

How the Bhagavad Gita Can Change Your Life

I'm not a political pundit this evening, except perhaps in relation to atmi-politics (Real Three Politik). But ever since I received the message that this is the *Gita* moment (the actual time that the *Gita* teaching and information are most relevant to), I've considered the *Bhagavad Gita* equivalent to what a Tantric Buddhist (at least a Tibetan Buddhist) would call a *terma*—a teaching in a way placed in a time capsule. It can be found much later than when it was originally conceived and discovered at a moment when it will be most useful to humanity.

After meditating on the fact that this is the *Gita* moment, this consciousness fell through a trap door and went into free-fall, passing through the text of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which I hadn't read in a long time—probably way too long. But what I recognized was that the *Gita* is teachings specifically designed to help Sat Yogis (in the generic sense of that term) at the end of Kali Yuga. The story is not about some early Kali-Yuga or Copper-Age war, it's about this global conflict. But its focus is on the microcosm. The relevance of the *Bhagavad Gita* is that each one of us in our own fractal of reality is in a position equivalent to that of Arjuna at the beginning of the *Gita* story.

Actually, that's not entirely true. It's the story of Arjuna and Krishna in the *Mahabharata*, in a chapter before the *Gita* starts. It's in that chapter that Krishna comes to the generals of the two sides of the battle that's about to be fought between the Light and the Dark (the Pandavas and the Kauravas). I don't remember if he flipped a coin or whatever, but Arjuna got to have first choice of what Krishna offered. He said, “You can either have all the high-tech weapons that my divine intelligence can provide, or you can have me on your side and I'll drive your chariot but I won't fight. I'm nonviolent, all right? I won't be of any use to you in the battle, except as someone who can offer teachings right now.” . . . Who wants teachings in the middle of a battle and can take them in? But in this kind of a battle, yes. Why? Let's understand this symbolically.

Arjuna represents your soul—every soul that has made the choice to have Krishna in its chariot, not having chosen all the high-tech advantages that modern society could offer, not interested in (let's say) cell phones and computers and all of the digital apparatus and temptations and offerings, etc. . . . but Consciousness itself. So, if you've made the choice that you want to expand your consciousness as much as possible at this time—to actually be able to have God-Consciousness as your chariot driver (in other words, if the chariot is the body, it means that you've agreed to be possessed by God and that you've actually given God-Consciousness the reins to determine your destiny)—you're now just a passenger in your own vehicle . . . you're no longer the driver.

This is the situation that Arjuna has put himself in, and that's already a very rare attainment. How many people would be willing not to be in the driver's seat of their own life, but to give it all to the Will of God and have faith and complete trust without any desire for control? So Arjuna is that kind of a noble spiritual warrior who wants to have the Infinite Intelligence, even though that will require radical surrender and trust. And it's in that state where Arjuna then becomes a real disciple of God, who becomes his *satguru* in the sense of the source of inner wisdom and willpower and capacity for accurate action in the world.

And then Krishna begins to give instructions. I feel it's my duty, actually, to read you the instructions that Krishna gives to Arjuna, because I believe that these are instructions specifically for yogis—not for everyone . . . they won't appeal to those who don't want what God-Consciousness can offer, preferring what technology and the ego intellect can offer. What he gives is very different from what you find in the *Ashtavakra Samhita*, which is why I want to put that one on pause and go to this. That one is very paradoxical and begins already in nonduality. So I think it's very difficult for an ego-identified consciousness to relate to and make use of the *Ashtavakra*. But these teachings of the *Gita* are put in very dualistic form. They are directed to the individual person, not to the Self that animates the person. So I think that the teachings of the *Gita* are much more designed to take you step by step from what would be called by the Shaivites the *anavamala*, through the *karmamala* and the *mayamala*, all the way to being free of ego identification. So I want to read a little bit from the beginning of those instructions, which start in chapter two at verse 11.

There are many, many translations of the *Gita*, OK? I chose one to use tonight, not necessarily because it's the best or the most accurate. It's relatively so, although I find a few mistakes and a few dubious translations that I think could be improved. But what's good about this translation (by Winthrop Sargent, by the way, in case anyone does want to get a copy) is that he includes the Sanskrit with other English options, so it allows (let's say) meditation upon its meaning at a deeper level than a straight English translation might. I have found that every translation I've read so far makes certain mistakes, or at least what I consider to be inaccurate ways of expressing a point. But they all make different mistakes and the mistakes that one makes, another gets right. So you can compare different translations and come up with a *madhyamaka*, let's say.

OK, I'm going to start reading a few of these and see if they are helpful to you:

Verse 11: “The blessed Lord spoke: You have mourned those that should not be mourned, and yet you speak words as if with wisdom; the wise do not mourn for the dead or for the living.” OK? So that's your first instruction as a yogi: You are not to mourn. And I would say that that would include not mourning for mistakes you've made in the past in your own life, or what you consider to be mistakes or losses or traumas or choosing to climb the wrong mountain.

