-knowledge—past, present and future. The consciousness of the individual soul is prone to be forgetful. When he is forgetful of his real nature, he obtains education and enlightenment from the superior lessons of Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa is not like the forgetful soul. If so, Kṛṣṇa's teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* would be useless.

There are **two kinds of souls**—namely the minute particle soul (*anu-*

**Comment [jh49]:** Symptom of the soul.

**Comment [jh50]:** Two kinds of souls: Soul and Supersoul

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*ātmā*) and the Supersoul (*vibhu-ātmā*). This is also confirmed in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.20) in this way:

*aṅor aṅīyān mahato mahīyān  
ātmāsya jantor nihito guhāyām  
tam akratuḥ paśyati vīta-śoko  
dhātuḥ prasādān mahimānam ātmanaḥ*

"Both the Supersoul [Paramātmā] and the atomic soul [jīvātmā] are situated on the same tree of the body within the same heart of the living being, and only one who has become free from all material desires as well as lamentations can, by the grace of the Supreme, understand the glories of the soul." Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of the Supersoul also, as it will be disclosed in the following chapters, and Arjuna is the atomic soul, forgetful of his real nature; therefore he requires to be enlightened by Kṛṣṇa, or by His bona fide representative (the spiritual master).

### TEXT 21

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।  
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ २१ ॥

*vedāvināśinaṁ nityaṁ  
ya enam ajam avyayam  
kathaṁ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha  
kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam*

*veda*—knows; *avināśinaṁ*—indestructible; *nityaṁ*—always existing; *yaḥ*—one who; *enam*—this (soul); *ajam*—unborn; *avyayam*—immutable; *kathaṁ*—how; *saḥ*—that; *puruṣaḥ*—person; *pārtha*—O Pārtha (Arjuna); *kaṁ*—whom; *ghātayati*—causes to hurt; *hanti*—kills; *kaṁ*—whom.

**O Pārtha, how can a person who knows that the soul is indestructible, eternal, unborn and immutable kill anyone or cause anyone to kill?<sup>23</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> In spite of Kṛṣṇa's logic, Arjuna fears that although he may not be the cause of anyone's death, he will be the cause of others changing their bodies. Kṛṣṇa replies to this doubt in the next verse (Tripurari, 2001). [and thus cause suffering for relatives...]

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

Everything has its proper utility, and a man who is situated in complete knowledge knows how and where to apply a thing for its proper utility. Similarly, violence also has its utility, and how to apply violence rests with the person in knowledge. Although the justice of the peace awards capital punishment to a person condemned for murder, the justice of the peace cannot be blamed, because he orders violence to another person according to the codes of justice. In *Manu-saṁhitā*, the lawbook for mankind, it is supported that a murderer should be condemned to death so that in his next life he will not have to suffer for the great sin he has committed. Therefore, the king's punishment of hanging a murderer is actually beneficial. Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa orders fighting, it must be concluded that violence is for supreme justice, and thus Arjuna should follow the instruction, knowing well that such violence, committed in the act of fighting for Kṛṣṇa, is not violence at all because, at any rate, the man, or rather the soul, cannot be killed; so for the administration of justice, so-called violence is permitted. A surgical operation is not meant to kill the patient, but to cure him. Therefore the fighting to be executed by Arjuna at the instruction of Kṛṣṇa is with full knowledge, so there is no possibility of sinful reaction.

**Comment [jh52]:** Everything has its proper use, including violence

### TEXT 22

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय  
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।  
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-  
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२ ॥

*vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya  
navāni gṛhṇāti naro 'aparāṇi  
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny  
anyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī*

*vāsāṁsi*—garments; *jīrṇāni*—old and worn out; *yathā*—just as; *vihāya*—giving up; *navāni*—new garments; *gṛhṇāti*—does accept; *naraḥ*—a man; *aparāṇi*—others; *tathā*—in the same way; *śarīrāṇi*—bodies; *vihāya*—giving up; *jīrṇāni*—old and useless; *anyāni*—different; *saṁyāti*—verily accepts; *navāni*—new sets; *dehī*—the embodied.

**Comment [jh53]:** Discuss the example of the two birds

Kṛṣṇa (as the witnessing bird) speaks *Bhagavad-gītā* to help end the struggles of the *jīva* (eating bird)

Bhīṣma and Droṇa will benefit by dying in the battle (Goswami, 1986)

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

**As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones<sup>24</sup>.**

Change of body by the atomic individual soul is an accepted fact. Even the modern scientists who do not believe in the existence of the soul, but at the same time cannot explain the source of energy from the heart, have to accept continuous changes of body which appear from childhood to boyhood and from boyhood to youth and again from youth to old age. From old age, the change is transferred to another body. This has already been explained in a previous verse (2.13).

