

## **Bhagavad Gita**

When a person does not know what their innate tendencies are, what their natural talents are, and what their basic drive is, they are likely to miss the mark in life. For such a person the rediscovery of their true Self brings a joy they have never experienced before. (1)

Egos will burst naturally when once they ripen. (399)

Devotion verticalizes the mind and action horizontalizes it. (4)

The parables and dialogues in the Upanishads are given a more cogent and philosophically structured presentation in the Gita. For all practical purposes, the Gita can be considered the essence of the Upanishads. (8)

Realization is not a static event; it is a continuous process. In all states and stages of life, the higher Self is to be realized in the lower self, and the lower self is to be seen as an expression of the higher Self. (9)

The relation between a question and its answer is analogous to the relation between a disciple and Guru. A silly question can evoke only a commonplace answer, while a serious question, in its turn, can open up rare secrets. Each disciple gets, as it were, a Guru according to their own merit. (13)

A flame that flickers has on one hand the flame itself, and on the other hand the wind which makes it flicker, as something extraneous. In a windless place, however, where the extraneous factors causing the flickering are absent, the flame just burns on. Establishment of unity is a similar state. It requires only the removal of what is extraneous to the situation. (164)

Most people think of ends and means dualistically. When taken separately, “means” can become a painful anticipation, and can lead one ultimately even to frustration. When ends and means are unitively conceived there is a continuous and progressive realization of the end in the application of the means. For instance, when a child runs after a ball, its game is a “means” to gain the “end” of happiness. Here, ends and means have no real dichotomy between them. Happiness is not an award given at the end of the game. Right from the beginning, when the child kicks as well as misses the ball, it is in a state of happiness which is the natural end of the game. In other words, the game provides to the child a yoga of ends and means. The Bhagavad Gita treats the whole of life as a game presided over by the Supreme Lord, Ísvarah. (9)

When the mind is tied up with the symbols of analysis and cluttered with discursive thoughts, it cannot have any streak of intuition. Ratiocination and analytical reasoning are therefore to be dimmed or even abandoned in contemplation. Only in this state can the subject intuitively identify themselves with the object. (G 178)

The noumenal and the phenomenal can be compared to pure light and the rainbow, respectively. Pure light by itself has no form and color, whereas the rainbow is a colorful spectrum with an arc-like shape. To a person’s uncritical mind the rainbow, being visible and objective, will appear as positive, whereas pure light is what they might know only by mere inferential abstraction. On the other hand, someone with a discerning mind sees the rainbow as a negative phenomenon which falsifies the true nature of light. The relation between light and the rainbow is of an independent factor and a dependent accident. Light can shine on its own, whereas the rainbow cannot exist without the light even for a second. On that account, one can treat light as real and the rainbow as unreal. In spite of this philosophical verity, the fact remains that the rainbow is part of our experience. There must be something in the very

nature of pure light that accounts for the emergence of the rainbow. To that extent it cannot be unreal. In the same way, the phenomenal, while being entirely dependent on the noumenal, cannot be dismissed as unreal. That is why Vedantins call the phenomenal world *sadasat*, meaning “real-unreal”. (G 181)

Every possible value in the contemplative context is so rich with the presence of the Absolute that it is not necessary to idealize or idolize any one of them particularly. (220)

Situations presenting themselves to us without any initiative on our part, and as a result of our most natural and correct behavior, should be taken as the will of God. (241)

Long version:

Situations presenting themselves to us without any initiative on our part and as a result of our most natural and correct behavior, should be taken as the will of God. That very feeling will give us a sense of our togetherness with God. Even though a situation looks difficult and beyond us, this trust in the Highest will give us new hope and courage, and unsought aid coming from all directions will enhance our trust in God’s grace. When this trust and consequential fulfillment increases day by day, we know we are on the right track and we progress. In such a case no one will have any doubt in their mind of what is happening. (G, 241)

Devotion or practice in the Gita is not to be confused with indications in such texts as the Nārada *Bhakti Sūtras* and Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*, which should be looked upon as *darśanas* (distinct systematic visions of reality) on their own, with very little in common with the pure contemplation of the Absolute which is implied in this chapter (XII). (G 287)

Unfortunately, many hallucinatory malfunctions of the mind easily pass for mystical experiences, and pseudo-yogis and pretentious

spiritualists claim the experience of nondual visions. As *brahmavidya*, the Gita is an uncompromising science, not admitting into its scope anything that refutes sound reason. As a *yoga-sastra* it attempts to be precise and truthful in comprehending every detail of the perceptual and conceptual world, so that the aspiring yogi or spiritual seeker will not take any false step in advancing toward the final realization of nondual identity with the Absolute. (G 289)

True transcendence does not cause the least violation of the inner integrity of the empirical nature of the transactional world. (290)

When the transparency of the mind is not affected by any kind of emotional crisis, intellectual conflict, or psychotic or other pathological affectation, it gives a spontaneous expression of its own truthful nature. (353)

Liberation is nothing short of the emancipation of consciousness from its identification with the ego. This is the problematic situation of every embodied person. (417)

The conjunction of intelligence and mind works for the good when the mind becomes subservient to intelligence. On the other hand, when intelligence becomes a tool in the hands of the mind, which is already vitiated by the colorations of past impressions, it loses its efficacy to release the lower self from bondage and becomes *durmati*, perverted intelligence. (426)