Verse 12: “Truly there was never a time when I was not . . . [this is God-Consciousness speaking to you, saying, ‘I (which is yourself) am eternal’] . . . there was never a time when I was not, nor you, nor any of these lords of men: and neither will there be a time when we shall cease to be from this time onwards.” In other words, consciousness is eternal. He's speaking to the soul, because obviously your body is not eternal, nor is your ego identity; but your soul, yes—when the soul knows itself.

Verse 13: “Just as in the body childhood, adulthood, and old age happen to an embodied being, so also he (the embodied being) acquires another body. The Wise One is not deluded about this.” In other words, the action of birth and death and rebirth is not really of any interest to the yogi who is focused on the changeless consciousness that is unborn.

Verse 14: “Physical sensations, truly, Arjuna, causing cold, heat, pleasure or pain, come and go and are impermanent. So manage to endure them, Arjuna.” OK? Now that's an important

instruction. You've got to endure whatever life brings you, and you've got to be strong enough to do that. Easily said but how? Well, that's what the instructions are going to explain.

Verse 15: "Indeed, the man whom these (i.e. the sensations) do not afflict, O Arjuna, the wise one, to whom happiness and unhappiness are the same, is ready for immortality." Now that's quite an attainment if happiness and unhappiness are the same for you. The only way that that could be true is if you have discovered a higher kind of bliss that is not an impermanent state of situational happiness or the loss thereof, but is based on that which cannot be lost. Are you basing your life on that? That alone will give you the strength to endure.

Verse 16: So this is a discovery that you will make if you meditate deeply enough. "It is found that the unreal has no being; it is found that there is no non-being of the real. The certainty of both these propositions is indeed surely seen by the perceivers of truth." So what is Real is that which is eternal, that does not die. What dies, what is impermanent, is not actually real. Don't mistake it for the Real. And it is fated to suffer, because the unreal cannot reach the nonduality of happiness and unhappiness in a way that transcends both.

Verse 17: "Know that that by which all this universe is pervaded is indeed indestructible; no one is able to accomplish the destruction of the imperishable." So the universe is pervaded by an energy. Everything in the universe, including your body, is pervaded by the same energy; and it's the energy of Consciousness. Can you feel the energy that pervades your body and your mind? It's a radiance that is extremely subtle but extremely potent if you attune to it, and it will make you realize you are indestructible.

Verse 18: "These bodies inhabited by the eternal, the indestructible, the immeasurable embodied Self, are said to come to an end. Therefore fight, Arjuna!" So what does Arjuna really have to fight except his own tendency to choose the unreal . . . his own tendency to choose a temporary happiness that will bring an unhappiness, that will bring a fate of loss of the eternal, absolute, blissful Self? So the fight, in other words (if you wonder who is the opponent in this battle), the battle is the soul fighting in the service of God. Fighting against what? Against your own ego, against your own tendencies to remain ignorant of what is Real and to live as if you were just the character in the unreal cosmic drama that is only a dream in the mind of God.

Verse 19: "He who imagines this (the embodied Self) the slayer and he who imagines this (the embodied Self) the slain, neither of them understands this (the embodied Self) does not slay, nor is it slain." A yogi at the very threshold of joining a wisdom school takes a vow of nonviolence, *ahimsa*. Right? So what is being fought here is actually the tendency toward violence that is inherent in the ego—violence in the sense of anger, violence in the sense of will to dominate the other (to possess, to control, to appropriate). The Real Self has no violence and no relationship to the unreal any longer. It is not in the part of either subject or object or of a being in the world, even though its vehicle is in fact serving God through action in the world. But that action is actually entirely the will of God, who is driving everything.

Verse 20: "Neither is this (the embodied Self born) nor does it die at any time, nor, having been, will it again come not to be. Birthless, eternal, perpetual, primeval, it is not slain when the body

is slain.” (*Primeval* meaning from the beginning to the end of time, forever present.)

Verse 21: ”He who knows this, the indestructible, the eternal, the birthless, the imperishable, in what way does this man cause [anyone] to be slain, Arjuna? Whom does he slay?” Once you realize that there is only the Self that is inhabiting and animating everyone, and that the Self is deathless, there is a kind of innocence that takes over one's consciousness and sees only the God-Self in every being because there's no more interest in the unreal.

Verse 22: “As, after casting away worn out garments, a man later takes new ones, so, after casting away worn out bodies, the embodied Self encounters other, new ones.” Here I would like to take this more inwardly. What you are constantly uncovering are new potential ways of understanding yourself and presenting yourself in the world, and transmitting deeper and higher vibrational frequencies of the total consciousness that is your potentiality into the world as a service of the unification of the morphic field with the mind of God once more.

Verse 23: So he says, “Weapons do not pierce this (the embodied Self), fire does not burn this, water does not wet this, nor does the wind cause it to wither.”

Verse 24: “This cannot be pierced, burned, wetted, or withered; this is eternal, all pervading, fixed [by God]; this is unmoving and primeval [forever the same luminous beauty].”

Verse 25: “It is said that this is unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchanging. Therefore, having understood in this way, you should not mourn.” So what Krishna has just taught is unthinkable. The eternal Self cannot be an object of thought, because that Self can never be objectified. The Self is what knows but can never be known except *by* the Self. And the universe is its own reflection that brings to its Self its own projected secrets for it to recognize again after having forgotten.

