Make no mistake, you are divine!
Whatever state you are in now,
you are still divine within!
Let Krishna tell you how to unleash your divine potential.
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Published by
Life Bliss Foundation

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First Edition: December 2006
Second Edition: July 2008


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All proceeds from the sale of this book go towards supporting charitable activities.

Printed in India by WQ Judge Press, Bangalore. Ph.: +91 +80 22211168
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Bhagavad Gita: A Background

Bhagavad Gita is a sacred scripture of the Vedic culture. As with all scriptures, it was knowledge that was transmitted verbally. It was called sruti in Sanskrit, meaning something that is heard.

Gita, as Bhagavad Gita is generally called, translates literally from Sanskrit as the ‘Sacred Song’. Unlike the Veda and Upanishad, which are self-standing expressions, Gita is written into the Hindu epic Mahabharata, called a purana, an ancient tale. It is part of a story, so to speak.
As a scripture, Gita is part of the ancient knowledge base of *Vedic* tradition, which is the expression of the experiences of great sages.

*Veda* and *Upanishad*, the foundation of *sruti* literature, arose through the insight and awareness of these great sages when they went into a no-mind state. These are as old as humanity and the first and truest expressions in the journey of man’s search for truth.

Unlike the *Vedas*, which were internalized by the great sages, or the *Upanishads*, which were the teachings of these great sages, Gita is part of a story narrated by Vyasa, one of these great sages. It is narrated as the direct expression of the Divine.

No other epic, or part of an epic, has the special status of the Gita. As a consequence of the presence of Gita, the Mahabharata epic itself is considered a sacred Hindu scripture. Gita arose from the super consciousness of Krishna, the Supreme God, and is therefore considered a scripture.

Mahabharata, literally the Great *Bharata*, is a narration about the nation and civilization, which is now known as India. It was then a nation ruled by King Bharata and his descendants. The story of this epic is about two warring clans, Kauravas and Pandavas, closely related to one another. Dhritharashtra, the blind King of Hastinapura and father of the 100 Kaurava brothers was the brother of Pandu, whose children were the five Pandava princes. It is a tale of strife between cousins.
Pandu was the King of Hastinapura. A sage cursed him that he would die if he ever entered into physical relationship with his wives. He therefore had no children. Vyasa says that all the five Pandava children were born to their mothers Kunti and Madri through the blessing of divine beings. Pandu handed over the kingdom and his children to his blind brother Dhritharashtra and retired to meditate in the forest.

Kunti had received a boon when she was still a young unmarried adolescent, that she could summon any divine power at will to father a child. Before she married, she tested her boon. The Sun God Surya appeared before her. Karna was born to her as a result. In fear of social reprisals, she cast the newborn away in a river. Yudhishtra, Bhima, and Arjuna were born to Kunti after her marriage by invocation of her powers, and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva were born to Madri, the second wife of Pandu.

Yudhishtra was born to Kunti as a result of her being blessed by Yama, the God of death and justice, Bhima by Vayu, the God of wind, and Arjuna by Indra, God of all divine beings. Nakula and Sahadeva, the youngest Pandava twins were born to Madri, through the divine Ashwini twins.

Dhritharashtra had a hundred sons through his wife Gandhari. The eldest of these Kaurava princes was Duryodhana. Duryodhana felt no love for his five Pandava cousins. He made many unsuccessful attempts, along with his brother Dushashana, to kill the Pandava brothers. Kunti’s eldest son Karna, whom she had cast
away at birth, was brought up by a chariot driver in the palace and by a strange twist of fate joined hands with Duryodhana.

Dhritharashtra gave Yudhishtra one half of the Kuru Kingdom on his coming of age, since the Pandava Prince was the rightful heir to the throne that his father Pandu had vacated. Yudhishtra ruled from his new capital Indraprastha, along with his brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Arjuna won the hand of Princess Draupadi, daughter of the King of Panchala, in a swayamwara, a marital contest in which princes fought for the hand of a fair damsel. In fulfilment of their mother Kunti’s desire that the brothers would share everything equally, Draupadi became the wife of all five Pandava brothers.

Duryodhana persuaded Yudhishtra to join a gambling session, where his cunning uncle Sakuni defeated the Pandava King. Yudhishtra lost all that he owned - his kingdom, his brothers, his wife and himself, to Duryodhana. Dushashana shamed Draupadi in public by trying to disrobe her. The Pandava brothers and Draupadi were forced to go into exile for 14 years, with the condition that in the last year they should live incognito.

At the end of the 14 years, the Pandava brothers tried to reclaim their kingdom. In this effort they were helped by Krishna, the King of the Yadava clan, who is considered the eighth divine reincarnation of Vishnu. However, Duryodhana refused to yield even a needlepoint of land, and as a result, the Great War, the
War of Mahabharata ensued. In this war, various rulers of the entire nation that is modern India aligned with one or the other of these two clans, the Kauravas or the Pandavas.

Krishna offered to join with either of the two clans. He said, ‘One of you may have me unarmed. I will not take any part in the battle. The other may have my entire Yadava army.’ The first offer was made to Duryodhana, who predictably chose the large and well-armed Yadava army, in preference to the unarmed Krishna. Arjuna joyfully and gratefully chose his friend and mentor Krishna to be his unarmed charioteer!

The armies assembled in the vast field of Kurukshetra, now in the state of Haryana in modern day India. All the Kings and Princes were related to one another, and were often on opposite sides. Facing the Kaurava army and his friends, relatives and teachers, Arjuna was overcome by remorse and guilt, and wanted to walk away from the battle.

Krishna’s dialogue with Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is the content of the Bhagavad Gita. Krishna persuaded Arjuna to take up arms and vanquish his enemies. ‘They are already dead,’ says Krishna, ‘all those who are facing you have been already killed by Me. Go ahead and do what you have to do. That is your duty. Do not worry about the outcome. Leave that to Me.’

The Gita is the ultimate practical teaching on the inner science of spirituality. It is not as some scholars
incorrectly claim, a promotion of violence. It is about the impermanence of the mind, body, and the need to destroy the mind, ego and logic.

Sanjaya, King Dhritharashtra’s charioteer, presents Gita in eighteen chapters to the blind king. All the Kaurava Princes as well as all their commanders such as Bhishma, Drona and Karna were killed in battle. The five Pandava brothers survived as winners and became the rulers of the combined kingdom.

This dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna is a dialogue between man and God or nara and Narayana as they are termed in Sanskrit. Arjuna’s questions and doubts are those of each one of us. The answers of the Divine, Krishna, transcend time and space. Krishna’s message is as valid today as it was on that fateful battlefield some thousands of years ago.

Nithyananda explains the inner metaphorical meaning of Mahabharata thus:

‘The Great War of Mahabharata is the fight between the positive and negative thoughts of the mind, called the sanskaras. Positive thoughts are the Pandava princes and the negative thoughts are the Kaurava princes. Kurukshetra or the battlefield is the body. Arjuna is the individual consciousness and Krishna is the enlightened Master.

The various commanders who led the Kaurava army represent the major blocks that the individual
consciousness faces in its journey to enlightenment. Bhishma represents parental and societal conditioning. Drona represents the conditioning from teachers who provide knowledge including spiritual guidance. Karna represents the restrictive influence of good deeds such as charity and compassion, and finally Duryodhana represents the ego, which is the last to fall.

Parental and societal conditionings have to be overcome by rebelling against conventions. This is why traditionally those seeking the path of enlightenment are required to renounce the world as *sannyasin* and move away from civilization. This conditioning does not die as long as the body lives, but its influence drops.

Drona represents all the knowledge one imbibes and the teachers one encounters, who stop short of being to able to take us through to the ultimate flowering of enlightenment. It is difficult to give them up since one feels grateful to them. This is where the enlightened master steps in and guides us.