Transference of the atomic individual soul to another body is made possible by the grace of the Supersoul. The Supersoul fulfills the desire of the atomic soul as one friend fulfills the desire of another. The *Vedas*, like the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, as well as the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, compare the soul and the Supersoul to two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds (the individual atomic soul) is eating the fruit of the tree, and the other bird (Kṛṣṇa) is simply watching His friend. Of these two birds—although they are the same in quality—one is captivated by the fruits of the material tree, while the other is simply witnessing the activities of His friend. Kṛṣṇa is the witnessing bird, and Arjuna is the eating bird. Although they are friends, one is still the master and the other is the servant. Forgetfulness of this relationship by the atomic soul is the cause of one's changing his position from one tree to another, or from one body to another. The *jīva* soul is struggling very hard on the tree of the material body, but as soon as he agrees to accept the other bird as the supreme spiritual master—as Arjuna agreed to do by voluntary surrender unto Kṛṣṇa for instruction—the subordinate bird immediately becomes free from all lamentations. Both the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*

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<sup>24</sup> Kṛṣṇa replies to Arjuna that the changing of bodies is inevitable in this world. Moreover, he indicates that for elders such as Bhīṣma this may be a cause of rejoicing rather than sorrow, for no one laments on giving up an old garment in exchange for a new one. The word *aparāṇi* (others) implies an improvement, whereas *jīrṇāni* (worn out) indicates something that has passed its usefulness. The word *saṁyāti* indicates an attainment such as that which Bhīṣma is due: a heavenly body resulting from his righteous life, now that the current one had been worn out in the discharge of his religious duty.

Arjuna next wonders how the soul within the body is not affected by the destruction of the body, as one within a burning house is injured when the house burns. Kṛṣṇa answers his doubt in the following verse (Tripurari, 2001).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

(3.1.2) and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.7) confirm this:

*samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno  
'nīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ  
juṣṭam yadā paśyaty anyam iśam  
asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ*

"Although the two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord and knows His glories—at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties." Arjuna has now turned his face towards his eternal friend, Kṛṣṇa, and is understanding the *Bhagavad-gītā* from Him. And thus, hearing from Kṛṣṇa, he can understand the supreme glories of the Lord and be free from lamentation.

Arjuna is advised herewith by the Lord not to lament for the bodily change of his old grandfather and his teacher. He should rather be happy to kill their bodies in the righteous fight so that they may be cleansed at once of all reactions from various bodily activities. One who lays down his life on the sacrificial altar, or in the proper battlefield, is at once cleansed of bodily reactions and promoted to a higher status of life. So there was no cause for Arjuna's lamentation.

### TEXT 23

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।  
न चैनं चो दयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २३ ॥

*nainam chindanti śastrāṇi  
nainam dahati pāvakaḥ  
na cainam kledayanty āpo  
na śoṣayati mārutaḥ*

*na*—never; *enam*—this soul; *chindanti*—can cut to pieces; *śastrāṇi*—weapons; *na*—never; *enam*—this soul; *dahati*—burns; *pāvakaḥ*—fire; *na*—never; *ca*—also; *enam*—this soul; *kledayanti*—moistens; *āpaḥ*—water; *na*—never; *śoṣayati*—dries; *mārutaḥ*—wind.

**The soul can never be cut to pieces by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor**

**Comment [jh54]:** Due to their smallness, the *jīvas* are prone to become covered by *māyā*.

Discuss the example of the sparks (Goswami, 1986).

moistened by water, nor withered by the wind<sup>25</sup>.

All kinds of weapons—swords, flame weapons, rain weapons, tornado weapons, etc.—are unable to kill the spirit soul. It appears that there were many kinds of weapons made of earth, water, air, ether, etc., in addition to the modern weapons of fire. Even the nuclear weapons of the modern age are classified as fire weapons, but formerly there were other weapons made of all different types of material elements. Firearms were counteracted by water weapons, which are now unknown to modern science. Nor do modern scientists have knowledge of tornado weapons. Nonetheless, the soul can never be cut into pieces, nor annihilated by any number of weapons, regardless of scientific devices.

The Māyāvādī cannot explain how the individual soul came into existence simply by ignorance and consequently became covered by the illusory energy. Nor was it ever possible to cut the individual souls from the original Supreme Soul; rather, the individual souls are eternally separated parts of the Supreme Soul. Because they are atomic individual souls eternally (*sanātana*), they are prone to be covered by the illusory energy, and thus they become separated from the association of the Supreme Lord, just as the sparks of a fire, although one in quality with the fire, are prone to be extinguished when out of the fire. In the *Varāha Purāṇa*, the living entities are described as separated parts and parcels of the Supreme. They are eternally so, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā* also. So, even after being liberated from illusion, the living entity remains a separate identity, as is evident from the teachings of the Lord to Arjuna. Arjuna became liberated by the knowledge received from Kṛṣṇa, but he never became one with Kṛṣṇa.

TEXT 24

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमृचो ह्योऽशोष्य एव च ।  
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४ ॥

<sup>25</sup> As Kṛṣṇa speaks he gestures to Arjuna's arsenal of arrows, which include not only sharp arrows that cut, but others that harness the powers of fire, water, and wind through the use of mantra. None of these weapons can harm the soul, nor protect the body from its destiny of destruction. Kṛṣṇa next states why these weapons cannot destroy the soul and how it is that the soul is not susceptible to destruction by them (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh55]:** Arjuna's weapons can't hurt the soul.

**Comment [jh56]:** Even if a soul merges in the *brahmajyoti*, he retains his individuality

Discuss the word *sarva-gata* (Goswami, 1986)

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*acchedyo*<sup>26</sup> 'yam *adāhyo*<sup>27</sup> 'yam  
*akledyo*<sup>28</sup> 'śoṣya<sup>29</sup> eva ca  
*nityaḥ*<sup>30</sup> *sarva-gataḥ sthāṇur*  
*acalo* 'yam *sanātanaḥ*

*acchedyaḥ*—unbreakable; *ayam*—this soul; *adāhyaḥ*—unable to be burned; *ayam*—this soul; *akledyaḥ*—insoluble; *aśoṣyaḥ*—not able to be dried; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—and; *nityaḥ*—everlasting; *sarva-gataḥ*—all—pervading; *sthāṇuḥ*—unchangeable; *acalaḥ*—immovable; *ayam*—this soul; *sanātanaḥ*—eternally the same.