Verse 26: “And moreover [says Krishna] even if you think this to be eternally born or eternally dead, even then you should not mourn for this, Arjuna.”

Verse 27: “For the born, [yes,] death is certain; for the dead there is certainly birth. Therefore, for this, inevitable in consequence, you should not mourn.”

Verse 28: “Beings are such that their beginnings are unmanifest, their middles are manifest, and their ends are unmanifest again. What complaint could there be over this?” Does everyone accept the wheel of life and death? Does everyone accept that you can choose at any time to transcend the wheel, to get off the wheel, to be liberated from the birth-and-death cycle, just by realizing you were never born and never die? But are you willing to do that and give up the identity of the one who is born and will die? That's what most cannot imagine or contemplate.

Verse 29: “Someone perceives this as a wonder, another declares it as a wonder, another hears of this as a wonder; but even having heard of this [all of these teachings], no one knows it.” Right? If you're still thinking it, you don't yet know it. If it's what you want, you don't yet know it.

Verse 30: “This, the embodied Self [that you are now], is eternally indestructible [and this Self is] in the body of all [beings], Arjuna. Therefore you should not mourn for any being [including yourself].

Verse 31: “And, perceiving your own caste duty [this is interesting . . . perceiving your duty], you should not tremble. Indeed, anything superior to righteous battle [with the dark, with the demonic, with the ego, anything superior to that victorious battle] does not exist for the *kshatriya* (man of warrior caste) [for the one of noble warrior level of consciousness].” If you are a spiritual warrior, you will not shirk this battle; but very few will actually engage in this fight.

Verse 32: “And if by good fortune they gain the open gate of heaven, happy are the *kshatriyas*, Arjuna, when they encounter such a fight.”

Verse 33: “Now, if you will not undertake this righteous war, thereupon having avoided your own duty and glory, you shall incur evil.” This is interesting.

Verse 34: “And also people will relate your undying infamy; and, for one who has been honoured, disgrace is worse than dying.” Now, is he talking about disgrace in front of other people? No, what he's talking about is your own superego shaming you, giving you a sense of guilt, self-betrayal, and failure. The battle involves killing the superego even before you kill the ego, so you are not subject to the attacks of guilt and shame. Now you might think, “Well then, if I kill the superego, I can stop the battle.” But, once you kill the superego, which is actually the hard part of the battle, the ego is easy pickings. It's the superego who rules your consciousness and is able to create anxiety, desire, fear, attachment, and the ability or inability to think coherently, because the superego is an agency of the Censor. And, of course, there are many superego images; it's a whole army of superegos, not just one.

Verse 37: “Either, having been slain, you shall attain heaven, or, having conquered, you shall enjoy the earth. Therefore stand up, Arjuna, resolved to fight.” Well, to have been slain really simply means that you have sacrificed yourself completely to the service of God and you've been consumed by God. That's the only way you can be slain, and that's a very blissful way. Otherwise, you become the one who is able to guide the process of the battle itself for other warriors.

Verse 38: “Holding pleasure and pain to be alike, likewise gain and loss, victory and defeat, then engage in battle! Thus you shall not incur evil.” So that's very interesting. To win the battle you have to no longer believe there's any such thing as winning the battle or losing the battle, because the battle itself is a dualistic illusion that you are here to overcome. Yet you can only overcome it paradoxically by engaging in the battle.

But what is the battle? It's to remember who you are, not who your ego mind thinks you are. Because what is the ego? It's just cardboard. It's a flatland character whose concerns and obsessions never lead to fulfillment but always to more disappointment and a sense of having lost one's way. What's needed is a level of intelligence that transcends that of the character and a power to endure that comes only through integration of the nonduality of the Real and the duality

of its reflection and expression in this field of battle—the theodrama in which we go through this ultimate rite of passage into God-Realization, Self-Realization.

Are you fully committed to the battle and willing to follow all the instructions? These are the first, more superficial, instructions. In every chapter they get deeper and more subtle until the yogi is able to have such a purified intelligence that the absolute Real is completely and consciously permeating his/her consciousness continually—continuously.

So the process is really the essence of alchemy. You have to make the chariot that you are in with Krishna (with the God-Self, with your your own innermost presence) . . . you have to make it alchemically sealed—hermetically sealed, they say (without leakage). Then the power of God-Consciousness will incinerate with its microwave frequency the standing waves of ego self-image and tendencies and paradigms and personal desires and beliefs. All of that will disappear until there is a complete emptiness that will then be filled by the inconceivable Self . . . *if* you are willing to go through the process. Very few are . . . one in millions will even find this interesting, let alone be able to override the drive for jouissance, for sensory enjoyment, for the fulfillment of desire and the spewing of anger, for the attainment of objects of desire to be possessed and made use of in service to the ego rather than God. This is the decisive moment when you have to choose what life is about (what you are here for) and not waste a moment in full-speed-ahead fulfillment of the instructions of God.

So that's the teaching I was told to transmit for this evening. How many people felt inspired by this teaching? Yes? Good.

Namaste,
Shunyamurti