Karna is the repository of all good deeds and it is his good deeds that stand in the way of his own enlightenment. Krishna has to take the load of Karna’s *punya*, his meritorious deeds, before he could be liberated. The enlightened Master guides one to drop one’s attachment to good deeds arising out of what are perceived to be charitable and compassionate intentions. He also shows us that the quest for and experience of enlightenment is the ultimate act of compassion that one can offer to the world.
Finally one reaches Duryodhana, one’s ego, the most difficult to conquer. One needs the full help of the Master here. It is subtle work and even the Master’s help may not be obvious, since at this point, sometimes the ego makes one disconnect from the Master as well.

The Great War was between one hundred eighty million people - one hundred ten million on the Kaurava side representing our negative *samskaras* – stored memories - and seventy million on the Pandava side representing our positive *samskaras* – stored memories - and it lasted eighteen days and nights. The number eighteen has a great mystical significance. It essentially signifies our ten senses that are made up of *gnanendriya* - the five senses of perception like taste, sight, smell, hearing and touch, and *karmendriya* - the five senses initiating action like speech, bodily movements etc., added to our eight kinds of thoughts like lust, greed etc. All eighteen need to be dropped for Self-realization.

Mahabharata is not just an epic story. It is not merely the fight between good and evil. It is the dissolution of both positive and negative *samskaras* that reside in our body-mind system, which must happen for the ultimate liberation. It is a tale of the process of enlightenment.

Mahabharata is a living legend. Bhagavad Gita is the manual for enlightenment.

Like Arjuna many thousand years ago, you are here in a dialogue with a living enlightened Master in this book. This is a tremendous opportunity to resolve all questions and clear all doubts with the Master’s words.
Introduction

In this series, a young enlightened Master, Paramahamsa Nithyananda comments on the Bhagavad Gita.

Many hundreds of commentaries of the Gita have been written over the years. The earliest commentaries were by the great spiritual masters such as Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, some thousand years ago. In recent times, great masters such as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Ramana Maharishi have spoken from the Gita extensively. Many others have written volumes on this great scripture.
Nithyananda’s commentary on the Bhagavad Gita is not just a literary translation and a simple explanation of that translation. He takes the reader through a world tour while talking about each verse. It is believed that each verse of the Gita has seven levels of meaning. What is commonly rendered is the first level meaning. Here, an enlightened master takes us beyond the common into the uncommon, with equal ease and simplicity.

To read Nithyananda’s commentary on the Gita is to obtain an insight that is rare. It is not mere reading; it is an experience; it is a meditation.

Sankara, the great master philosopher said:

‘A little reading of the Gita, a drop of Ganga water to drink, remembering Krishna once in a while, all this will ensure that you have no problems with the God of Death.’

Editors of these volumes of Bhagavad Gita have expanded upon the original discourses delivered by Nithyananda through further discussions with Him. For ease of understanding for English speaking readers, and to cater to their academic interest, the original Sanskrit verses in their English translation have been included as an appendix in this book.

This reading is meant to help every individual in daily life as well as in the endeavour to realize the Ultimate Truth. It creates every possibility to attain nithyananda, eternal bliss!
You Are God!

It is here that we enter into the real Gita. It is from here that Bhagavan or God starts speaking.

Until now Krishna was speaking as a man, as Vasudeva Krishna, in His human form, but it is only from here that Krishna speaks as the Parabrahma Krishna, as Bhagavan, in His divine state.

An important point we all need to understand is that only an intelligent man will allow the other person to speak. We all speak continuously to each other but a conversation does not
really happen. The two are quite different. We don’t have conversations. We simply carry out simultaneous monologues with each other. When the other person speaks we do not listen; we are busy preparing our own reply. Similarly, when we speak, the other person is actually preparing his response.

We are polite enough to pretend that we are listening so that we will, in turn, be heard. A conversation does not happen. You need intelligence to allow the other person to speak. Please understand that you do not need intelligence to speak; you need it only to listen.

A small story:

A person was telling his friend that he had not spoken to his wife for a whole week. His friend asked him whether he was angry with her or if he had fought with her.

The man replied, ‘No, I am afraid of interrupting her!’

Maybe because Bhagavan is a male, he allowed Arjuna to speak!

We may either speak verbally or mentally, but in any case, we are speaking continuously. Why do you think psychiatrists are paid so well? The professions of psychiatry and psychoanalysis are nothing but the art of listening. A psychiatrist is a person who asks expensive questions and just listens, nothing else! We speak continuously. Even when we keep quiet, we are not listening.
A real incident:

A young trainee in Psychiatry was overwhelmed by the ease with which his experienced mentor counseled patients. They poured their hearts out to him. The trainee was deeply disturbed by these traumatic experiences that were shared. Yet, his mentor went from one patient to another calmly and without being affected.

After a few weeks of this training the younger doctor approached his mentor and said, ‘I am not sure I can bear this much longer. I am getting depressed. How can you listen to all these people without getting disturbed? What is the trick?’

His mentor calmly responded, ‘Who listens?’

Krishna does listen. He listens carefully and answers compassionately. Of the original seven hundred forty five verses in the Gita, as part of the Bhishma Purana of Mahabharata, He responds in depth to Arjuna’s fifty-seven questions through six hundred twenty verses.

In the first chapter Bhagavan does not say a word to interrupt Arjuna. He allows Arjuna to speak fully for one whole chapter. He keeps quiet even on seeing the depth of Arjuna’s confusion and depression. He consciously analyzes the origin of Arjuna’s thoughts to determine the platform of confusion upon which Arjuna is standing.

It is possible to become a successful businessman just by studying the first few chapters of the Gita. You can
reach the peak of your profession just by learning the art of listening. Once you listen clearly, you will automatically be able to answer clearly as well. A devotee once asked me, ‘Master, how is it that you are able to answer so many questions?’ There is only one secret to this. I know how to listen to the question, that’s all. If you know the technique of listening, the reply is immediately ready in your being.

The problem is that we do not trust ourselves and our innate intelligence to respond to a question without preparation. That is why we start preparing the reply even before listening to the question. We do not have the patience to listen to the problem. Before we listen to it, we already start judging the speaker and develop the solution to the query. We are only interested in expressing what we know, not in addressing the real problem or even in understanding what the other person has to say.

We hear mechanically at best; we never really listen.

Here, Krishna is interested in the real problem and not interested in expressing what He knows. The only reason a Master expresses is his endless compassion. He wants Arjuna to have clarity of mind and is interested in helping him find a solution to his problem. He allowed Arjuna to speak so that He could go to the root of the problem and address the issue.

One needs intelligence, or I may say enlightenment, to listen.
Only an enlightened Master like Krishna can listen. In the first chapter He listens fully and completely. Even in the second chapter, He allowed Arjuna to speak in many verses.

He knew that once He allowed Arjuna to express his problems, he would himself find the solution to them.

People come to me and say, ‘Master, you know our problems; please give us the answer.’ I ask them to state their problems clearly.

They say, ‘You are enlightened and already know of our problems; please give us the answer.’

I say, ‘Yes, I know your problem even if you don’t speak, but you will not know your own problem if you do not speak.’

Even if, in some cases, we may not be able to speak out in detail with clarity, we should be able to think through our problem, so that at least we understand what the problem is. Our mind should be open to possibilities.

I tell people during the Ananda Darshan (energy awakening) part of our programs that they can ask me for advice on problems that they face.

When you speak the Master listens. More importantly, you listen within yourself. Actually, it is not even necessary to speak and hold up people who are queuing up behind you. All that is needed is to keep your mind open so that the transmission can take place. Even if you
do not verbalize you can visualize your needs and problems and this will be even more powerful than speech itself.