**This individual soul is unbreakable and insoluble, and can be neither burned nor dried. He is everlasting, present everywhere, unchangeable, immovable and eternally the same.**

All these qualifications of the atomic soul definitely prove that the individual soul is eternally the atomic particle of the spirit whole, and he remains the same atom eternally, without change. The theory of monism is very difficult to apply in this case, because the individual soul is never expected to become one homogeneously. After liberation from material contamination, the atomic soul may prefer to remain as a spiritual spark in the effulgent rays of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but the intelligent souls enter into the spiritual planets to associate with the Personality of Godhead.

The word *sarva-gata*<sup>31</sup> ("all-pervading") is significant because there is no

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<sup>26</sup> Since the soul is indivisible (*acchedyaḥ*), it cannot be cut (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> It cannot be burnt because it is unburnable (*adṛhyaḥ*) (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> The soul cannot be moistened by water because it is insoluble (*akledyaḥ*) (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Nor can it be withered by wind because it cannot be dried up (*aśoṣyaḥ*). Thus the effects stated in the previous verse are by-products of the soul's qualities mentioned in this one (Tripurari, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> The second half of this verse explains why the soul is not subject to the effects of the above-mentioned weapons. Because it is eternal (*nityaḥ*), all-pervading (*sarva-gataḥ*), changeless (*sthāṇuḥ*), unmoving (*acalaḥ*), and primeval (*sanātanaḥ*), it is not subject to any transformation whatsoever. Something subject to action causes a result of that action, such as production, acquisition, transformation, and change of condition. Being eternal the soul is not produced. Since it is all-pervading it cannot be acquired. Being changeless it is not transformed, and being unmoving it is not subject to any change of condition. For emphasis, the word *eva* (surely) is intended to modify all of the soul's qualities mentioned in this verse (Tripurari, 2001).

doubt that living entities are all over God's creation. They live on the land, in the water, in the air, within the earth and even within fire. The belief that they are sterilized in fire is not acceptable, because it is clearly stated here that the soul cannot be burned by fire. Therefore, there is no doubt that there are living entities also in the sun planet with suitable bodies to live there. If the sun globe is uninhabited, then the word *sarva-gata*—"living everywhere"—becomes meaningless.

TEXT 25

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।  
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

*avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam  
avikāryo 'yam ucyate  
tasmād evaṁ viditvainaṁ  
nānuśocitum arhasi*

*avyaktaḥ*—invisible; *ayam*—this soul; *acintyaḥ*—inconceivable; *ayam*—this soul; *avikāryaḥ*—unchangeable; *ayam*—this soul; *ucyate*—is said; *tasmāt*—therefore; *evam*—like this; *viditvā*—knowing it well; *enam*—this soul; *na*—do not; *anuśocitum*—to lament; *arhasi*—you deserve.

**It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable and immutable. Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body.**

As described previously, the magnitude of the soul is so small for our material calculation that he cannot be seen even by the most powerful microscope; therefore, he is invisible. As far as the soul's existence is concerned, no one can establish his existence experimentally beyond the proof of *śruti*, or Vedic wisdom. We have to accept this truth, because there is no other source of understanding the existence of the soul, although it is a fact by perception. There are many things we have to accept solely on grounds of

**Comment [jh57]:** Discuss the example for the authority of the mother

The individual souls remain eternally infinitesimal (Goswami, 1986).

<sup>31</sup> Jīva Goswāmī explains the word *sarva-gataḥ* as meaning “dependent (*gataḥ*) on God, who is everything (*sarva*).” (Ps. 34) Everything is but God and his energies. One who is aware of this and thus depends exclusively on God in all circumstances experiences all-pervasiveness through dependence on the person who is all-pervasive (Tripurari, 2001).

superior authority. No one can deny the existence of his father, based upon the authority of his mother. There is no source of understanding the identity of the father except by the authority of the mother. Similarly, there is no source of understanding the soul except by studying the *Vedas*. In other words, the soul is inconceivable by human experimental knowledge. The soul is consciousness and conscious—that also is the statement of the *Vedas*, and we have to accept that. Unlike the bodily changes, there is no change in the soul. As eternally unchangeable, the soul remains atomic in comparison to the infinite Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is infinite, and the atomic soul is infinitesimal. Therefore, the infinitesimal soul, being unchangeable, can never become equal to the infinite soul, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This concept is repeated in the *Vedas* in different ways just to confirm the stability of the conception of the soul. Repetition of something is necessary in order that we understand the matter thoroughly, without error.

TEXT 26

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।  
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥

*atha cainam nitya-jātam  
nityam vā manyase mṛtam  
tathāpi tvam mahā-bāho  
nainam śocitum arhasi*

*atha*—if, however; *ca*—also; *enam*—this soul; *nitya-jātam*—always born; *nityam*—forever; *vā*—either; *manyase*—you so think; *mṛtam*—dead; *tathā api*—still; *tvam*—you; *mahā-bāho*—O mighty—armed one; *na*—never; *enam*—about the soul; *śocitum*—to lament; *arhasi*—deserve.

