

Guidance of Gita - Direction & Goal of Life.

It is said that a human birth is not easy to achieve. Once you have this human body, whether it be due to karma or 'evolution', you are no longer in the hands of nature. You now have the rare capacity, called free will, to initiate a further process of evolution. The whole process, then, is in your own hands. An animal, on the other hand, is fulfilled once it survives a few years and produces an offspring. It need not do anything more than reach physical maturity in order to be an adult. For example, there is no such thing as an emotionally matured cow. To become an adult physically, you need only survive by appeasing your hunger and thirst and avoiding fatal accidents and diseases. Emotional maturity, however, does not happen in the same way. Unlike physical maturity, emotional growth is purely in your own hands. Inner maturity is a process that you have to initiate because you are a human being enjoying a faculty of choice.

THE HUMAN PURSUIT

Whatever is fundamentally sought after by every human being is called puruSartha in Sanskrit ('goals' in a broader category). Although each individual seeks something different but legitimate, All the goals or ends can be included within the four goals that everyone seeks. The universal goals most commonly sought after are security and pleasure — artha and kama. The remaining two puruSarthas — dharma and mokSa, can also be accomplished by a human being. That which gives you any kind of security — emotional, economical, or social, is called artha in Sanskrit. Artha may be in the form of cash or liquid assets, stocks, real estate, relationships, a home, a good name, a title, recognition, influence, or power of any kind. Such accomplishments provide some security for the ego. Seeking pleasure is another puruSartha, called kama in Sanskrit. It, too, takes many forms such as from the relationship at home and moral sensory gratifications to the intellectual pleasures, derived from playing certain games, solving puzzles or riddles, and studying certain bodies of knowledge. There is a third puruSartha, dharma, is a word with many meanings. Here, Dhama refers to the 'pleasure' born of harmony, the satisfaction derived from friendship, sharing, helping another

person, and so on. For example, when you are able to relieve someone's suffering, you experience a joy that is not kama. This form of pleasure is different from both artha and kama. Social service, Charity works etc., in the same way. Those who are able to discover joy in such work do so, because there is inner growth and understanding, a certain sensitivity on their part.

Living does not simply mean dragging yourself around from

day to day — from bed to work, back home and to bed again. The whole process repeats itself until the weekend comes. Then you drag yourself to some recreation in the hope of forgetting yourself — which is why recreation becomes so important. In fact, your whole life can be a recreation. If you enjoy what you do. If you do not enjoy what you do, then you have to do something to enjoy, which can be very costly. On the other hand, any pleasure that comes out of one's maturing process is a different type of joy. Not hurting someone, or doing For instance, doing right thing at the right time gives you joy — if not immediately, later. It is just doing what is to be done; it is dharma, a very big topic that we will discuss later. For now, it is enough to know that as you grow in your understanding, your dharma also grows. These, then, are three of the four puruSarthas — artha, kama and dharma. Because of the importance we place on dharma, the order can now be reversed — dharma, artha, and kama. Dharma accounts for your maturity. The more mature you are, the more dharmika you are. In order to be mature, an understanding of dharma and conformity to it become of prime importance in one's life. Thus, dharma occupies the first place among these three human ends. Without violating dharma, doing what is to be done, you pursue artha and kama, security and pleasure. This is how these three universal human pursuits are to be understood. The fourth goal or 'purusartha of human life is "moksh' or FREEDOM, freedom FROM WHAT? we shall see. MokSa is recognised as a pursuit only by a very few people in any given generation. Because a certain appreciation, a certain maturity or insight, about life and its struggles is required to understand mokSa, people do not discerningly pursue it, although everyone is in fact, always seeking freedom in one form or other from various types of undesirables. Knowing there is a reason for your sadness, you have a

sense of freedom. You had certain opinions about yourself that made you sad and now your reactions and responses have been validated properly. Your conclusions, based upon wrong notions about yourself, can now be looked at differently. By changing those opinions, you gain a freedom, as though you have thrown light upon yourself.

Swami Chinmayananda whose initiatives and efforts are well-known in making many aware of Bhagawad Gita, as 'Gita Yagna', in his introduction to Bhagawad Gita, says, it is pointing out the principle called God in all religion, reality in all philosophies, truth by the great thinkers is one and the same.

