

The *Bhagavad Gita* at the End of Time

Well, we're all finished with anxiety, right? Done. What's next to check off on our bucket list? There shouldn't be too many other problems after that, really.

Let's move forward now in, let's say, a more heightened state of spiritual emergency and urgency, because that's actually an appropriate state to be in at this moment. In fact, if you're not in a state of emergency, that's an emergency.

So, tonight let's return to this very important guidebook that is called the *Bhagavad Gita*, to help us deal with this spiritual emergency in the most accurate way but to approach it in a wider context than is usually given or applied to the contents of the text. In some way, we have to make it relevant to the current ego structure, which did not exist at the time when this instruction manual was written. We can learn a lot just from understanding how we respond to this approach in relation to our general attitudes as functioning individual characters within the holographic cinema in this very dense moment of the closing act of the theodrama.

So what is the *Gita* an instruction manual for exactly? Who has some ideas about that?

Coming out of delusion.

Yeah, I think that's a very good answer. So let's posit that, at the time when the *Bhagavad Gita* was a bestseller in ancient India, this was like the standard textbook that would be read by every student during their formative years in order to prepare them for the challenges of life. At the time, it wasn't *a* process of individuation being described, but *the* process. But I write “a” now, because we're reading the *Gita* not at the beginning of Kali Yuga but at the end. And since that time, many different alterations of the process have been suggested and mandated by various cultural shifts that produced movements in relation to the question of individuation as the goal of life. OK? Even the meaning of the word “individuation” at that time bears little resemblance to how that signifier was used more recently by Carl Jung, for example, or how that term is used by cognitive therapists and many existential or analytic philosophers of the 20th and 21st century.

So we need to understand what is meant by “individuation” as the goal of life and what is the process—the original process (let's call this one the *primal standard process*). As we analyze it, we will discover that the particular challenge that individuation faces us with was the crossroads of the ancient world. In other words, every culture was dealing with that question. We can see the similarity, for example, in how the Greeks dealt with it, how the Abrahamic religions (especially later Christianity) reacted to it, modified it, and dealt with it—even the difference that developed between the Vedic yogis and the Buddhist yogis. And, of course, there was another answer or variant by the Daoist yogis. But at that point there was agreement on what individuation was about, even though there were different approaches to its practical achievement.

So what is meant by individuation in the *Gita*? It's expressed by that painting that I showed you—by the scene that occurs in the first chapter of the *Gita*, which is Arjuna's agreement to give the reins of his chariot to Krishna, right? So what does that mean symbolically, and what

did it mean to the people who were taught the *Gita* 3,000 years ago? Arjuna was the individual consciousness of the character identified with the body. Krishna symbolized (symbolizes, even now) the Godhead. So within Arjuna's chariot (in other words, his temple, his cranium) was the individual character as a center of consciousness and a second center, which was the consciousness of what we in that last retreat referred to as the *fundamental mind*. The Greeks would call it the *nous*, the Mind of God; the Buddhists might have called it the Buddha Mind or *nirvana* or emptiness or suchness or the *tathāgatagarbha*, depending on the particular school within that tradition; and, of course, Shiva within the Shaivite tradition, or Shakti within the Shakta tradition. What we're dealing with in this symbol is the understanding that we have both a particular self and a universal self, but that they have become separated—they have become split apart. They are now two different centers; and, so long as they are two different centers, there will be a wavering in how the individual center functions depending on changes in its relationship to this second center.

So what does individuation mean? The word itself means to become undivided. That means that the individual self of the character and the Supreme Self, the Infinite Self, must be indivisible. They must be united in such a way that they can no longer be sundered—they can no longer be separated. That's individuation. When you say, "I and the Father are one," or "*shivoham*," or however it gets expressed in the different traditions, it's the same concept. That's individuation, and life doesn't begin until that has been attained—that union. This is why Ramana is always speaking of our problem as split mind, right? (We even have a split-mind rock, so we remember that the split in our minds must be healed, it must be overcome.)