**If, however, you think that the soul [or the symptoms of life] is always born and dies forever, you still have no reason to lament, O mighty-armed.**

There is always a class of philosophers, almost akin to the Buddhists, who do not believe in the separate existence of the soul beyond the body. When Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it appears that such philosophers existed, and they were known as the *lokāyatikas* and *vaibhāṣikas*. Such

**Comment [jh58]:** Even if Arjuna accepts the atheistic philosophers' speculation that life symptoms arise due to combinations of chemicals, he still has no reason to lament (Goswami, 1986).

philosophers maintain that life symptoms take place at a certain mature condition of material combination. The modern material scientist and materialist philosophers also think similarly. According to them, the body is a combination of physical elements, and at a certain stage the life symptoms develop by interaction of the physical and chemical elements. The science of anthropology is based on this philosophy. Currently, many pseudo religions—now becoming fashionable in America—are also adhering to this philosophy, as are the nihilistic nondevotional Buddhist sects.

Even if Arjuna did not believe in the existence of the soul—as in the *vaibhāṣika* philosophy—there would still have been no cause for lamentation. No one laments the loss of a certain bulk of chemicals and stops discharging his prescribed duty. On the other hand, in modern science and scientific warfare, so many tons of chemicals are wasted for achieving victory over the enemy. According to the *vaibhāṣika* philosophy, the so-called soul or *ātmā* vanishes along with the deterioration of the body. So, in any case, whether Arjuna accepted the Vedic conclusion that there is an atomic soul or he did not believe in the existence of the soul, he had no reason to lament. According to this theory, since there are so many living entities generating out of matter every moment, and so many of them are being vanquished every moment, there is no need to grieve for such incidents. If there were no rebirth for the soul, Arjuna had no reason to be afraid of being affected by sinful reactions due to his killing his grandfather and teacher. But at the same time, Kṛṣṇa sarcastically addressed Arjuna as *mahā-bāhu*, mighty-armed, because He, at least, did not accept the theory of the *vaibhāṣikas*, which leaves aside the Vedic wisdom. As a *kṣatriya*, Arjuna belonged to the Vedic culture, and it behooved him to continue to follow its principles.

TEXT 27

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।  
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७ ॥

*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur  
dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca  
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe  
na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi*

**Comment [jh59]:** Avoidance of duty is sinful (Goswami, 1986).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*jātasya*—of one who has taken his birth; *hi*—certainly; *dhruvaḥ*—a fact; *mṛtyuḥ*—death; *dhruvam*—it is also a fact; *janma*—birth; *mṛtasya*—of the dead; *ca*—also; *tasmāt*—therefore; *aṇṇarihārye*—of that which is unavoidable; *arthe*—in the matter; *na*—do not; *tvam*—you; *śocitum*—to lament; *arhasi*—deserve.

**One who has taken his birth is sure to die, and after death one is sure to take birth again. Therefore, in the unavoidable discharge of your duty, you should not lament.**

One has to take birth according to one's activities of life. And after finishing one term of activities, one has to die to take birth for the next. In this way one is going through one cycle of birth and death after another without liberation. This cycle of birth and death does not, however, support unnecessary murder, slaughter and war. But at the same time, violence and war are inevitable factors in human society for keeping law and order.

The Battle of Kurukṣetra, being the will of the Supreme, was an inevitable event, and to fight for the right cause is the duty of a *kṣatriya*. Why should Arjuna be afraid of or aggrieved at the death of his relatives since he was discharging his proper duty? He did not deserve to break the law, thereby becoming subjected to the reactions of sinful acts, of which he was so afraid. By avoiding the discharge of his proper duty, he would not be able to stop the death of his relatives, and he would be degraded due to his selection of the wrong path of action.

### TEXT 28

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।  
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८ ॥

*avyaktādīni bhūtāni*  
*vyakta-madhyāni bhārata*  
*avyakta-nidhanāny eva*  
*tatra kā paridevanā*

*avyakta*—*ādīni*—in the beginning unmanifested; *bhūtāni*—all that are created; *vyakta*—manifested; *madhyāni*—in the middle; *bhārata*—○

**Comment [jh60]:** Since every manifestations of material energy has a beginning and an end, one should not lament over the destruction of material bodies (Goswami, 1986).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

descendant of Bharata; *avyakta*—nonmanifested; *nidhanāni*—when vanquished; *eva*—it is all like that; *tatra*—therefore; *kā*—what; *paridevanā*—lamentation.

**All created beings are unmanifest in their beginning, manifest in their interim state, and unmanifest again when annihilated. So what need is there for lamentation?**

Accepting that there are two classes of philosophers, one believing in the existence of the soul and the other not believing in the existence of the soul, there is no cause for lamentation in either case. Nonbelievers in the existence of the soul are called atheists by followers of Vedic wisdom. Yet even if, for argument's sake, we accept this atheistic theory, there is still no cause for lamentation. Apart from the separate existence of the soul, the material elements remain unmanifested before creation. From this subtle state of nonmanifestation comes manifestation, just as from ether, air is generated; from air, fire is generated; from fire, water is generated; and from water, earth becomes manifested. From the earth, many varieties of manifestations take place. Take, for example, a big skyscraper manifested from the earth. When it is dismantled, the manifestation becomes again unmanifested and remains as atoms in the ultimate stage. The law of conservation of energy remains, but in course of time things are manifested and unmanifested—that is the difference. Then what cause is there for lamentation either in the stage of manifestation or in unmanifestation? Somehow or other, even in the unmanifested stage, things are not lost. Both at the beginning and at the end, all elements remain unmanifested, and only in the middle are they manifested, and this does not make any real material difference.