That is what happens on the Kurukshetra battlefield. People who have the rationality to compute time may wonder, ‘Arjuna spoke for so long. Now Krishna speaks for so long. How is it possible for these two to hold such a long conversation in the middle of a battlefield? What were all the others doing? Wasn’t Duryodhana fed up or didn’t he think that this was a good opportunity to get rid of Arjuna and Krishna, as they talked and wasted everybody’s time?’

That’s how the logical, rational, unaware mind thinks. Such a mind cannot conceive of the possibility that a conversation can indeed take place in silence. People are not used to visualization. They lose this skill as they grow up. Children can visualize beautifully. That is why they can keep themselves busy talking silently to themselves and talking silently with imaginary friends. Education and logic rob us of this skill.

At the next level of communication your mind needs to be still to allow the grace to move in. This is the subtlest and most powerful of all communication. At this level communication becomes communion.

When they talk of great Masters like Ramana Maharishi communicating in silence, it was indeed true. To communicate, you need not open your mouth. You only need to open up your mind. When the mind is open and
free of disturbing thoughts, especially in front of the Master, communication can take place at the speed of light. The presence of the Master will help still your mind. Answers will appear even before your questions are asked.

Seekers, intellectual seekers, with years of questioning and doubting behind them, come to me and ask, ‘Master, why is it that when I come to you with hundreds of questions, when I am in front of you, there is no need to ask you about them? I feel as if the answers are already there!’

This is not imagination; this is truth. Questions can only raise more questions. Questions are a reflection of your inner ego, which is violence. When you are in front of the Master, a Master you truly believe in, the first thing that happens is the melting of your ego. The ego just disappears like snow in the sun. Therefore, questions also disappear. In their place the answers that you were already aware of make their appearance, previously hidden by the veil of your ego, your ignorance. You start feeling that magically, miraculously the answers appear in front of the Master.

The truth is that the answers were all there, already there. Our ego would not allow us to accept and be aware of those answers. The Master’s presence dissolved the ego and let the answers out.

There is an interesting Zen parable.

A soldier went to the Master - Nansen, with this problem.
A man kept a goose in a bottle, feeding it until it grew too large to get out of the neck of the bottle. Now, how did he get the goose out without killing the goose or breaking the bottle?

Nansen said to him, ‘Oh, Officer?’

The soldier responded, ‘Yes, Master?’

Nansen exclaimed ‘There, the goose is out of the bottle!’

The moment the soldier addressed Nansen as Master, accepted that he was his Master, the goose, the ego, was out of the bottle, his body-mind!

Only when you open up to the Master do you actually come to know your problem clearly and the answers come as if from nowhere. You can do it at three levels. You can converse and convey through words and the Master will listen. At the next level you can communicate from the heart in silence; you can visualize instead of verbalizing in speech. Finally, you can commune in silence and the Master will grasp this even more powerfully.

Here Krishna allowed Arjuna to verbalize, so that to begin with, Arjuna himself has the clarity to understand his problem. Once Arjuna expressed his confusion, he could relapse into silence and commune with the Master.
A Zen Slap Awakens!

2.1 Sanjaya said,

As Arjuna’s eyes overflowed with tears of pity and despair,

Krishna spoke to him thus.

2.2 Krishna said,

Where from has this dejection descended on you at this critical time, Arjuna!

You behave unlike a noble man and this will keep you away from realization.
2.3 Do not yield to fear, Partha! It does not befit you.

Drop this faint heartedness and stand up, Destroyer of enemies!

Arjuna was distraught with pity and despair. His pity was for his opposition that consisted of kinsmen, elders, teachers, relatives and friends. He despaired at the thought of what would happen if he did have to kill them. His dilemma was complete and total. He had collapsed in his chariot and his bow and arrow had slipped from his hands.

Lord Krishna allowed Arjuna to exhaust himself, physically, emotionally and spiritually. He listened to him carefully. Krishna wanted to give Arjuna time to open his mind, heart and being to Him, his friend, guide and Master, so that His answers would penetrate Arjuna’s very being.

Then He spoke for the first time, as if opening His being directly. Krishna says, ‘My dear Arjuna, how have you acquired these impurities? They do not at all befit a man who knows the value of life. They lead not to higher planes but to infamy.’

This verse is connected to the next one.

‘O Partha! Do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O destroyer of the enemy.’
I may say that this is the direction of the whole Gita. Krishna is the true Zen Master and does not beat around the bush. Understand that Krishna is not a philosopher and addresses the issue straightaway. A philosopher would have gone on and on, loving his own logic and voice. Philosophers talk only to prove that they know and in the process prove that they are fools. If they keep quiet, people can only suspect that they are in the presence of a fool, but by opening their mouths they prove the suspicion.

Krishna is not a philosopher and He has no time to waste on fools.

He asks Arjuna directly, ‘How did such impurities come upon you? They are not for a man like you. They will not lead you to higher planes but only defame you.’ In the next verse He asks Arjuna to give up this weakness and, addressing him as ‘destroyer of enemy’, asks him to arise.

This is a straight Zen response.

A disciple goes to an enlightened Zen Master and asks, ‘Master, what is Buddha? How can I become Buddha? Please teach me.’

The Master slaps him hard on his face.

The disciple is shocked, as he expected to receive some kind of meditation technique, a blessing or guidance. It was like going to a swami and asking him how to realize God or atman and receiving a blow in return! But the disciple, being mature, does not speak ill of his Master.
He says, ‘Master, I know that you do not do anything without a meaning. Though I am unable to understand the reason for your action, I cannot say it is wrong. Please explain.’

The Master says, ‘Fool, you are Buddha. Why do you try to become something you are already? If a horse comes to me and asks how it can become a horse, how to eat grass and drink water, what can I do? You are already that and nothing else needs to be added to you. That’s why I slapped you, to awaken you. That’s all.’

Similarly, Krishna gives the direction to the whole Gita with this one ‘slap’.

Krishna knows Arjuna’s problem. Please understand that Arjuna is not depressed because of a spiritual search. It is just that he does not want a solution; he wants only support.

Understand, asking for solutions and asking for support are two different things.

What Arjuna needs is support, not a solution. This is why Krishna does not speak of spirituality in these two verses. Arjuna’s problem originates from fear and worry. His Manipuraka (navel center) and Swadhishtana (being center) chakras, energy centers within the body that get locked due to worry and fear, are now locked completely! Because of his fear, he has deep seated complexes, stress and worry. Krishna addresses Arjuna’s deep fear straightaway without any philosophy and asks him to give up his foolish weakness and to get up and fight. He
does not offer any consolation, just a straightforward scolding, and a slap to awaken him.

If Arjuna had been in a mood of stotra, a devotional surrender that he reaches only later on, these two verses would have served asutra or techniques for him. If Arjuna had been without fear and expressed full faith and devotion in Krishna, these two verses would have been enough to get him up and going. He would have become enlightened or would have achieved the ultimate just with these two verses.

The entire Gita would have been encapsulated here and there would have been no need to continue. None of us would need to come here for eighteen days!

I spoke to you about sastra, stotra and sutra (wisdom, devotion and technique) in the first chapter.

All three can be a means to enlightenment for people of different aptitudes.

Sastras are the wisdom of scriptural inputs aimed at the intellectual seeker, the one centered at the head. Stotras are aimed at the emotions, at the heart, in the form of devotional songs and stories. Sutras are for the being level people, techniques of meditation and yoga. These are not exclusive, in that one must be practiced to the exclusion of another. The same person may be in a state to receive a stotra today and a sastra tomorrow. At this point, Arjuna is in the state to be intellectually convinced and Krishna employs sastra as the right approach.
Since he was not in the mood of *stotra*, not yet ready with devotion and faith, Krishna had to create the *sastra*, or method, to bring him to the *stotra* state. The whole issue was due to fear plus worry and depression because of this fear.

All our depressions have their roots in anxiety and fear. You need to stand up to them to be rid of them.