Well, that's what the *Gita* is instructing us to do. But that instruction, after a certain amount of time, no longer worked practically—or it worked for fewer and fewer disciples of that approach. That's what caused the split between approaches—not just between West and East but between Ascetic and Tantric, for example, and between Vedic and Buddhist . . . all the various splits in wisdom schools to accommodate various shifts in the intensity, density, and assemblage-point-level of consciousness in the cultural norms of that particular era in which a new modality would have to be invented in order to serve the population in a practical way. This is why the wheel of dharma had to turn so many times in Buddhism, and it's also why it didn't turn properly in many of the other traditions.

So let's just approach it from where we left off, which as far as I remember was **chapter two, verse 38**. I think that's where we stopped, but—even if it isn't—that's where I want to start, because I think this verse is the bedrock of the *Gita*. This is the statement of the problem or the challenge, OK? Now remember, when people were reading this, they understood very clearly that Arjuna represents everyone (every human, every character) and that Krishna is in the cranium of every character, but that not every character recognizes that fact and is seeking individuation. The only thing that separates Arjuna from everyone else is that Arjuna is conscious of that split and of the need to heal it—the urgency of healing it—because he will not be able to deal with the challenges of the battle he faces ahead if he doesn't accomplish this now.

That's the spiritual emergency that Arjuna realizes he is in and why then the instructions could work. But if you don't realize you're in that situation, none of this text will have any value for you. You have to recognize that you are facing an equally challenging battle that cannot be

avoided, despite all of those ten defense mechanisms that we know don't work. (They don't work when the battle starts, at least.)

So here's the verse. This is Krishna giving what I would say is the core instruction to Arjuna:

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.”

OK, what do I have to do? Arjuna gets the word: All I have to do is realize that pleasure and pain are the same. They're not different. That's easy. And victory and defeat are not different. Success and failure are not different. Gain and loss are not different. . . . Is that possible? Are you able to be in that state of consciousness where that is true? I don't think it's possible any longer for the current ego structure that has been manufactured in the 20th and 21st centuries (as we quaintly call this period, though it has nothing to do with those numbers), but this was what everyone was called upon to achieve. I think everyone needs to answer two questions about this: One, is it feasible to be in that state where there's literally no difference between pleasure and pain? Is that possible phenomenologically, psychologically, practically? And, two, if it is possible but not actualized, how important would it be for you to reach that state? Would you even want to be in that state?

It's interesting, in the Hermetic tradition of the West (and in the West, I think that the core mainstream esoteric teaching tradition is that of Hermeticism . . . we'll go much more into that as we approach the differences between East and West in regard to this question) . . . what they said was that the teaching of the Torah (the Bible, the Pentateuch, call it what you will) is accurate in Bereshit (in Genesis), and that human history can be divided into a before and after—before Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge (let's call it belief in good and evil) and after. Now, the “before” was kind of dealt with as if it wasn't a lot of time, while most of history is the aftermath. In the East, it's the reverse. It says, “No, we didn't start eating that apple until halfway through the cycle of time. We had thousands of years in that state where we had not touched the concept of good and evil. Not only did it not arise in our minds that there was a difference between good and evil, but the concepts (the words ‘good’ and ‘evil’) did not exist.”

Now, that state was defined in the Bible as a state of total innocence. Whereas in the aftermath, when you have taken in that belief as an axiom, then your entire consciousness is dyed by that belief. And I think the word “dyed” has many different aspects to the signifier, but it has definitely been colored by it—it's been darkened. And this is really the original meaning of why Krishna was called Shyam Sunder (“dark and yet beautiful”), because he started out as the god prior to the eating of that forbidden fruit but also had to go through the period after that, when he was blue. (Remember, Shiva's throat turns blue but not the rest of him, and then he's able to transform the poison into nectar.) But it's this darkness of the belief in good and evil that will always bring about a state of guilt, of self-judgment, that will then undermine the capacity to achieve individuation. The judgment of God as superego will now act as the wall that separates you from yourself.