Mentally accepting situations and initiating actions is an effective method of facing and overcoming sorrowful situations such as severe afflictions and conflicts. **The unique thing that we learn from scriptural studies, is taking the sorrow one step further and asking, 'Is there a real reason for sorrow?' Lord Krishna told Arjuna there was not. How could he say this? Was it to Arjuna only ? No, it is for the entire humanity and we will see the teachings of Lord in the way that one should understand it correctly in these series of classes.**

Bhagawad Gita is a scripture with a difference that it is from the Lord Himself and blessed to the humanity as the most comprehensive 'all in one' teaching. Therefore, it can be considered as the 'User Manual' for handling and also properly making use of the highly sophisticated 'human Body Mind Complex, the hard earned gift by oneself. Gita Prescribes 'DOs' & 'DONTs' and thus, describes the 'Art of Living in the Human Body and the Science of Leaving the Body'.

In addition to all these facts, there are some Uniqueness of Bhagawad Gita as a teaching. Location of the teaching was war-field, and the context was that the Student was an extremely KNOWLEDGEABLE, Skilled, person from Royal Family but, in a Highly Confused & Stressful mind-set and the teacher was The Lord Himself. The time-period was More than 5000 years ago, Before Hinduism, Islam & Christianity started. BUT, the teaching is TILL NOW APPLICABLE and in future

also. The BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTATION is Experiencing the 'Values of the Values. Gita adds meaning and also the real value to life.

Gita opens, with the blind king DhritaraStra, sitting in his palace with his companion, Sanjaya, a minister who was blessed by Vyasa with an extraordinary audio-visual capacity. Knowing that Sanjaya had these psychic powers, the blind DhritaraStra asked,

Verse 1.1 :

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच |

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः |

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ||1||

Commentary : The two armies had gathered on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, well prepared to fight a war that was inevitable. Still, in this verse, King Dhritarashtra asked Sanjay, what his sons and his brother Pandu's sons were doing on the battlefield? why did he ask such a question?

The blind King Dhritarashtra's fondness for his own sons had clouded his spiritual wisdom and deviated him from the path of virtue. He had usurped the kingdom of Hastinapur from the rightful heirs; the Pandavas, sons of his brother Pandu. Feeling guilty of the injustice he had done towards his nephews, his conscience worried him about the outcome of this battle.

He was uncertain of the consequences of the war, yet desired to determine the fate of his sons. Therefore, he asked Sanjay about the activities of the two armies on the battleground.

Verse 1.19 :

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् |

नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो नुनादयन् || ||

Commentary : : Sanjay conveyed to Dhritarashtra, that the tremendous sound of the various conch shells from the Pandava army was shattering the hearts of his sons. Whereas, he did not mention any such reaction from the Pandavas, when the Kauravas were blowing their conch and their army was much larger. The Kauravas were fearful, as their conscience pricked them for their crimes and misdeeds. They were relying solely on their physical strength to fight the war. However, the

Pandavas were confident of victory because they felt that dharma was in their side and also they are protected by Lord Krishna.

Verse 1.28 to 31 : अर्जुन उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ।

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ॥ 28 ॥

Translation : Arjun said: O Krishna, seeing my own kinsmen arrayed for battle here and intent on killing each other, my limbs are giving way and my mouth is drying up.

Commentary : Arjun realized that all the warriors on the battlefield ready to shed blood were none other than his own relatives, friends, and family. He was filled with remorse and fearful of performing his duty of fighting this war. The cause for these sentiments was his attachment towards his bodily relatives. His affection for his bodily relatives had blinded his discriminating faculty or intellect. In the materialistic concept, we consider ourselves to be only the 'Body-Mind complex', , through which we get emotionally attached to all its bodily relatives. As this attachment is based on ignorance it carries with it the physical burdens of life like pain, sorrow, grief, and death. Tangled in the various attachments of the material world, we keep forgetting that the Supreme Lord is our only permanent support.

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ ॥

गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदहयते ।

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ 30 ॥

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।

Translation : My whole body shudders; my hair is standing on end. My bow, the 'Gandeevam' is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning all over. My mind is in dilemma and whirling in confusion; I am unable to hold myself steady any longer. O Krishna, killer of the Keshi demon, I only see omens of misfortune. I do not foresee how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle.

Verse 18.63 :

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ 63 ॥

Translation : BG 18.63: Thus, I have explained to you this knowledge that is more secret than all secrets. Ponder over it deeply, and then do as you wish.