And if we accept the Vedic conclusion as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that these material bodies are perishable in due course of time (*antavanta ime dehāḥ*) but that the soul is eternal (*nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ*), then we must remember always that the body is like a dress; therefore why lament the changing of a dress? The material body has no factual existence in relation to the eternal soul. It is something like a dream. In a dream we may think of flying in the sky, or sitting on a chariot as a king, but when we wake up we can see that we are neither in the sky nor seated on the chariot. The Vedic wisdom encourages self-realization on the basis of the nonexistence of the material

**Comment [jh61]:** One could take this a little further: even atheists—via evolutionary psychology/biology are arguing for morality.

**Comment [jh62]:** Some basic physics here.

body. Therefore, in either case, whether one believes in the existence of the soul or one does not believe in the existence of the soul, there is no cause for lamentation for loss of the body.

**TEXT 29**

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेन-  
माश्चर्यवद्ब्रुवति तथैव चान्यः ।  
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति  
श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

*āścarya-vat paśyati kaścīd enam*  
*āścarya-vad vadati tathāiva cānyaḥ*  
*āścarya-vac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti*  
*śrutvāpy enam veda na caiva kaścit*

*āścarya-vat*—as amazing; *paśyati*—sees; *kaścīd*—someone; *enam*—this soul;  
*āścarya-vad*—as amazing; *vadati*—speaks of; *tathā*—thus; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—  
also; *anyaḥ*—another; *āścarya-vat*—similarly amazing; *ca*—also; *enam*—this  
soul; *anyaḥ*—another; *śṛṇoti*—hears of; *śrutvā*—having heard; *api*—even;  
*enam*—this soul; *veda*—knows; *na*—never; *ca*—and; *eva*—certainly; *kaścīd*—  
someone.

Some look on the soul as **amazing**, some describe him as amazing, and some hear of him as amazing, while others, even after hearing about him, cannot understand him at all.

Since *Gītopaniṣad* is largely based on the principles of the *Upaniṣads*, it is not surprising to also find this passage in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.7):

*śravaṇayāpi bahubhir yo na labhyaḥ*  
*śṛṇvanto 'pi bahavo yaṁ na vidyuḥ*  
*āścaryo vaktā kuśalo 'sya labdhā*  
*āścaryo 'sya jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ*

The fact that the atomic soul is within the body of a gigantic animal, in the body of a gigantic banyan tree, and also in the microbic germs, millions and billions of which occupy only an inch of space, is certainly very amazing. Men

**Comment [jh63]:** Discuss the reasons people have trouble understanding the soul; so many sizes and shapes of bodies; no time to think about it; they confuse the individual soul with the Super soul (Goswami, 1986).

**Comment [jh64]:**  
Soul = amazing  
Seer = amazing  
That it can be seen/perceived = amazing

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

with a poor fund of knowledge and men who are not austere cannot understand the wonders of the individual atomic spark of spirit, even though it is explained by the greatest authority of knowledge, who imparted lessons even to Brahmā, the first living being in the universe. Owing to a gross material conception of things, most men in this age cannot imagine how such a small particle can become both so great and so small. So men look at the soul proper as wonderful either by constitution or by description. Illusioned by the material energy, people are so engrossed in subject matters for sense gratification that they have very little time to understand the question of self-understanding, even though it is a fact that without this self-understanding all activities result in ultimate defeat in the struggle for existence. Perhaps they have no idea that one must think of the soul, and thus make a solution to the material miseries.

Some people who are inclined to hear about the soul may be attending lectures, in good association, but sometimes, owing to ignorance, they are misguided by acceptance of the Supersoul and the atomic soul as one without distinction of magnitude. It is very difficult to find a man who perfectly understands the position of the Supersoul, the atomic soul, their respective functions and relationships and all other major and minor details. And it is still more difficult to find a man who has actually derived full benefit from knowledge of the soul, and who is able to describe the position of the soul in different aspects. But if, somehow or other, one is able to understand the subject matter of the soul, then one's life is successful.

The easiest process for understanding the subject matter of self, however, is to accept the statements of the *Bhagavad-gītā* spoken by the greatest authority, Lord Kṛṣṇa, without being deviated by other theories. But it also requires a great deal of penance and sacrifice, either in this life or in the previous ones, before one is able to accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa can, however, be known as such by the causeless mercy of the pure devotee and by no other way.

### TEXT 30

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।  
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*dehī nityam avadhyo 'yam  
dehe sarvasya bhārata  
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
na tvam śocitum arhasi*

*dehī*—the owner of the material body; *nityam*—eternally; *avadhyaḥ*—cannot be killed; *ayam*—this soul; *dehe*—in the body; *sarvasya*—of everyone; *bhārata*—O descendant of Bharata; *tasmāt*—therefore; *sarvāṇi*—all; *bhūtāni*—living entities (that are born); *na*—never; *tvam*—you; *śocitum*—to lament; *arhasi*—deserve.