But interestingly, I think we are now in a period of “after the after”—a period of post-good-and-evil. To me, we are returning again to the original innocence. But the way that the “beyond” of

good and evil shows up today is in the rule of psychopaths who have become dominant in the civilizational hierarchies and for whom there's no difference between good and evil. They can do anything they want. And people are starting to get very scared about that because the psychopaths now controlling the nuclear buttons are clearly tending to activate that which most would consider evil, if they still have those values separated.

But if that aspect of the undifferentiation of good and evil is taking place on the dark side, it also means that it's available as the original state of innocence as well, because both polarities always appear simultaneously. That's why the upper death drive is also accessible as never before, even though the lower is more normative and more magnetically drawing of the ego in its current state. And you know, the philosopher who in a sense injected this concern into modern philosophy was Nietzsche, who also recognized time as circular with his whole theory of "the eternal return." But what he says, and what was later emphasized and even recast by Gilles Deleuze in his famous book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, is that—because of this psychopathy—what happens to egos at the end of time is that they become reactive. In the beginning, the ego was an active agent of that infinite consciousness, so the will to yoga (to unity, to individuation) was magnetically powerful and couldn't be pulled apart. But now we have a world in which egos have become atheistic and nihilistic. Nihilism is the ultimate state of weakness of the ego because it cannot draw itself out of the quicksand of negativity and self-judgment that comes with that. It cannot feel itself worthy of (or even open to facing) the possibility of individuation, which would shatter (dissolve) its nihilistic identifications.

So the narcissistic ego pushes away the very intense power of individuation that is on offer; and, in a way, this is what the *Gita* battle is about. It's not the army that he's facing that constitutes the battle that Arjuna is in. It's the battle to reach this state of consciousness that has just been described—that's the challenge. Then it won't matter what happens in the battle with the other guys, because victory and defeat are not different; and you can only be indifferent to the fate of the bodily organism . . . even love your fate, as Nietzsche said (*amor fati*) . . . able to move into your fate with total empowerment—gung ho, a berserker in that battle in which there is no inhibition. But which battle? The battle against your own ego. Have you even begun that battle?

This is what individuation is about. For the postmodern ego, I don't think individuation even shows up on the radar screen of goals in life to be considered. Yet this is the core of what needs to be attained if one is going to live with nobility, wisdom, joy, love, fulfillment, etc. The question is, "How do you go about that, if you're even interested in it?" And how could it be possible to live, in a practical sense, where you constantly have to make choices and decisions between this and that—this is good, that is bad (maybe not evil, but at least good and bad) . . . this will bring the results we want, that won't)? How do we live in a world in this state that's being described and function at that level of duty that is part of the dharma of life?

The solution to this problem has to be somehow reconfigured in a way that enables the postmodern mind to make this a feasible reality again, which I think it's not for most people today. How many can relate to that—that it feels too far beyond even the level of imaginability? (Maybe you're all too apathetic even to raise your hand.) There's too much despair about it, I guess, and maybe also too much denial . . . "Is this really important or interesting? We've got videos to watch on YouTube and politics to chat about and all kinds of concerns about the

ecosystems and economic systems, etc. What's the relevance of this?" But a time will come, if it hasn't already, where there'll be nothing more relevant than this.

So, as we go forward now, I want to deepen our understanding of what creates the separation now that must be individuated and how that gap is to be closed. Here's how Arjuna describes it. (I don't want to run out of time, but let's just read the next sections that will give the standard ancient method.) So Krishna goes on:

Verse 39: "This (insight) [that he just gave to be in that state of nonduality] is wisdom, as declared in the theory of Sankhya [the Sankhya texts]; now hear it as applied in arduous practice [in other words, you have to practice this arduously, rigorously]; yoked with this determination, Arjuna [your will has to be totally determined to achieve this now], you shall rid yourself of the bondage of karma [meaning the bondage of pain and suffering that comes with having a physical body that is mortal]."

Verse 40: "Here (in the yoga doctrine of practice) no effort is lost, nor is any loss of progress [toward the goal] found. Even a little of this discipline [that is being instructed] protects one from great danger."