A small story:

A presidential candidate was addressing a press conference, ‘I am very optimistic about my future.’

The journalist asked, ‘Then why do you look so worried?’

The candidate replied, ‘My optimism is not warranted. So, I am worried.’

We constantly expect our optimism to be warranted and when we do not get the warranty, we start worrying. All our depression, worry and anxiety are nothing but a deep fear of life and fear of losing something.

There are many levels of fear: fear of losing our wealth and status, fear of losing a limb or our health, fear of losing our near and dear ones and fear of the unknown or death. That is why Krishna says that Arjuna is not behaving as an *arya*, a word that can be interpreted as a noble man. The term *arya* is applied here to denote an aware human being, not to a particular race or caste. *Vedic*
literature says that an *arya* is one who is evolved, cultured, a prince amongst men.

Here Krishna tells Arjuna that he is confronted with all the four fears: fear that he may lose whatever he possesses, that he may be maimed in the war, that he may lose his near and dear ones, and fourth, that he may lose his very life. These fears have in turn led to his worry.

Krishna directly addresses this worry and fear with the *sastra*, the explanation of wisdom that is directed to the head, the intellect.

Later on in the Gita, in the eleventh chapter, after receiving Krishna’s Cosmic Vision, Arjuna realizes who Krishna truly is. He understands that Krishna is beyond everything and beyond his imagination, his comprehension. He is not surprised any longer that all the deities worship Him and surrender to Him. Krishna then repeats the same words that He says now, after which the Gita ends and Arjuna engages in the war.

These same words uttered by Krishna later on, when Arjuna is in the state of *stotra*, when he is in a state of pure devotion and faith, become the *sutra*, the technique of enlightenment for Arjuna. That stage is yet to happen. Since Arjuna is not yet in the devotional state now, these words are only plain wisdom.

Krishna is not a philosopher. All philosophy is an attempt to convince the other to do what the philosopher
wants of him. It may be a very slow process, but still a process of trying to convince the other person what to do.

Hitler, in his autobiography says that if a lie is repeated a hundred times, it becomes the truth and if a truth is expressed for the first time, people think it is a lie. Whether something is true or false does not depend on the actual fact, but on how many times it is repeated!

All philosophies, whether they are of communism or religion or politics, are the same. Philosophers invent logical reasons as to why you should follow their words.

Here Krishna is not a philosopher and does not want to create any philosophy.

He tries to give the conclusion directly to Arjuna. However, as Arjuna is not in the mood to receive it because he is not mature enough to assimilate it, Krishna needs to give Arjuna the experience.

There is a beautiful story in the Upanishad:

A disciple goes to the Master and asks, ‘O Master! Teach me *atmagnana*, knowledge of the inner Self.’

The Master says, ‘Thou art that! *Tatvamasi*, You are God.’

The disciple, unable to believe this, thinks to himself, ‘How can I be God? I am still afraid of my wife. I have all these problems and a thousand questions!’
Only when the Master proves to him that the Master himself is God, the disciple trusts the Master’s words.

The Master needs to first prove that he is God in order to make you understand that you are God. Here Krishna does the same thing by repeating that He is all of this.

Krishna later explains His glory and that all the devata, the deities, Vedas, the scriptural wisdom, are worshiping at His feet; the whole world is in Him. He makes these incredible statements that would appear egoistic to a normal person. And yet Krishna says all this, even at the risk of being misunderstood. He repeats that He is God to make you realize that you are God.

With authority He states, ‘I am God’ to make you realize that you are God.

You would not believe the words of ordinary people. You need to hear the words from a source of authority that has the right to say them. Here Krishna says the same words that He repeats throughout the entire Gita. But as of now Arjuna is not able to take it all in. It is too much for him to grasp in his present condition.

Once Krishna proves His divinity, Arjuna believes His words and is ready to follow them.

Similarly, when Masters prove their divinity and perform great deeds or miracles, they do not do so for their ego satisfaction. They do them to prove that they
are God, so that you believe their words and experience that you are God. This is the reason why Masters repeatedly prove their divinity through expression of their energies.

Bhagavad Gita is not part of the Vedas or Upanishads that are traditionally classified as sacred scriptures, or the sruti which are believed to have had divine origin. Gita is part of an epic, a purana, the Mahabharata. Some even believe that the Gita was a later addition to Mahabharata. Despite all that, Gita and Mahabharata are accepted universally as a scripture by all Hindu scholars. It is the authority with which Krishna is seen to deliver the Gita that makes it a scripture.

‘I am the Divine,’ says Krishna. ‘If you believe in Me, you too shall realize your inner divinity.’

It is this profound and yet simple message, that has resounded so deeply in the hearts, minds and beings of generations of Hindus, in turn establishing the scriptural sanctity of Gita.

A great author wrote a book of just forty pages giving the gist of his philosophy. One reader asked him why the book was only forty pages long. The author replied that if he had the time he would have written a book of only twenty pages!

It requires intelligence to put anything into a clear, simple form or in a nutshell.

To go on and on, not much intelligence is required. Only fools write big volumes! Intelligent people express
the same content in a few words. The less you know of something the more you speak and write about it.

Here all the verses of the Gita are reduced to just two verses by Krishna.

He straightaway addresses and clears the point where Arjuna is stuck, in his need for name and fame or rajas. A man who is centered on satva, goodness, who has neither greed nor lethargy but a neutral attitude, will work out of compassion. A man who is centered on rajas will work only for name and fame. A man who is centered on tamas, lethargy, will work only for sensual pleasures.

Duryodhana works only through tamas, which is why his cruel and gross behavior. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira works on satva, out of compassion. Here Arjuna is centered on rajas, therefore, he is working only for name and fame. This is why Krishna asks him not to work in this way as it would ultimately bring Arjuna a bad name. This is how He straightaway puts His hand on the tumor, the tumor that is the subtle ego working within Arjuna.

Fortunately, Arjuna is not intelligent enough. Or rather he acts as if he is not intelligent enough to understand these words. He has lived with Krishna for more than thirty years and must have intelligence. He puts his questions and addresses his doubts not for himself but for the future generations and for the whole of humankind.

Krishna again comes to the point straightaway. He is not creating a philosophy and does not beat around the
bush. He declares, ‘O Arjuna! Lead not into this degrading weakness, do not behave like this. Come out!’

A small story I read in a magazine recently:

There was a person who had a compulsive and obsessive habit of tearing up whatever paper he laid his hands on. His family was worried and took him to Jungians, Freudians and psychoanalysts. They spent a lot of money and tried all possible treatments but nothing worked.

One day they read about a young and innovative psychotherapist in the newspaper and decided to try him. The therapist said he wanted to spend a few minutes alone with the patient. He and the patient simply walked up and down for a few minutes, after which the therapist returned and pronounced that the patient was now cured of his malady and could be taken home.

His family was surprised when they found that he really was cured. Even after a year he was found to be perfectly alright. However, no one knew how the problem disappeared. The family returned to the doctor to express their gratitude. They wanted to know what the doctor had really done to cure him of the problem that others could not solve.

He replied that he had simply asked the patient not to tear any more paper and that if he did so even once more, the patient would be brought to the
doctor again, whereupon he would be thrown out of the window!

Most of the time our problems are very simple. We complicate them by analyzing them. When we verbalize and analyze a problem, we complicate it and give power to it. Our problems are not as big as we think they are. When we verbalize, analyze, label and categorize them, we have created a whole new problem that had not existed earlier in our being. This is how psychiatric doctors continue to invent newer diseases!

The more we analyze, the more problems and difficulties we create.

The simple and direct approach of the young doctor solved the problem which all the detailed analysis and lying down on couches did not.

You have only one mind. You can either use it to solve the problem or it will naturally get used to creating more problems. Understand that if you are not solving your existing problems, you will be creating more problems. In the level of the mind, there is no position of simply standing, no status quo – you either climb or fall.

