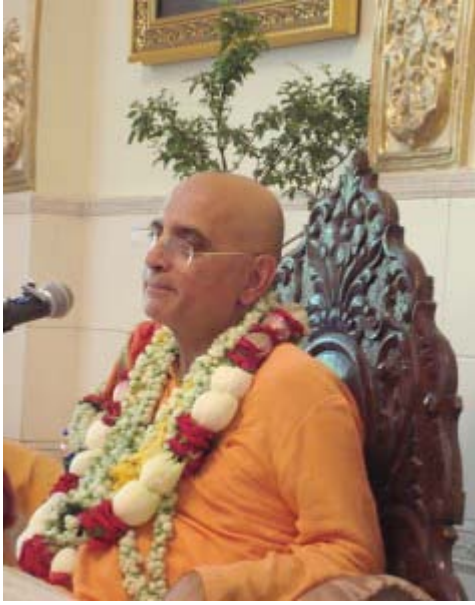


Srimad Bhagavad Gita As It Is Chapter 1-6

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Chapter 1: Observing the Armies

Srimad Bhagavad Gita comprises the 25th to the 42nd chapters of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata. Sage Vaisampayana narrated to Janamejaya the conversation between Dhrtarastra and Sanjaya about the battle of Kurukshetra. Due to the mercy of Vyasadeva, Sanjaya received divine vision and therefore although he was in Hastinapura, he could perceive the preparation of the battle in Kurukshetra and Krishna's instructions to Arjuna and narrated that to Dhrtarastra.

The lamentation that developed due to the false identification with the material body has been described in this chapter. Conditioned soul identifies him with the material body. Then only the duties of the body, society, nation etc. appear to be the eternal religion of the soul, and becoming bewildered by Maya, the illusory energy of the Lord, one is overwhelmed by lamentation, illusion and fear. The consideration of duty or religion due to false identification of the body to be the self is mano dharma.

In this first chapter of Bhagavad Gita when Dhrtarastra asked Sanjaya about the battle of Kurukshetra, Sanjaya described how Duryodhana asked Dronacharya about the strength of his army. In order to increase Duryodhana's enthusiasm, Bhishma blew his conch shell. On the other side, the Pandava army's great enthusiasm also became obvious. Before the commence of the battle, in order to figure out whom he would have to fight with, Arjuna requested his charioteer Krishna to place his chariot between the two armies. At that time, seeing that his teacher, uncle, grandfather, father in law, son, grandson, brother in law and friends etc, his friends in relation to the body, Arjuna apparently became overwhelmed with lamentation and grief, and expressing his opinions on dharma and adharma, mentioned that due to the destruction of the dynasty, the eternal family tradition will be vanquished. When the religious principles become destroyed in this way, the family will become involved in irreligion. Gradually, due to the cessation of the performance of offering food and water to the ancestors, varnasrama dharma will be lost and the entire social structure will collapse.

Chapter 2: Sankhya Yoga

In this chapter known as Sankhya Yoga, Krishna instructed Arjuna about the symptoms of atma tattva (understanding of the self) and sthita prajna (person fixed in Krishna consciousness). He mentioned that to

become bewildered at the time of crisis is not befitting a person situated in Dharma, religion, and it is disgraceful and uncivilized. Therefore Arjuna should give up that mentality and must act like a member of the royal order. In response, Arjuna said that to win the kingdom by killing his teacher and relatives can never be appropriate. Krishna replied that a wise man, who is free from the bodily concept of life and is not bewildered by false ego, never laments for anyone because the gross body made of the 5 material elements and the subtle body made of mind, intelligence and false ego are subject to creation and destruction, whereas the soul is eternal. Just as one puts on a new dress giving up the old ones, similarly a conditioned soul transmigrates from one body to another. The material body made of five material elements is temporary and can be killed; however, the proprietor of the body, the soul, is eternal, imperishable and most difficult to understand. Unconditional devotional service to the lotus feet of the Lord is the dharma of the spirit soul.

There is no loss or diminution in the devotional service of the Lord. When one performs pure devotional service, even to a small extent, he becomes free from the great fear of material existence. The vyavasayatmika buddhi – the understanding that “If I serve Krishna I will achieve the ultimate auspiciousness” should be the sole objective of a person desirous of the ultimate goal of life. Those who are foolish become attracted to the flowery words of the Vedas and giving up devotional service, accept different paths that are inferior to the devotional service of the Lord.

The karma kanda section of the Vedas deals with the three modes of material nature (goodness, passion and ignorance). The duty of a real intelligent person is to reject that and accept pure devotional service. All the results and benefits that have been described in the Vedas are there in devotional service. Those who are fruitive, those who want to enjoy the results of their actions, are indeed miserly.

When Arjuna asked about the symptoms of a self-realized soul, Krishna informed – A self-realized soul, sthita-prajna, does not have any other desire besides serving Krishna.

He is equipoised. The duality of this material nature, like auspicious and inauspicious, pleasure and pain, heat and cold etc. do not affect him.

He is averse to material activities and attached to the blissful involvement of Krishna bhakti. He is situated on the perfect spiritual path.