Verse 41: "Here there is a single resolute understanding, Arjuna. The thoughts of the irresolute have many branches and are, indeed, endless." In other words, this has to be your single focus in life, because otherwise you won't have the resolution (the will, the determination) to achieve the goal. Your thoughts will divert from the *sattvic* into the *rajasic* and the *tamasic*. You won't be able to hold your course. He goes on.

Verse 42: "The ignorant ones proclaim a flowery discourse, Arjuna, delighting in the letter of the Veda and saying, 'There is nothing else.'" [In other words, all the teachings of the rituals you do, fire ceremonies and animal sacrifices and all kinds of other things . . . and they will say that's all you have to do—follow the rituals.]

Verse 43: "Full of desires, intent on heaven [that the Vedas say you'll get after you die], they offer rebirth as the fruit of action, and are addicted to many specific rites [and rituals] aimed [primarily] at the goal [the double goal] of enjoyment and power." That is how far the *brahman* rituals had fallen. They were no longer about achieving individuation but power—power and jouissance.

Verse 44: "To those (the ignorant ones) attached to enjoyment and power, whose thought is stolen away by this kind of talk, resolute insight in meditation is not granted." So, in other words, if you're not willing to be resolute to that extent, forget it. Don't even bother being on the spiritual path. You're wasting your time, you won't make it.

It's pretty serious. Krishna is not whitewashing the situation in any way. And he's attacking the Vedas, right? This is a Vedic teaching. He's saying, "Forget all the writings, because you can get lost in books and reading and intellectuality. But if you don't practice it (if you don't make this real), then all of that knowledge is useless. All of your mantras, you can repeat them forever but you won't internalize them."

Verse 45: So he says, “The Vedas are such that their scope is confined to the three qualities [gunas]; be free from those three qualities, Arjuna [all the gunas, not just the *rajasic* and *tamasic*, even the *sattvic*], indifferent towards the pairs of opposites, eternally fixed in truth [the truth of your absolute Self], free from thoughts of acquisition [gaining and fear of loss—the whole capitalist impulse—free of that, free of a desire even for] and comfort and [completely] possessed [*possessed*—not by the self here, but] of the Self.” You are possessed *by* the self (Krishna, the God-Self); but, because there is individuation, you're possessed *of* that Self . . . it *is* your Self. There's no longer duality.

Verse 46: “As much value as there is in a well when water is flooding on every side, so much is the value in all the Vedas for a brahman [yogi] who knows [the truth].” You don't need to read all that stuff. It may be nowadays that it is useful to read some stuff that will give you information about your resistances; but, still, that's only in order to get beyond the diversions to the practice.

Verse 47: So Krishna says, “[Your power] Your right is to action alone; never to its fruits at any time. Never should the fruits of action be your motive; never let there be attachment to inaction in you.” It's not in your control what your fate ends up to be as a character in this matrix—and it's none of your business. That's what Krishna is saying. You shouldn't be concerned about your character. You should be concerned about being one with the infinite Self, who is the Self of every character. Don't focus on the particular now but the universal. Never should the fruits of action be your motive. It's not about gaining and avoiding, loss or victory, and not defeat. No, let there be no attachment to action, because the Self doesn't act—it's not a doer. And letting go of that constant doing of the ego character—only the stopping of that wheel of activity, of thought—will bring you to the Self.

Verse 48: “Fixed in yoga, perform actions [in other words, *yoga* (meaning union—individuation with the Absolute Self) . . . let the character do all of its seva, but keep the mind in stillness . . . keep the attention in the focus on the absolute presence], having abandoned attachment, Arjuna, and having become indifferent to success or failure. It is said that evenness of mind is yoga.” OK? Undisturbable. In fact, I think that the word they use in the Sanskrit is *achala*. In other words, your mind has to become immovable like a mountain (like Arunachala, right?) . . . illuminated by the Supreme Self, but immovable, luminous, unshakable.

Verse 49: “Action is inferior by far to the yoga of wisdom, Arjuna. Seek refuge in wisdom! [Wisdom . . . the ego has no wisdom. Wisdom is in the fundamental mind, and that's where you must take refuge.] Despicable are those whose motives are based on [desire for] the fruit of action.” Pretty heavy judgment by this nondual teaching.