Here Krishna straightaway addresses Arjuna’s problem.

Another small story:

A man walks into a bar with his pet pig. The bartender notices that the pig has a wooden leg. He is surprised that a pig is brought into the bar and
also one with a wooden leg. He asks the customer about the pig’s wooden leg. The man realizes that he could cash in on the bartender’s curiosity and replies that, if he could get a free drink, he would relate the whole story. The bartender agrees.

After the first drink the man says that this is a special pig that saved him, his wife and his family when his house was on fire. The bartender nods but says that he still cannot understand why the pig has a wooden leg. The man replies that he will continue with the story if he gets another free drink.

The bartender agrees. The man says that when he fell into a lake, the pig rushed to his wife, called her and the man was again saved. The bartender is not able to take it anymore. He says he understands that the pig is special but still does not know why it has a wooden leg. The man asks for one more free drink. The bartender agrees to give one last drink.

The man begins yet another story of how the pig once again saved him from a tornado, but the bartender would have no more of it. He catches hold of the man by his neck and demands to know why the pig has a wooden leg.

The man replies calmly, ‘Such a special pig! Who could eat it all at once? I’m eating it part by part!’

The man narrated the whole thing as a story that he could have finished in just one line. He must have been a great philosopher!
Here Krishna is not creating any philosophy and gives the answer straightaway in just one line. However, as Arjuna is not mature enough, He has to give an intellectual explanation.

All Western philosophies begin with logical analysis and end in the conclusion. All Eastern processes begin with the conclusion and then give the analysis.

As Eastern Masters are compassionate, they do not want to torture us with all the logic. They give us the first option of grasping the solution if we have the intelligence.

If we do not have the intelligence, they have no other option but to go into detailed explanation and analysis.

They expect us to transform with just the trust in them. When they find that we do not have this qualification in us, they start the regular process.

Here Krishna tries the first method of sudden enlightenment, the immediate liberation, but Arjuna is not mature enough to receive it or comprehend it. So Krishna now starts the process of explaining it to him step-by-step.

There are two ways in which people react to the sanctity and divinity of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

To one set of people, Krishna has no special qualification to be called divine and these people may not even believe in anything such as the Divine. As atheists
or agnostics, the only way such people can be convinced is initially through the rationale of the dialogue in the Gita. The dialogue surpasses anything written in any language at any point in time in its clarity and wisdom. The message of Krishna is universal and timeless. Those who do not accept and understand, it just means that as of now it is not their time to accept, understand and transform.

Laws of Nature do not change just because we do not accept and understand them. The Earth was always round and never flat and it revolved always around the sun and not the other way around, even when the societal leaders denied these truths and killed thousands of people for expounding these truths.

There is another class of people who say that there is only Krishna, who is divine and all other divine manifestations have no relevance.

One such group of people came to me after I had spoken about the Gita, very perturbed. They said, ‘From what you say, we see that you accept the divinity of Krishna.’ I said, ‘Yes, I very much do. He is the Poornavataara, the complete Incarnation.’

They complained, ‘Then how can you worship Shiva in your ashram? We believe you have a Dakshinamurty temple in your Bidadi ashram in India. How can you do this?’
I asked them, ‘Have you read the Anu Gita which is also another part of the Mahabharata?’ They said, ‘No.’

I then explained to them about Anu Gita. After the war, Arjuna and Krishna are together and Arjuna says, ‘Krishna, I do not remember all of what you taught me at Kurukshetra, when you delivered to me the Gita. Can you please enlighten me again?’

Krishna said, ‘Oh, you have forgotten, have you? I too have forgotten what I then said!’

Arjuna exclaims, ‘Krishna, how is that possible?’

Krishna says, ‘At that point I was Parabrahma Krishna. I was Bhagavan. I was the Super Consciousness. I was the Divine. Now, I am Vasudeva Krishna, son of Vasudeva. So, I do not remember what I spoke to you as Parabrahma Krishna. I shall try and remember.’

What he remembered and recounted was Anu Gita.

Krishna, as Parabrahma Krishna, is the Divine Energy, the formless Brahman, the same as Shiva, Vishnu or Devi. He is the Ultimate Truth, the Puroshottama, as are these other manifestations of the same Brahman.

It is only the ignorant cows of Krishna who fight with the equally ignorant monkeys of Rama, forgetting that Rama and Krishna are both the same Energy.

Krishna is no doubt the Poornam, the Whole and the Infinite, as was enunciated in the Upanishads:
That is Infinite. This is Infinite. From that Infinite arises this Infinite.

If this Infinite is taken out of that Infinite, Infinite still remains Infinite.

As the Infinite, the Brahman, Krishna too, is Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi, as well as all other Divine manifestations.

The Ultimate Energy behind all of them has no name and no form; that is the truth.

The constant, repetitive reference to Bhagavan in the Gita is to emphasize this point that Krishna is not just the mere divine charioteer of Arjuna, Parthasarathy, or Kesava, destroyer of the demon Kesin or Madhusudhana, destroyer of the demon Madhu but that He is the Parabrahma Krishna, the Supreme Energy, who is formless and nameless.

This constant repetition is also to reinforce the concept that you too, like Arjuna, are God and no less.

Understanding the divinity of Krishna is a step to accepting and understanding one’s own divinity. That awareness is what liberates. That is why Sankara says in Bhaja Govindam, ‘Even a little reading of the Bhagavad Gita will liberate you from death.’
Q: You have used the word pity in describing Arjuna’s state. Some people call it compassion that does not allow him to fight his kinsmen. Is there a difference?

There is a huge difference between pity and compassion. Pity is what you feel for someone whom you consider lesser than yourself, such as a beggar. Pity needs an object.

In the dictionary, compassion may be shown with pity as a synonym. It is an expression of misunderstanding. Most of us are only capable of pity. Pity arises
out of ego, one’s identity. We believe that we have to express our superiority to others to prove our worth. Pity arises through comparison. You cannot feel pity unless you place yourself in a situation that is superior to the person for whom you feel pity.

Ego breeds violence. Pity has an undertone of violence. Arjuna is in a state of violence. It is his ego that creates the fear in him about the loss of his identity. That fear of loss of identity is being expressed as pity or sympathy for his kinsmen and elders. Arjuna has shifted his focus from the inner self to the outer object. That’s all. The fear for his identity has been hidden and expressed as sympathy for his opposition.

For pity to become compassion, ego must disappear. Until then any effort at compassion is only hypocrisy.

Compassion needs no object, it just flows.

Only an enlightened Master can express compassion. It is a natural outpouring of his state. It does not matter who is in front of him and in what state they are in. A Master expresses and radiates compassion as his very energy.

Compassion is an outcome of expression arising out of the experience of boundarylessness. When a person realizes that he is indeed a part of the universal existence and that he too is divine, he automatically becomes a part of all the beings that populate this universe. There is a
natural empathy that reaches out to everyone and everything around such a person. This is compassion.

Compassion is possible only when one’s ego drops and identity disappears; compassion is the very opposite of pity.

Q: Krishna uses the term Arya. People say that Aryans were invaders of the ancient Indian people? Is that true?

In Sanskrit, the word Arya is used to denote a person of true nobility. It is not merely nobility of birth but the expression of noble qualities in one’s behavior. This has nothing to do with any foreign invader.

Recent scientific investigations have shown that there was no such Aryan invasion of India from European stock. This was misinformation spread by the British colonizers to show the seeds of separation between the inhabitants in different parts of India. This was their planned strategy to destroy Indian culture.

In fact, they succeeded quite well. For over 60 years this misinformation has turned many people in the South of India into atheists simply because they associated religion with invasion. Just a small part of Tamil Nadu has more temples than almost all of the rest of India, and indigenous kings built these places of worship. People
have been brainwashed to believe that they need to deny their religion to return to their roots.