**O descendant of Bharata, he who dwells in the body can never be slain.  
Therefore you need not grieve for any living being.**

The Lord now concludes the chapter of instruction on the immutable spirit soul. In describing the immortal soul in various ways, Lord Kṛṣṇa establishes that the soul is immortal and the body is temporary. Therefore Arjuna as a *kṣatriya* should not abandon his duty out of fear that his grandfather and teacher—Bhīṣma and Droṇa—will die in the battle. On the authority of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one has to believe that there is a soul different from the material body, not that there is no such thing as soul, or that living symptoms develop at a certain stage of material maturity resulting from the interaction of chemicals. Though the soul is immortal, violence is not encouraged, but at the time of war it is not discouraged when there is actual need for it. That need must be justified in terms of the sanction of the Lord, and not capriciously.

### TEXT 31

**स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।  
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ ३१ ॥**

*sva-dharmam api cāvekṣya  
na vikampitum arhasi  
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat  
kṣatriyasya na vidyate*

Begins section 3:  
Don't be foolish. Fight  
because as a ksatriya it is  
your duty and nature.  
(*sakāma karma yoga*)

**Comment [jh65]:** Discuss the two kinds of *sva-dharma*: (1) before liberation one should perform duties within *varṇāśrama-dharma*, and (2) after liberation one's *sva-dharma* "becomes spiritual."

Discuss the *kṣatriyas* tiger killing

Human society requires *kṣatriyas*, one should not consider their killing on the battlefield violent (Goswami, 1986).

*sva-dharmam*—one's own religious principles; *api*—also; *ca*—indeed;

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*avekṣya*—considering; *na*—never; *vikampitum*—to hesitate; *arhasi*—you deserve; *dharmyāt*—for religious principles; *hi*—indeed; *yuddhāt*—than fighting; *śreyah*—better engagement; *anyat*—any other; *kṣatriyasya*—of the *kṣatriya*; *na*—does not; *vidyate*—exist.

**Considering your specific duty as a *kṣatriya*, you should know that there is no better engagement for you than fighting on religious principles; and so there is no need for hesitation.**

Out of the four orders of social administration, the second order, for the matter of good administration, is called *kṣatriya*. *Kṣat* means hurt. One who gives protection from harm is called *kṣatriya* (*trāyate*—to give protection). The *kṣatriyas* are trained for killing in the forest. A *kṣatriya* would go into the forest and challenge a tiger face to face and fight with the tiger with his sword. When the tiger was killed, it would be offered the royal order of cremation. This system has been followed even up to the present day by the *kṣatriya* kings of Jaipur state. The *kṣatriyas* are specially trained for challenging and killing because religious violence is sometimes a necessary factor. Therefore, *kṣatriyas* are never meant for accepting directly the order of *sannyāsa*, or renunciation. Nonviolence in politics may be a diplomacy, but it is never a factor or principle. In the religious law books it is stated:

*āhaveṣu mitho 'nyonyam  
jighāmsanto mahī-kṣitaḥ  
yuddhamānāḥ param śaktyā  
svargam yānty aparāṇ-mukhāḥ*

*yajñeṣu paśavo brahman  
hanyante satataṁ dvijaiḥ  
saṁskṛtāḥ kila mantraiś ca  
te 'pi svargam avāpnuvan*

"In the battlefield, a king or *kṣatriya*, while fighting another king envious of him, is eligible for achieving heavenly planets after death, as the *brāhmaṇas* also attain the heavenly planets by sacrificing animals in the sacrificial fire." Therefore, killing on the battlefield on religious principles and killing animals in the sacrificial fire are not at all considered to be acts of violence, because everyone is benefited by the religious principles involved. The animal

**Comment [jh66]:** Five topics of the Gita:

- 1.Śvara
- 2.Jīva
- 3.Prakṛti
- 4.Kāla
- 5.Karma

Jīva was discussed previously. Karma is being discussed now.

**Comment [jh67]:** Religious fighting means in accord with religious principles—to dethrone those, who like Duryodhana, rule impiously and not to forcefully establish one religion over another—as the Christians and Muslim traditions do.

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

sacrificed gets a human life immediately without undergoing the gradual evolutionary process from one form to another, and the *kṣatriyas* killed on the battlefield also attain the heavenly planets as do the *brāhmaṇas* who attain them by offering sacrifice.

There are two kinds of *sva-dharmas*, specific duties. As long as one is not liberated, one has to perform the duties of his particular body in accordance with religious principles in order to achieve liberation. When one is liberated, one's *sva-dharma*—specific duty—becomes spiritual and is not in the material bodily concept. In the bodily conception of life there are specific duties for the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* respectively, and such duties are unavoidable. *Sva-dharma* is ordained by the Lord, and this will be clarified in the Fourth Chapter. On the bodily plane *sva-dharma* is called *varṇāśrama-dharma*, or man's steppingstone for spiritual understanding. Human civilization begins from the stage of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, or specific duties in terms of the specific modes of nature of the body obtained. Discharging one's specific duty in any field of action in accordance with the orders of higher authorities serves to elevate one to a higher status of life.

### TEXT 32

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।  
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२ ॥

*yadṛcchayā copapannam*  
*svarga-dvāram apāvṛtam*  
*sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha*  
*labhante yuddham idṛśam*

*yadṛcchayā*—by its own accord; *ca*—also; *upapannam*—arrived at; *svarga*—of the heavenly planets; *dvāram*—door; *apāvṛtam*—wide open; *sukhinaḥ*—very happy; *kṣatriyāḥ*—the members of the royal order; *pārtha*—O son of Pṛthā; *labhante*—do achieve; *yuddham*—war; *idṛśam*—like this.