Commentary : A secret is that knowledge which is not accessible to majority of the people. Most of the laws of Physics were a secret until a few centuries ago, and many still continue to remain so. Spiritual knowledge is profound and not realizable through direct perception. It needs to be learnt through the Guru and the scriptures. Hence, it is described as secret. In the second chapter, Shree Krishna had revealed knowledge of the spirit, which is guhya, or secret knowledge. In the seventh and eighth chapters, he explained knowledge of his powers, which is guhyatar, or more secret. In the ninth and subsequent chapters, he revealed knowledge of his bhakti, which is guhyatamam, or most secret. In the present chapter, verse 55, he revealed that he can be known in his personal form only by bhakti. Shree Krishna is now concluding the Bhagavad Gita. Having spoken the eighteen chapters, including most secret knowledge to Arjun, he now leaves the choice in Arjun's hands. He says, "I have revealed to you, profound and confidential knowledge. Now the choice is in your hands."

"The advice I have given to you is neither incorrect nor forced. Listen to it carefully, contemplate over it, and then do what you wish."

This free will to choose between available alternatives has been given to the soul by God. The freedom of choice is not infinite. One cannot decide, "I choose to be the most intelligent person in the world." Our choices are limited by our past and present karmas. However, we do possess a certain amount of free will, for we are not machines in the hands of God. Sometimes people question that if God had not given us free will then we would not have done any evil. But then we would not have done anything good either. The opportunity to do good always comes with the danger of doing evil. More importantly, God wants us to love him, and love is only possible when there is a choice. A machine cannot love for it does not have any freedom of choice. God created us with free will and provided us with choices so that we may choose him and thereby exercise our love for him. Even the all-powerful God cannot force the soul to love and surrender to him; this decision has to be made by the soul itself. Here, Shree Krishna is calling Arjun's attention to his free will and asking him to choose.

Verse : 18.73 :

अर्जुन उवाच ।

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ 73 ॥

Translation : Arjun Said: O infallible one, by your grace my illusion has been dispelled, and I am situated in knowledge. I am now free from doubts, and I shall act according to your instructions.

Commentary : At the outset, Arjun was faced with a bewildering situation, and confused about his duty in the situation. Overwhelmed with sorrow, he had sat down on his chariot, giving up his weapons. He had confessed that he could find no remedy to the grief that attacked his body and senses. But he now finds himself completely transformed, and announces that he is situated in knowledge and no longer perplexed. He has given himself to the will of God and shall do what Shree

Krishna instructed him to do. This was the impact of the message of Bhagavad Gita upon him. However, he adds tvat prasādān, meaning, “O Shree Krishna, it was not just your lecture, but your grace that dispelled my ignorance.”

Material knowledge does not require grace. We can pay the educational institute or teacher and receive knowledge in return, but spiritual knowledge can neither be purchased nor sold. It is offered through grace and received through faith and humbleness. Thus, if we approach the Bhagavad Gita with an attitude of pride, “I am so intelligent. I will evaluate what the net worth of this message is,” we will never be able to comprehend it. Our intellect will find some apparent defect in the scripture to dwell upon, and on that pretext we will reject the entire scripture as incorrect. There have been so many commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita and innumerable readers of the divine message in the last 5,000 years, but how many people have become enlightened? If we wish to truly receive this knowledge, we must not merely read it, but also attract Shree Krishna’s grace with an attitude of faith and loving surrender. Then we will know the purport of the Bhagavad Gita by his grace.

Verse 6.40 to 46 :

श्री					भगवानुवाच
पार्थ	नैवेह	नामुत्र	विनाशस्तस्य		विद्यते।
नहि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिददुर्गतिं तात गच्छ 6.40					
प्राप्य	पुण्यकृतां	लोकानुषित्वा	शाश्वतीः		समाः।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते।।6.41					
अथवा	योगिनामेव	कुले	भवति		धीमताम्।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम्।।6.42					
तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम्।					
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन।।6.43					
पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव हियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः।					
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते।।6.44					
प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः।					
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम्।।6.45					
तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः।					
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन।।6.46					

Verse 6.40 to 46 : Indeed, O Son of Pritha (Arjuna), there is no destruction for him (or her), neither here nor in the hereafter,

because any one who performs good actions (this pursuit of Self-knowledge) never reaches a bad end.

Having gained the worlds belonging to those who do good actions (and) having lived (there) for countless years, the one who did not succeed in yoga (did not gain Self-knowledge in this birth) is born in the home of the wealthy (and cultured) people who are committed to dharma.

Or he is indeed born into the family of wise yogis. A birth such as this is indeed very difficult to gain in this world.

There, he gains a connection through the intellect with that which existed in his previous body and strives for further success (in yoga (this pursuit of Self-knowledge) than that gained previously, O Joy of the Kuru family!