A conditioned soul becomes attached to the objects of sense gratification. Due to his attachment, he develops lust, from lust anger, due to anger he becomes bewildered about what to do and what not to do, and as a result of that he forgets the instructions of the scriptures and spiritual master and as a result of that his intelligence is destroyed and he achieves a state that is almost like a dead man.

One whose intelligence is completely withdrawn from sense enjoyment is situated in real knowledge.

To a conditioned soul, self discipline is like night, but a sense controlled person is awake in that. Conditioned souls are awake in sense gratification whereas to a self-realized soul that is like night.

One who has become free from all desire and has become totally detached, free from false ego and all feeling of proprietorship achieves peace. Such a person never becomes bewildered. What to speak of prolonged situation of Brahma sthiti, if one achieves that state even at the time of death, he achieves liberation. The second chapter is known as Gita-sutra because in this chapter karma and jnana have been described very clearly. However, devotional service, bhakti, has not been described so clearly. Actually the dharma of the soul is the eternal constitutional dharma of the jiva, whereas the dharma of the body is temporary and conditional.

Chapter 3: Karma Yoga

In this chapter selfless action, niskama karma, and its goal, knowledge, jnana, have been described. In the previous chapter, after hearing about the superiority of vyavasayatmika buddhi, Arjuna asked in this chapter, “Krishna, why are you then provoking me into action?”

In reply Krishna told that according to pure heart and impure heart there are two types of dedication in the practice of devotional service. The pure hearted ones become attached to sankhya, jnana yoga, and the ones with impure heart, offering the results of their actions to the Lord through niskama karma yoga, become elevated to the platform of jnana and become free from the bondage of matter due to the mercy of bhakti.

Unless one acts according to the instructions of the scriptures, one cannot achieve knowledge that is manifest in the form of inaction. One cannot stay without action even for a moment. Conditioned souls are compelled to act due to the influence of the three modes of material nature. Those who externally control the working senses but internally meditate on the objects of the senses are pretenders. Those who are not qualified to renounce their actions, for them it is better to be engaged in action. However, if the activities are not for the pleasure of Vishnu, then those actions become the cause of bondage. Therefore one must act only for the sake of serving Vishnu without being attached to the results. Those who are unable to become detached, they should act with attachment but offer the results of their actions to the Lord. When one offers foodstuffs to the demigods through the panca-maha-yajnas and accepts the remnants of the yajna, one becomes free from sinful reactions. If foodstuffs are not offered to the demigods then that becomes stealing. Those who are engaged in action but do not perform sacrifice become servants of their senses and uselessly waste their human form of life. Exalted personalities like Janaka who were perfectly situated on the platform of knowledge, jnana, achieved perfection through karma.

Common people generally follow the great personalities. Therefore Krishna instructed Arjuna that he should act without desiring for the results of his action for the sake of teaching the general population. He instructed Arjuna not to bewilder the fruitive workers. On the other hand he should teach them how to become engaged in the service of Vishnu through all their actions.

All actions are performed by the influence of the modes of material nature, however, being bewildered by false ego people consider themselves to be the doers. A person situated in perfect knowledge never considers himself to be as such.

“O Arjuna, give up all your actions to Me, remembering that I am your Supersoul and you are doing everything under My direction. In this way, becoming free from desire, attachment and lamentation fight.

“Those who always follow My instructions with faith and devoid of envy, become free from the bondage of karma. Those foolish individuals, who, due to envy do not follow My instructions, are ruined in their endeavour for perfection.” It is better to discharge one’s prescribed duty faultily than another’s duty perfectly. Destruction in course of performing one’s duty is better than engaging in another’s duty, for to follow another’s path is dangerous.

Hearing these instructions of Krishna, Arjuna again asked, “O Krishna, why does one become compelled in sinful actions even unwillingly as if engaged by force?” Krishna replied, “Lust and anger, which are born of the material mode of passion, engage one in sinful activities. On the path of liberation lust and anger are two extremely dangerous enemies. A living entity’s pure consciousness is covered by this lust and anger. In the conditioned state the living entity mistakes his senses, mind and intelligence to be him. Senses are superior to inert matter, mind is superior to the senses, intelligence is superior to mind and the one who is superior even to intelligence is the spirit soul.

“Arjuna, steadying your mind with deliberate spiritual intelligence (Krishna consciousness) conquers this formidable enemy known as lust.” The points to note in this chapter are, giving up renunciation of action that is devoid of Krishna consciousness; one should become engaged in devotional service to Krishna. Then only one will be able to become free from the dangerous bondage of karma. Lust and anger are the root cause of all sufferings. Devotional service destroys that.

Chapter 4: Jnana Yoga.

Krishna instructed Jnana Yoga or transcendental knowledge to the Sun god Vivasvan. Vivasvan gave it to Manu, who in turn gave it to Ikshvaku. In this way through a disciplic succession the saintly kings receive

transcendental knowledge by the performance of *niskama karma yoga*. Since that science got lost in course of time, Krishna revealed *jnana yoga* to Arjuna. Whenever there is a decline in religious principles and a predominant rise of irreligion, the Lord appears and establishes the principles of religion by delivering the pious and annihilating the miscreants. Taking shelter of His internal potency, He manifests His original transcendental form. His appearance and all other activities are transcendental. One who knows that fact becomes free from the cycle of birth and death by becoming aware of his relationship with Him and becoming engaged in His loving devotional service.