**O Pārtha, happy are the *kṣatriyas* to whom such fighting opportunities come**

**Comment [jh68]:** Arjuna refused to fight out of ignorance (Goswami, 1986).

unsought, opening for them the doors of the heavenly planets<sup>32</sup>.

As supreme teacher of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa condemns the attitude of Arjuna, who said, "I do not find any good in this fighting. It will cause perpetual habitation in hell." Such statements by Arjuna were due to ignorance only. He wanted to become nonviolent in the discharge of his specific duty. For a *kṣatriya* to be on the battlefield and to become nonviolent is the philosophy of fools. In the *Parāśara-smṛti*, or religious codes made by Parāśara, the great sage and father of Vyāsadeva, it is stated:

*kṣatriyo hi prajā rakṣan  
śastra-pāṇih pradaṇḍayan  
nirjitya para-sainyādi  
kṣitim dharmeṇa pālayet*

"The *kṣatriya*'s duty is to protect the citizens from all kinds of difficulties, and for that reason he has to apply violence in suitable cases for law and order. Therefore he has to conquer the soldiers of inimical kings, and thus, with religious principles, he should rule over the world."

Considering all aspects, Arjuna had no reason to refrain from fighting. If he should conquer his enemies, he would enjoy the kingdom; and if he should die in the battle, he would be elevated to the heavenly planets, whose doors were wide open to him. Fighting would be for his benefit in either case.

TEXT 33

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं सङ्ग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।  
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३३ ॥

*atha cet tvam imam dharmyam  
saṅgrāmaṁ na kariṣyasi*

<sup>32</sup> With this and the previous verse, Kṛṣṇa intimates to Arjuna that not only those interested in eternal life and love of God should follow his guidance but even those who desire material benefit or heaven. Although previously Arjuna had thought that by fighting he would be engaged in an unrighteous activity, here Kṛṣṇa acting in the capacity of his guru tells him otherwise. He tells him he would incur an unrighteous reaction by not fighting. After telling Arjuna why he should fight from the angle of religious life, Kṛṣṇa tells him what will happen if he desists (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh69]:** Arjuna thinks that he will sin by fighting, but actually he will sin by neglecting his prescribed duty of fighting (Goswami, 1986).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*tataḥ sva-dharmam kīrtim ca  
hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi*

*atha*—therefore; *cet*—if; *tvam*—you; *imam*—this; *dharmyam*—as a religious duty; *saṅgrāmam*—fighting; *na*—do not; *kariṣyasi*—perform; *tataḥ*—then; *sva-dharmam*—your religious duty; *kīrtim*—reputation; *ca*—also; *hitvā*—losing; *pāpam*—sinful reaction; *avāpsyasi*—will gain.

**If, however, you do not perform your religious duty of fighting, then you will certainly incur sins for neglecting your duties and thus lose your reputation as a fighter<sup>33</sup>.**

Arjuna was a famous fighter, and he attained fame by fighting many great demigods, including even Lord Śiva. After fighting and defeating Lord Śiva in the dress of a hunter, Arjuna pleased the lord and received as a reward a weapon called *pāśupata-astra*. Everyone knew that he was a great warrior. Even Droṇācārya gave him benedictions and awarded him the special weapon by which he could kill even his teacher. So he was credited with so many military certificates from many authorities, including his adopted father Indra, the heavenly king. But if he abandoned the battle, not only would he neglect his specific duty as a *kṣatriya*, but he would lose all his fame and good name and thus prepare his royal road to hell. In other words, he would go to hell not by fighting but by withdrawing from battle.

### TEXT 34

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।  
सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ ३४ ॥

*akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni  
kathayiṣyanti te 'vyayām  
sambhāvitasya cākīrtir*

**Comment [jh70]:** Arjuna should prefer to die in the battle rather than risk infamy by abandoning his prescribed duties. In fact, he will risk losing his fame, kingdom, piety, and his chance for rendering valuable services to Kṛṣṇa (Goswami, 1986).

<sup>33</sup> Well aware of Arjuna's warrior ego, Kṛṣṇa pinches his pride. Here he tells him that Bhīṣma and Droṇa will not think that he had left the battle out of compassion, but rather out of cowardice. Should Arjuna think that even if great people like Bhīṣma and Droṇa belittled him, at least his direct enemies, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, would appreciate his compassion, Kṛṣṇa addresses this misconception in the next three verses (Tripurari, 2001).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

*maraṇād atiricyate*

*akīrtim*—infamy; *ca*—also; *api*—over and above; *bhūtāni*—all people; *kathayiṣyanti*—will speak; *te*—of you; *avyayām*—forever; *sambhāvitasya*—for a respectable man; *ca*—also; *akīrtiḥ*—ill fame; *maraṇāt*—than death; *atiricyate*—becomes more.

**People will always speak of your infamy, and for a respectable person, dishonor is worse than death.**

Both as friend and philosopher to Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa now gives His final judgment regarding Arjuna's refusal to fight. The Lord says, "Arjuna, if you leave the battlefield before the battle even begins, people will call you a coward. And if you think that people may call you bad names but that you will save your life by fleeing the battlefield, then My advice is that you'd do better to die in the battle. For a respectable man like you, ill fame is worse than death. So, you should not flee for fear of your life; better to die in the battle. That will save you from the ill fame of misusing My friendship and from losing your prestige in society."

So, the final judgment of the Lord was for Arjuna to die in the battle and not withdraw.