*Sanatana Dharma*, the *Vedic* science, evolved in many parts of India simultaneously. Many religions developed from this science; Hinduism is one of them. Buddhism, Jainism and other such major religions have their roots in the same philosophy.

An *Aryan* is one who has a thorough understanding of this *Vedic* science. An *Aryan* is one who, by understanding the tenets of this science, is able to practice them. An *Aryan* is one who by practicing the truths of this noble science radiates the noble and enlightened qualities through his behavior.

**Q: Master, why did Krishna choose the battlefield to deliver the great knowledge of Gita?**

Krishna delivered the Gita in a battlefield because planet Earth is a battlefield.

Please be very clear: in the last two thousand years of recorded history, we have fought more than five thousand wars. We are not doing anything else except fighting wars. The gap between one war and another cannot be called peace because it is simply preparation time for the next war!
You do only one of two things, either fight a war or prepare for the next one. If, in the morning, you go to the office after a fight with your spouse, you know by evening that other arguments will be ready! This is the reason planet Earth is a battlefield. This is the reason Krishna chose the battlefield to deliver His message.

There are three game situations on planet Earth – ‘win-win’, ‘win-lose’ and ‘lose-lose’.

‘Win-win’ situation is between the Master and disciple, where the Master wins the disciple and the disciple also wins enlightenment. Both achieve something and neither of them loses. The Master does not lose anything as he enjoys the act of giving enlightenment. The disciple too does not lose, as he gets enlightenment.

The next one is the ‘win-lose’ scenario. All our businesses are ‘win-lose’ situations. When somebody wins, the other person loses.

The third situation is the worst of all - ‘lose-lose’. Both the parties lose. The battlefield is a ‘lose-lose’ situation where even the so-called winning is not winning. Krishna delivers the Gita in the battlefield because he gives a solution for the worst situations. Even the worst situations in life are addressed by the Gita.

The battlefield is indeed the right place to deliver this spiritual message because if something cannot be used in
the worst situations, it cannot be taken as the ultimate message. If it can be used in the worst situation, you can be sure that it can be used anywhere else. It is like a master key. If it can open the most difficult lock, it can open all other locks. Krishna gives life solutions for the worst situations.
Surrender is Not Based on Your Convenience

2.4 Arjuna said:

O killer of Madhu, how can I oppose in battle,

Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship?

2.5 I would rather beg for my food in this world than kill the most noble of teachers.

If I kill them, all my enjoyment of wealth and desires will be stained with blood.
2.6 I cannot say which is better; their defeating us or us defeating them.

We do not wish to live after slaying the sons of Dhritharashtra who stand before us.

2.7 My heart is overwhelmed with pity and my mind is confused about what my duty is.

I beg of you, please tell me what is best for me. I am your disciple. Instruct me as I seek refuge in you.

2.8 Even if I were to attain unrivalled dominion and prosperity on Earth or even lordship over the Gods,

How would that remove this sorrow that burns my senses?

Despite what Krishna had said to him with total clarity, that Arjuna should get up and fight, Arjuna now recounts all his previous arguments. It is as if he had not heard Krishna at all or not heard him right.

He once again implores Krishna, ‘You, as the Lord of the Universe, have the right to destroy what you please. You destroyed the demons Madhu and Kesin and you destroyed many other enemies. You are justified because you are the Lord. How can I, a mere mortal, be bold enough to wage war against my grandfather and my teacher, with the intent to kill them? They are ones I
should worship, not destroy. I shall be condemned if I fight them.’

He continues, ‘It is better for me to seek alms as an ascetic or even a beggar than to kill these elders. Once my hands are stained with their blood what and how can I enjoy worldly pleasures? I am confused as to which would be better, for them to slay me or for me to slay them? How can we live after slaying our kinsmen and elders?’

Arjuna says further, ‘Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of misery and weakness. I can see no solution to my dilemma. Even if I slay these people and gain control over the Earth, or even control over the heavens, what good will it do to me? In this condition, I ask you to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am your disciple and the soul is surrendered unto you. Please instruct me.’

I must now tell you an important truth. Here Arjuna says, ‘My soul is surrendered unto you.’ This is a lie.

Had his soul been truly surrendered to Krishna, he would simply have followed what Krishna said and would not have waited for intellectual explanation.

I have seen many people in the same situation.

A small story, rather a piece of history:

One night around midnight I got a call from one of our devotees who was a government officer pleading
for my help from a serious problem. He said that if he could not have my help, suicide was the only alternative for him. I asked him to come the following morning and that we would do whatever had to be done to take care of his problem. He however insisted on a solution right then.

After going into details about the problem I assured him that his problem would be taken care of but that he should come the following morning anyway, so that the problem could be analyzed properly and to ensure it did not repeat itself. He replied that coming in the morning of the following day was not possible because he had to go to work!

When he was speaking of his problem, he said his life itself was at my feet and that as my disciple he had surrendered completely and only I could save him. But when I asked him to come on the following day, he said he had to go to office!

Arjuna is in exactly the same position. He says his soul is surrendered to Krishna but when Krishna asks him to do His bidding, he is not ready to do so and is confused!

Surrender out of confusion is not surrender, as you do not even know if you are doing the right thing.

Understand that surrender after clarity of sastra, or intelligence, is true surrender.
Here Arjuna surrenders only verbally as he says that he is confused.

You must either do what you think is right or do as the Master instructs.

Here Arjuna wants the Master to say what he wants to hear, not what the Master is saying. So, although Arjuna says he has surrendered, he has not done so.

Time and again, people come to me for advice and ask me, ‘Master, I have this problem or that problem. Please advise me what to do. Whatever you tell me I shall do.’ Then, if I ask them to come to the ashram for a few days or attend a meditation course because I know it will help them, they give me a dozen reasons why it cannot be done. They cite all other important tasks that they need to complete before they undertake anything that I suggest to them.

Some even say, ‘Master, the time has to be right before we do that. Perhaps the time is not right.’

Nonsense… simply nonsense! You are all not controlled by some unknown destiny that you conveniently blame, when you cannot do something right, or when you do something that is not right. Your destiny is in your own hands.

An enlightened Master, on the other hand, has no control over what he does. Everything that he does is in the hands of the universal power, Parashakti.
I cannot move a little finger or utter a word without active direction of *Parashakti*, but each one of you, every one of you, has the power to decide what you want to do. So does Arjuna.

Arjuna is asking Krishna to tell him what he needs to do in the same way that my disciples come and ask me. If what I tell them is in line with what they want, they will agree. So will Arjuna. Krishna knows this only too well.

However, only out of compassion, Krishna continues to express and teach him the Truth. Here begins the *sastra*. The two verses that Krishna speaks are *sutra*, techniques. But as Arjuna is not ready to receive them, he has to commence the *sastra*, the background knowledge.

An interesting episode happens after the Mahabharata war is over.

Arjuna and Krishna are walking together. Krishna points to a crow sitting on a tree and says, ‘Arjuna, can you see that green crow?’

‘Yes, Krishna!’ replies Arjuna immediately.

They walk a little further. Again Krishna points and says, ‘Arjuna, can you see that black crow?’

Again Arjuna responds, ‘Of course, Krishna, I do see that black crow.’

Krishna laughingly says, ‘Arjuna, you really are a fool. When I asked you to see the green crow, you said you saw one. How can a crow ever be green?’
Arjuna said, ‘Krishna, what can I tell you? When you said that the crow was green, what my eyes saw was indeed a green crow!’

By then Arjuna had truly surrendered to his Master. Not merely intellectually and emotionally, but Arjuna had surrendered his very senses to Krishna. He had surrendered so fully that when the Master told him that the crow was green, what his eyes saw was just that.