The triad of the Absolute (*sat-cit-ānanda*) and the triad of nature (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) are complementary aspects of the Absolute, referring respectively to its positive and negative aspects. The former unifies and the latter differentiates. (434)

God-realization is not the exclusive privilege of any chosen people.... There are as many ways of realizing God as there are

people. The only condition is to establish an absolute bipolarity which puts the individual at ease in working out his or her course of life in a meaningful way. (440)

The sin spoken of here has not even the remotest resemblance to the Christian concept. Its significance is one of epistemological import. True artists, when given wholeheartedly to their performance, experience a oneness which is neither inside nor outside. Like that, in unitive action the purpose of acting ceases to be an extraneous goal in the future which separates a person from their happiness. Instead, happiness prevails all through. The “sin” spoken of here is only a potential frustration or regret that is likely to be produced by a certain course of action. (441)

What is translated here as “duty belonging to one by birth” is *sahajam karma* in the original Sanskrit. *Sahajam* literally means congenital. Our potentials are genetic. There is scope for enlarging and developing these potentials into skills with education and training. However, development is also restricted by these same inherent genetic factors. *Karma* is only an outward expression of what is potential.

The genetic theory of the Gita is not mechanistic. Apart from the physiologic or biologic structuring of the genes, which come from a family tree, the Gita also takes into account the continuation of a personality trait from a previous life. The concept of previous lives is also quite different from the popular belief of a linear continuation of an ego-unit from one embodied life to another. As seen here, death marks the return of the essence of a person into *Íśvara*, the creative energy of perpetual becoming. Birth marks the reemergence of that essence as restructured by the cosmic creative intelligence. As a result of this we may find a genius born to parents of mediocre ability, or a dull-headed offspring to a genius. The social set-up of the environment in which any person is born does not indicate their natural or inherent abilities or aptitudes.

Thus we can say with confidence that this verse does not support the claims of the caste proponents at all. (442)

Ego is the link between *buddhi*, intellect, and the consolidated memory of the individual, *citta*, which is intimately connected with the incipient memories of the past. When the ego is employing reason, the identification of the ego and the intellect is so close that one fails to distinguish between the two. In such a state, the intellect becomes concerned with the promotion of one incipient memory after another. This is called *saṅga* or *sakti*, attachment. *Buddhi* is the true light of the Self. When it attains its freedom from bondage with ego and memory, it is called *asaktabuddhi*, unattached intelligence. Mind is too feeble to know the Absolute. Only intellect can comprehend it. That is why Krishna insists on freeing the intellect from the entanglements of the mind. (444)

When a person sees the stump of a tree in moonlight as a ghost, it is evident that the ghost has no substance. If it is argued that by a fragment of the tree the ghost came into existence, you are trying to establish the existence of two entities, that is, the tree and the ghost. When you see the ghost you have no idea of the tree. When you see the tree, there is not even the slightest trace of the ghost in it. Again, when you look at it from a distance, your timidity may suggest a ghost to your mind. If you want others to believe that what you experience is a confection of ghost and tree, that is far-fetched. Out there in the moonlight the tree alone is. The ghost is in your mind. (445)

Verticalizing one's self-awareness is one of the greatest secrets of the Upanishads. The first step in it is to identify one's mind with an absolutist vision and attitude. In the Chandogya Upanishad (3:18:1), it says, "One should reverence the mind as Brahma."<sup>i</sup> When Krishna says, "Become one in mind with Me", he is calling Arjuna's attention to the difference in their attitudes. Even though Krishna and Arjuna were both placed in the same situation, Arjuna

became filled with a great sense of guilt and was very agitated. Krishna, on the other hand, stood there smiling with an even mind. These two minds are, respectively, one subjected to relativistic influence and the other free of all taints of relativism. (450)

Narayana Guru speaks of a union that is coming from two sides. It is a complementary function, as in the coming together of a bolt and a nut. On the bolt are the threads. Their complementary grooves are on the nut. There has to be a correspondence between the thread and the groove. There also has to be the application of a progressive, gentle force of turning the bolt or the nut in the right direction. This does not mean forcing one's way, but rather submitting to the requirements of the situation. Thus, the final union has in it both a positive and a negative attitude which cancel out the pairs of opposites. Leaving all *dharma* is negative, and taking refuge in the Absolute is positive. Both these are happening simultaneously. In the highest sense nothing is happening. It is only like waking up from a dream. No effort is needed to leave the persons, things, and situations of the dream when consciousness emerges from it to the wakeful state. Similarly, when one recognizes the universality of Being, the several demands and peculiarities of the individuated persona vanish like mist in the sunlight. (452)

Love is like an alchemy. The intimacy of love corrodes the dividing line between Self and non-Self. Like a river flowing into an ocean and merging with it, the limit of consciousness of the finite Self becomes absorbed into the limitless expanse of universal appreciation. (447)

A botanist examining a flower to derive detailed information about its calyx, petals, ovary, and mode of pollination is different from a lover, moved by its beauty, offering it as a precious token of love to the beloved. The kind of knowledge recommended here is not

the punditry of a scholar but the intimations of immortality that grow between an aspirant and God. (448)

Our personality is caught between free will and the force of necessity. It would be fatal not to recognize one or the other. (448)

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