### TEXT 35

**भयाद्राणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।  
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ ३५ ॥**

*bhayād raṇād uparataṁ*  
*maṁsyante tvāṁ mahā-rathāḥ*  
*yeṣāṁ ca tvāṁ bahu-mato*  
*bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam*

*bhayāt*—out of fear; *raṇāt*—from the battlefield; *uparatam*—ceased; *maṁsyante*—they will consider; *tvāṁ*—you; *mahā*—*rathāḥ*—the great generals; *yeṣāṁ*—for whom; *ca*—also; *tvam*—you; *bahu*—*mataḥ*—in great estimation; *bhūtvā*—having been; *yāsyasi*—you will go; *lāghavam*—decreased in value.

The great generals who have highly esteemed your name and fame will think that you have left the battlefield out of fear only, and thus they will consider you insignificant.

Lord Kṛṣṇa continued to give His verdict to Arjuna: "Do not think that the great generals like Duryodhana, Karṇa, and other contemporaries will think that you have left the battlefield out of compassion for your brothers and grandfather. They will think that you have left out of fear for your life. And thus their high estimation of your personality will go to hell."

TEXT 36

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहुन्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।  
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ ३६ ॥

*avācya-vādāṁś ca bahūn  
vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ  
nindantas tava sāmartyam  
tato duḥkhataram nu kim*

*avācya*—unkind; *vādān*—fabricated words; *ca*—also; *bahūn*—many; *vadiṣyanti*—will say; *tava*—your; *ahitāḥ*—enemies; *nindantaḥ*—while vilifying; *tava*—your; *sāmartyam*—ability; *tataḥ*—than that; *duḥkha*—*taram*—more painful; *nu*—of course; *kim*—what is there.

Your enemies will describe you in many unkind words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful for you?<sup>34</sup>

Lord Kṛṣṇa was astonished in the beginning at Arjuna's uncalled—for plea for compassion, and He described his compassion as befitting the non-Āryans. Now in so many words, He has proved His statements against Arjuna's so-called compassion.

TEXT 37

**Comment [jh71]:** Although Arjuna thinks he can only lose by fighting, actually, win or lose, he can only gain by fighting (Goswami, 1986).

<sup>34</sup> Here Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna that not even his enemies will praise him for not fighting. In verses 31 through 36 Kṛṣṇa has explained the words *akīrti* and *asvargya* ("infamy" and "not leading to heaven"), with which he had characterized Arjuna's reluctance to fight in the second verse of this chapter (Tripurari, 2001).

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।  
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ ३७ ॥

*hato vā prāpsyasi svargam  
jivā vā bhokṣyase mahīm  
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya  
yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ*

*hataḥ*—being killed; *vā*—either; *prāpsyasi*—you gain; *svargam*—the heavenly kingdom; *jivā*—by conquering; *vā*—or; *bhokṣyase*—you enjoy; *mahīm*—the world; *tasmāt*—therefore; *uttiṣṭha*—get up; *kaunteya*—O son of Kuntī; *yuddhāya*—to fight; *kṛta*—determined; *niścayaḥ*—in certainty.

O son of Kuntī, either you will be killed on the battlefield and attain the heavenly planets, or you will conquer and enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore, get up with determination and fight<sup>35</sup>.

Even though there was no certainty of victory for Arjuna's side, he still had to fight; for, even being killed there, he could be elevated into the heavenly planets.

TEXT 38

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।  
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā  
lābhālābhau jayājayau  
tato yuddhāya yujyasva  
naivam pāpam avāpsyasi*

*sukha*—happiness; *duḥkhe*—and distress; *same*—in equanimity; *kṛtvā*—doing so; *lābha*—*alābhau*—both profit and loss; *jaya*—*ajayau*—both victory and defeat; *tataḥ*—thereafter; *yuddhāya*—for the sake of fighting; *yujyasva*—

<sup>35</sup> Kṛṣṇa declares that even if Arjuna loses the battle he will gain through fighting. In other words, heavenly gain in the case of defeat and earthly kingdom in the case of victory are side benefits of desireless adherence to *dharma* (Tripurari, 2001).

**Comment [jh72]:** Kṛṣṇa hints that Arjuna should not make these considerations of profit and loss, but should fight because He desires it (Goswami, 1986).

## Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a

engage (fight); *na*—never; *evam*—in this way; *pāpam*—sinful reaction; *avāpsyasi*—you will gain.

**Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat—and by so doing you shall never incur sin.**

Lord Kṛṣṇa now directly says that Arjuna should fight for the sake of fighting because He desires the battle. There is no consideration of happiness or distress, profit or gain, victory or defeat in the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That everything should be performed for the sake of Kṛṣṇa is transcendental consciousness; so there is no reaction to material activities. He who acts for his own sense gratification, either in goodness or in passion, is subject to the reaction, good or bad. But he who has completely surrendered himself in the activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is no longer obliged to anyone, nor is he a debtor to anyone, as one is in the ordinary course of activities. It is said:

*devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām pitṛṇām  
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇī ca rājan  
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam  
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam*

"Anyone who has completely surrendered unto Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, giving up all other duties, is no longer a debtor, nor is he obliged to anyone—not the demigods, nor the sages, nor the people in general, nor kinsmen, nor humanity, nor forefathers." (SB 11.5.41) That is the indirect hint given by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in this verse, and the matter will be more clearly explained in the following verses.

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**Comment [jh73]:** In other words, consider what should be done & do that; do not consider whether it will be enjoyable or any personal interest.

Bhagavad-gītā As It Is Chapter 2a