At this point Arjuna is not yet in that state. He is confused. He is in dilemma. He knows that his duty is to defeat his enemies and kill them if needed but his enemies are his kinsmen, his elders and his teachers. The relationship, the *samskara* of his relationship with them, makes him hesitate. Arjuna brings up all that he knows from scriptures, from tradition and from hearsay, doing whatever he can to avoid the unpleasant decision to fight his own kith and kin.

Krishna, fully aware of his dilemma, moves forward in his mission to destroy that identity. The Master is a surgeon who removes the cancer of ego. This is what Krishna does throughout the Gita dialogue. To give Arjuna credit, he stays through this surgery. Many weaker men would have run away from the operation theatre, this battlefield, with no desire to let go of their identities. The greatness of Arjuna lies in his determination to listen to his Master and be guided by him.
So he implores his Master, ‘Krishna, please tell me what to do. I am your disciple. You are my refuge.’

It is this readiness to surrender to the Master that redeems Arjuna and helps him win the war, which in reality is the war within himself.

This is the war that each one of you is fighting each day, if you are truly aware. This is the war that you need to fight to drop your ego, your mind, and the identity that binds you to all the bondages upon this Earth.

What ever you think is yours and whatever you think is you, is different from the truth.

It is the Master who can lead you through the path of this self-discovery, as Krishna is now leading Arjuna.

To be led, you need the attitude of surrender.
The Master is Your Bridge to Divinity

Q: Master, how does the Guru help the disciple? What is the process?

The whole Gita is the answer for this question. The whole Gita is the process. It starts with the Master providing the intellectual clarity, then giving the experience, taking the disciple through the whole path and putting him in the same consciousness in which the Master lives. The whole Gita explains the process, and if you listen to it, you will be able to
understand the whole process. The whole Gita is the answer to your question.

Guru, the Master, is the link between God and humanity. Seeing the state of the Master, the disciple gets encouraged to feel that he too can elevate himself to that level and that he too can aspire. That is why time and again I tell you all, I am not here to prove my divinity; I am here to prove your divinity.

The very mission of a guru is to remove the layer of ignorance that surrounds you, which prevents you from seeing your own divine nature. That is what the word guru means; it means, leading from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, to the wisdom of who you really are.

The guru can assist with a glance, with a touch, with a word, without a word, in many ways, to gift his grace upon you. This is what is referred to as diksha or initiation. This is the process of bestowing his grace upon the initiate. All that the disciple needs to do is to accept with an open mind. But, that is the difficult part.

The Original Sin that the Old Testament refers to is the loss of memory of their divine nature by Adam and Eve. It is a sin that a Master can rectify. He can restore you to your divine nature, if you let him.

This is what Krishna does for Arjuna through the course of His teaching in the Gita. He listens to Arjuna patiently, answers his questions, clarifies his doubts,
chides him as needed and finally reveals to him His own true form.

The nature of the guru is compassion. He is not satisfied until the disciple is liberated. The only way for liberation is the destruction of all ego. That is the painful part. The process therefore becomes a surgery, with the Master as the Master Surgeon. The disciple who has the wisdom to realize this, undergoes the surgery and realizes himself.

**Q: When will Gita be accepted universally as a scripture?**

There is a book written by Dr. David Hawkins, a renowned Psychiatrist, about a system that evaluates the absolute truth of a scripture or a person through a scientifically validated system. In this, he rates the Gita at the highest level of truth.

When you are open to the truths propounded in the Gita, they penetrate your being with an energy that no other literature can match. That is why I call the Gita a *sastra, stotra* and *sutra*; a scripture of wisdom, a devotional book and a book of techniques, all combined in one.

There is an ancient Chinese book called I Ching that people in China use as a guide. They either open a page at random or use sticks to generate the page number to
obtain an answer to the problem that troubles them. They use it as a book of predictions. Many Christians use the Bible in this manner. Gita can be used in a similar way. The Gita will answer any and all of your questions. It is the ultimate book of truth.

**Q: Why is Krishna wasting His time with Arjuna? Again and again Arjuna is coming up with the same questions. Obviously Arjuna does not have what it takes to understand the truth.**

Arjuna is not only the representation of all of humanity in the Mahabharata and Gita, but he is also a prince.

As a human being Arjuna has all the weaknesses that all of us possess in body and mind. These are the weaknesses, the conditioned memories or *samskaras* that are being released, as he is in dialogue with Krishna. This is the reason why Krishna is so patient with Arjuna. The entire humanity is in need of the compassion of the Master.

As a prince and warrior, Arjuna is ego incarnate. There is a saying in Tamil, and I am sure in other languages too, that only when a fruit is ripe it can fall. Unless the ego is ripe it cannot be dropped. People who practice humility without understanding will carry negative ego with them and it will be impossible to drop it.
A small story:

Birbal was a very wise man, a minister in the court of the great Mogul emperor Akbar.

One day Akbar asked Birbal to bring the four biggest fools of the kingdom to him.

Birbal started looking for fools. He saw a man carrying a large plate on his head. It had some clothes, food and toys. Birbal asked the man where he was going. The man said that he was taking this to his wife who had left him, remarried and now has a child from her new husband. These were gifts for the child.

Birbal was happy to find this fool to take to Akbar.

The next day Birbal saw a man traveling with a donkey, the man carrying a bundle of grass on his head. Birbal asked him why he was holding the bundle instead of tying it to the donkey. The man said that his donkey was pregnant so he did not want to overload the animal!

Birbal was happy to find another fool to take to Akbar.

The next morning Birbal took both these men to Akbar and introduced them, describing how he found them. Akbar asked: I told you to bring four fools. Where are the other two?
With folded hands Birbal said: Sire, The third fool brought you the two fools. The fourth asked for them!

Akbar was a wise and humorous man. He laughed and sent all of them away with gifts. He was a king who had everything except ego.

A prince has all the powers to do anything he wishes. When he decides to drop his mind he will apply the same energy and the same focus to this effort as he does to every other undertaking in his life. Some of the most celebrated sages of our ancient culture were kings like Janaka. When a king detaches himself from the outcome and focuses on the path and process, there can be no one more powerful.

Krishna is exemplifying humanity and the select class of humanity through Arjuna.

Q: You have been critical of philosophers. Isn’t it a bit unfair? There have been many great philosophers who have contributed highly to human consciousness.

When philosophers contribute to enhancement of human consciousness, they are no longer philosophers; they become teachers and sages.

You may think I am playing with words but I am not. From time immemorial you will find two classes of
scholars; one, who taught based on their inner and outer experience, with deep honesty and respect for the other person. Then there were those whose teachings and writings were based partially on reading others and partially on observing others. They had no internalization of what they read or observed and they had no inner experience of what they propounded. I call this latter class of scholars as philosophers.

To observe others partially and selectively requires no intelligence. One has already formed a hypothesis; one has already made a judgment. All that one does is to collect evidence to support that hypothesis and judgment. If one finds any evidence to the contrary, those are ignored. Most modern research works seem to be done this way. That is why there is so much controversy in the academic field.

Freud declared that man is unhappy by nature. This is because he never met any enlightened Master, nor perhaps, was he interested in meeting one. He had already made up his mind that all humans were unhappy and his mission was to collect evidence to prove this. Freud’s colleague and friend, Carl Jung came to India, heard about Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi, the great enlightened sage, but did not meet him. He later admitted that he was scared to meet this blissful enlightened Master for fear that his hypothesis and life’s work would be demolished!
Rene Descartes, the renowned French philosopher, single handedly established the Western philosophy of rationalism. ‘I think, therefore I am,’ he said. It is a pity that an intelligent man like him did not want to go deeper and understand that it is only when you stop thinking that you understand who you are. Until then you are a mere plaything in the hands of your mind. You are the slave of your mind, not its master. What is there to be proud of in being a slave?