By this previous practice alone, he is carried away helplessly. Even as one who is desirous of the knowledge of yoga (this pursuit of Self-knowledge) goes beyond the Veda — that is beyond the karma-kanda of the Veda.

Whereas the yogi who makes an effort by means of the will (and who), cleansed of all impurities, is successful after many births. Then, he (or she) gains the ultimate end.

A yogi (the pursuer of Self-knowledge) is considered superior to those who live a life of meditation, superior even to the scholars, and superior to those who perform action. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi (the pursuer of Self-knowledge) !

Verse 18.71 :

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम्॥18.71

The person who has trust (in this sastra), and who does not find fault with (this sastra), even if he merely listens (to the Gita), even he, being liberated, would gain the auspicious worlds of those who do good karmas.

BENEFIT OF LISTENING TO THE GITA

The person under discussion here who listens to the Gita is one who has sraddha, the sraddhavan, who looks upon Krishna not as an individual, but as Paramesvara, the Lord. Further, he does not try to find fault with this gita-sastra—he is anasuya. Such a person, even by listening to this gita-sastra becomes freed. From what? It all depends. Here Bhagavan says that he would go to those auspicious worlds which are born of punya-karma. That means he is freed from papa by simple listening, without even understanding the meaning. Here shankara says, 'What to talk of the one who has the knowledge!' If he has knowledge, he is totally liberated. Even by listening to the Gita a lot of papa gets destroyed for the one who has sraddha, because these are the words of Bhagavan. Thereby, one can gain an auspicious world, subhaloka. This is one thing. Then, suppose he studies the sastra and understands the meaning. He will gain mokSa, liberation from saMsara.

THE ACARYADHARMA THAT BHAGAVAN SHOWS

Now, as a teacher who wants to know whether Arjuna has understood all that has been taught or not, Krishna asks a question. As a teacher, surely, and again as Iswara too, he should know whether Arjuna has understood or not; he should know what is going on in his student's mind. Then why does he ask the question to Arjuna? Therefore, shankara introduces the verse saying that, by asking this question, Bhagavan makes a point here. Suppose Arjuna has not understood the sastra, then Krishna wants to indicate that he should teach him again. Even though there is nothing more to teach, he can follow some other method and then teach the subject matter again. One can always be

creative and find some other method to make the person understand. That is the intention of Bhagavan when he asked this question to Arjuna here. It is the teacher's duty to take some other course of action, if the student has not understood. The student must necessarily discover that he has found what is to be found, he should feel that he is kritartha, the one who has achieved what has to be achieved, before the teaching can be considered complete.

Verse 18.78 :

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ ॥

Translation : Wherever there is Shree Krishna, the Lord of all Yog, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be unending opulence, victory, prosperity, and righteousness. Of this, I am certain.

Commentary : The Bhagavad Gita concludes with this verse delivering a deep pronouncement.

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of yoga, wherever there is Arjuna, the one who bears the bow, there wealth, victory, various riches, and definite justice are present. This is my conclusion.

Sagnjaya says, 'Wherever, Krishna is, there is sri, wealth and vijaya, victory. And wherever Arjuna is, there too there is wealth and victory.' And when he says wherever Krishna is, he means, in whose heart Krishna is. Arjuna here is called the one who carries a bow, dhanurdhara. That is significant here and later we will look into it further. Wherever Krishna is, all wealth will be. Nowhere else; because LakSmi is inseparable from Krishna. This wealth is not ordinary wealth, but includes all kinds of wealth, bhuti—moral wealth, material wealth, spiritual wealth, etc. They will all be there for the one who has Krishna and Arjuna in his heart. It is certain, dhruva. There is no failure possible. Then again, justice, niti, will also certainly be there. That means there will be order in terms of dharma. Justice will be there, because Krishna is dharma. Wherever there is Krishna and Arjuna, there will be wealth, victory, and justice. In this way, Sagnjaya concludes the whole conversation.

WHEREVER THERE IS PROPER ATTITUDE AND EFFORT, LORD'S GRACE IS ALWAYS THERE

Let us look now at why Sagnjaya calls Arjuna, dhanurdhara, the one who wields the bow. Mere Arjuna will not achieve victory. He must be ready to do what is to be done. Only then can there be victory, etc. The unknown factor is controlled by invoking Iswara. Real control is taking Iswara into account. If you want to have control without taking Iswara into account, you are in trouble. Not all the variables can be controlled, but if you take the controller on your side, you have surrendered, and that attitude makes life simple. Then karma becomes yoga, and because of that, there is a grateful acceptance, prasada-buddhi, of whatever comes. Therefore, there is no failure; there is always victory.