In order to get a quick result, the fruitive workers worship the demigods. The four divisions of human society have been created according to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the creator of this system and yet His is a non-doer.

Lusty living entities, misusing their independence, become subjected to the results of their actions produced by the three modes of material nature. Those who perform actions without any desire for enjoying their fruits, burn the results of their actions with the fire of knowledge. Those who perform their actions only for the sake of maintaining their bodies in order to render devotional service to the Lord become free from the reactions of both sinful and pious actions. When the five limbs of *yajna*, offering, ingredients, fire, performer and result become Krishna conscious, then only the *yajna* becomes successful. Such a performer of *yajna* is a real yogi. The self realized spiritual master imparts the transcendental knowledge to a disciple who approaches him with respect, inquires from him submissively and renders service unto him.

With the fire of transcendental knowledge, karma is burnt. Those who have faith in the words of the spiritual master, who are eager to serve the Lord and who have subdued the senses are eligible to receive transcendental knowledge. Those who are doubtful and have no faith in the revealed scriptures fall down. For such a doubting soul, there is no happiness either in this world or in the next. Therefore the duty of a submissive disciple is to cut this doubt with the weapon of transcendental knowledge and become engaged in the loving devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Chapter 5: Karma Yoga: Action in Krishna consciousness.

In this chapter Krishna dispelled the doubts of Arjuna about renunciation of action and yoga of devotional service, and instructed him that real renunciation is to give up attachments to fruitive actions. After attaining this state of renunciation, when one becomes engaged in activities that are meant to please Vishnu, one realizes the Supreme Personality of Godhead and achieves transcendental peace. Arjuna asked, “Between renunciation of action and engagement in devotional service, which one is better?” Krishna replied that unconditional devotional service is better than renunciation of action. Real renunciation is not just cessation of action, but rejection of the attachment to the results of action. True *sannyasa* is to become detached from both attachment and aversion.

Sankhya yoga and *karma yoga* are not different. A wise man situated in *yoga* performs his actions without attachment. On the other hand, a fruitive worker, *karmi*, is bound by the attachment of the fruits of his action. When a living entity becomes covered by *avidya*, ignorance, he considers himself to be the doer.

Those who are fixed in the Supreme attain liberation. Those who have equal vision are truly learned. Those with fixed intelligence never become perturbed by fame or infamy – they are situated in transcendence. As long as they are in their material bodies, those who tolerate the urges of desire and anger through devotional service, are truly happy in this world. One whose happiness is within, who is active in his spiritual situation and rejoices within, and whose aim is inward is a true yogi, and attains the Supreme (*Brahma nirvana*). A *karma yogi* knows that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains transcendental peace.

Chapter 6: Dhyana Yoga

Without meditating upon the transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead, just by renunciation of action, one cannot attain liberation. One who renounces desire for sense gratification is a yogi. However, one who renders devotional service to the Lord with great faith is the best among all yogis.

One who is unattached to the fruits of his work and works as if he is obligated, is in the renounced order of life (sannyasa) and is a yogi. Sannyasa and yoga have the same meaning. For a neophyte devotee, karma is the means and for an advanced devotee, cessation of all material actions is the means. One who is elevated in yoga neither acts for sense gratification nor engages in fruitive activities. For a conditioned soul, mind can either be his friend or his enemy. For one who has conquered his mind, the mind is the best friend; however, for one who has failed to do that, his mind will remain his greatest enemy. One who has conquered the mind has already reached the supersoul, i.e. he has attained the stage of Samadhi.

The purpose of yoga is to focus the mind at the lotus feet of Krishna. One who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work, is qualified to practice yoga. The mind of a yogi is unwavering. The perfection of yoga, the fruits of yoga practice, can be achieved by perseverance and tolerance. When mind becomes completely controlled through dhyana, dharana and samadhi, one can realize the self. The true yogi sees the supersoul in all living beings and every living being in the supersoul.

When Arjuna asked how the extremely restless mind can be controlled, Krishna replied that only through practice of detachment and experience of spiritual bliss can the mind be controlled. A transcendentalist engaged in auspicious activities will never be overcome by evil. The unsuccessful yogi, after many many years of enjoyment in the higher planets, takes birth in a family of righteous people or into a family of rich aristocracy. Or he takes birth in a family of yogis, who are great in wisdom, and again revives the divine consciousness from his previous life and automatically becomes attracted to the yogic principles. Such an inquisitive transcendentalist, striving for yoga, stands always above the ritualistic principles of the scriptures. A yogi, after many many births of practice, being washed of all contamination, ultimately attains the supreme goal.

A yogi is greater than the ascetic, empiricist and fruitive worker. And of all yogis, one who always worships Sri Krishna in transcendental loving service with great faith is the highest of all because he is most intimately connected to Krishna.