Verse 50: “He whose wisdom is established casts off, here in the world, both good and evil actions [they disappear from your consciousness; they no longer split your mind and contaminate your projections on the world. Think of all of the ways that the concept of good and evil proliferates in every thought you have (in every attitude, in every emotion). What would it be like to eliminate that entirely, at one stroke? That's what you have to hold in your consciousness—that state—because it's there]; therefore devote yourself [entirely] to yoga

[individuation]! Yoga is skill in action.” Yoga isn't just sitting. No, it's when you can do your work in the world unshakably—without being disturbed by other people, by glitches, by wars, by everything going wrong (which it probably will)—by remaining unshakable.

Verse 51: “Those who are established in wisdom, the wise ones, who have abandoned the fruit born of action, and are freed from the bondage of rebirth, go to the place that is free from pain.” So here's the promise: There's no pain in this place and no rebirth because, if there is desire, that desire will bring about continuity on the wheel of life and death. But if you are free of desire, you are also free of time. When the mind is still, time stops and you enter eternity. You can still function in time, but you're not *in* time.

Verse 52: “When your intellect crosses beyond the thicket of delusion [as you said, Mataji], then you shall become disgusted with that which is yet to be heard and with that which has been heard (in the Veda).” You won't be interested anymore. I'm not sure “disgusted” is the right word, but you're done with it. In other words, there's no more need to learn from the past. Now the only need is to be in a state of total presence. These teachings from the past can be used to help motivate you to be in that state of presence, but then once it's done, it's done. It may be part of the seva of the character to continue to learn and to teach, but only of the character, not of the Self.

And here's the final one I'm going to read for the night:

Verse 53: “When your intellect stands [and here the word is *stiti*, meaning “established”] fixed in deep meditation, unmoving [no thoughts, no agitation], disregarding Vedic doctrine [any doctrines, ideologies, dogmas, creeds, or belief systems—completely free of all beliefs, all concepts], then you shall attain Self-realization.” And the word they use in Sanskrit is not “Self-realization,” it's *yoga*. That's the meaning of *yoga*—but again “immovable” . . . the word is *achala*, like a mountain.

So that symbol of Arunachala (the light of wisdom in the unshakable consciousness that is free from intention and desire, except to be the transmission of that Infinite Consciousness)—that's the only function that still remains for the character. Even though its function may be carried out through all kinds of particularities at the level of the character, that character is already in union with the infinite. Hence, the paradox of that nonduality of *samsara* and *nirvana*—of the moving and the unmoving as a single Real that never changes because it's all just the Self. There is nothing outside the Self, nothing other than the Self. Even the thoughts that arise come from the Self—from that absolute, eternal, unmoving Zero Point that one is established in and never leaves. Then we can cope with the Eschaton that we must soon face . . . and all the apocalyptic prologues that we will have to encounter as we approach that end that is nothing other than the total revelation of the One Absolute Self and the complete elimination of illusion.

It's this transformation of consciousness that is the whole meaning and purpose of life . . . and the solution to what otherwise creates perplexity and confusion in trying to understand why these particular events are happening to me or to them or to us. Wisdom is the overcoming of those kinds of doubts and questions that will always bring us back to what Nietzsche again famously called *ressentiment* (resentment) of one's fate: “Why did God put me in this situation? Why did I

have to suffer? Am I that evil and bad? Or is God actually immoral and demonic? Or is there just a meaningless, senseless flux of situations that have no rationality whatsoever? What does it all mean?"

We can't answer that question until we are connected to a mind that can truly understand levels of reality that the ego can't even begin to perceive. The ego must be humble enough to open its heart and mind in surrender to those higher degrees of intelligence so that they can be internalized and integrated as part of the Self, to be *remembered* from the *dismembered* state of ego consciousness. This is the challenge, the offer of grace, and the discipline required to achieve the stillness—the mastery over your own mind.

Namaste,
Shunyamurti