All these philosopher scholars had only one objective, which was to prove how intelligent they were. They were driven by their ego, not by any desire to benefit humanity. The odd exceptions were men like Socrates who were willing to sacrifice their own lives for their convictions. Such people surely enhanced human consciousness and are to be ranked as sages.

**Q: When Arjuna says that he cannot attack his revered teachers like Drona and Bhishma is he not saying what needs to be said by any intelligent and righteous person?**

You are right. That is the reason why Arjuna says what he says.

Arjuna knows that he will be evaluated at a later period by humanity based on his behavior towards his elders and teachers. People will say, ‘What kind of a
person was this? He claimed to be a noble and righteous prince and great warrior and yet he went ahead and killed his teachers.’ Arjuna is trying to protect himself, his reputation, his name and fame; he is protecting his identity. He is issuing a disclaimer: ‘I am not responsible for killing my teachers. I said so in public. This Krishna made me kill them.’

If Arjuna truly had such respect for his elders and teachers, he would not have come as far as the battlefield. In fact, Yudhishtira never wanted to fight. He was persuaded to fight by his brothers. His brothers wanted vengeance. Draupadi wanted to be avenged. Arjuna wanted the kingdom. Had Arjuna been aware and conscious he would have done one of two things; either he would not have come into the battlefield or he would have attacked his enemies without any mercy. Here he stands confused, torn between greed and fear. Arjuna is just being human.

Metaphorically speaking, Arjuna, like all of us, is bound by his conditioning of respect towards elders and teachers. Bheeshma represents the samskaras towards elders, and Drona represents the samskaras towards teachers. Both these samskaras need to be destroyed before he can move towards the ultimate truth. As long as one is ruled by this conditioning of elders and teachers, it is impossible to find one’s own truth. Truth conveyed by anyone else, even an enlightened Master, must be internalized through one’s own experience before it can
become one’s own truth. Even a Master can only guide; he can light the lamp to drive out the ignorance; but the realization must happen within oneself.
Time is Psychological, Not Chronological

2.9 Sanjaya said:

Arjuna then said to Krishna, ‘Govinda, I shall not fight,’ and fell silent.

2.10 Krishna, smilingly spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna, as they were placed in the middle of both armies.
2.11 Bhagavan said:

You grieve for those that should not be grieved for and yet, you speak words of wisdom.

The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

2.12 It is not that at anytime in the past I did not exist; so did you and these rulers exist,

And we shall not ever cease to be hereafter.

2.13 Just as the spirit in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age,

So does it pass into another body; the man centered within himself does not fear this.

Even though it is written here in the past tense, I feel Krishna should always be addressed in the present tense. He is still relevant to each of us today. We cannot say, ‘Krishna was’ but ‘Krishna is’; not ‘Krishna said’ but ‘Krishna says’.

Once again, having lamented about what he is being forced to do, and not wishing to do what he is expected to do, Arjuna, like a petulant child sits down saying, ‘I am not going to fight.’ It is as if Arjuna is waiting to be persuaded.

He is seeking an explanation.
Krishna says to him gently and smilingly, ‘While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor for the dead.’

Again, Krishna addresses the issue directly, ‘O Arjuna! You speak as if you are intelligent, enlightened. You speak the words without having experienced them. Therefore, your words do not carry conviction.

Your emotion, your being, shows that you are not enlightened, that you have not understood, that you have not experienced. A truly enlightened person will never worry for the living or the dead.’

If you worry for somebody living or dead, you cannot be an intelligent person. What is death and life after all? There are thousands, rather millions, who have lived and gone.

Someone once asked me, ‘Why is it that natural calamities happen? Why is it that so many people die in wars and calamities? Why is God doing these things and why is God being mean?’

I told him, ‘To give you an honest answer, I do not know. But if you insist on an answer, I can give you an answer the next time God calls for a conference. I can ask Him to give me an answer!’

These questions have no answer in Existence. The question is asked from a very low level, from your logic, but God is beyond your logic.
You can never have an answer for these questions.

For example, a small ant asks the elephant, ‘Why are you as dark as I am? How is it that we both have the same color skin?’ Will the elephant be able to answer? The elephant will not even know that it is being asked this question. He will not even be aware of the ant or it’s question!

Likewise, it is important to understand the rules of Existence, of the Divine.

Only the ignorant worry about people who are living or dead. A truly intelligent person does not bother about death.

Often people ask me, ‘How was the universe created? Was it by Brahma, as Hindu scriptures say? Or was it created in six days by a nameless God as the Old Testament would have us believe?’

I say to them what Buddha said thousands of years ago based on his personal perception. ‘The universe,’ Buddha said, ‘has neither been created nor will it ever be destroyed. It always has been.’

The universe created itself. It is the creation that embodies the creator and results in what has been created. The universe is the ultimate expression of the non-dual *advaitic* experience, in which the experience merges with the experiencer and the experienced.

Our questions regarding the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ of what happens around us arise only when they threaten us
in some manner or another. These questions, these issues about the morality of the universe, spring forth when our ego is threatened, when our identity is threatened, when our life is threatened.

Every person stricken with an incurable and fatal affliction such as cancer, would invariably ask the question, ‘Why me?’ If it is a young child, then certainly the parents, relatives and friends are bound to question the justice and fairness of God.

What do we know about the fairness of God? What do we know at all about God? All we know and care about is our own welfare. All we wish is to be secure in the comforts of our own wellbeing and that of our near and dear ones. Any concern about the rest of humanity is only after one’s own comfort zone is managed.

The creator is also the destroyer. What is created will be destroyed. We have no agreement with God that when we are born we will be assured of so many years of life along with the knowledge of the timing and nature of our death. We are born into this world with no awareness of why we are here. We will also die with no awareness of when and how. The truth is that simple. We have no birthright to all this information. Birth itself is not our right!

When you truly realize your Self, when you are enlightened, you will be aware of when you will die and how you will die. It will then make no difference to you whether your body is alive or dead. Living and dying
are no longer issues in which you feel you need to play a part. They are progressions of nature and being enlightened, you flow with nature.

We are just playing with words when we talk about *karma* and destiny, saying that they are responsible for everything that happens to us and for everything that we do.

Let me tell you this: We are responsible for what happens to us. We are responsible for what we do. It is a misrepresentation of nature’s law to blame nature for what happens to us.

Earthquakes and tsunamis occur because man has plundered nature. Looking for oil and minerals, we have drilled holes tens of thousands of meters into the bowels of the Earth, on land and in the ocean. We have ruthlessly destroyed forests and hills. We have drilled holes through the ozone layer in search of our comfort zone. Then we wonder why nature misbehaves. Nature only behaves, She never misbehaves.

Nature does not guarantee that the person who creates havoc and destroys is the one to suffer in that body. Nature is patient and all knowing. Nature’s law strikes without fear or favor. What one generation does to destroy nature may visit upon another generation. From nature’s standpoint we never die. We just disappear and reappear. In whichever scene we reappear, we still bear responsibility for what we have done in an earlier scene.
That’s why questions of why a ten-year-old should die or contract cancer have neither meaning nor relevance. The ten-year-old is only the reappearance of someone who has been here before and probably will reincarnate to be here again. We are not normally aware of what one has done before and what one is therefore responsible for.

Some people question, ‘Is it fair that we are held responsible for what we did in another lifetime and are not even aware of now?’

Who said anything about fairness? What do we know of fairness except what we determine what is fair out of our own selfishness? It is possible to be conscious of what one has done in previous births; it is even possible to have a conscious birth, coming into this world fully conscious and aware. Before that happens, we need to drop our ego and merge with nature. We need to surrender our existence to nature. When we do so, nature responds and opens up.

Sanjaya says Krishna was smiling as He uttered these words. Krishna must have been laughing at Arjuna. ‘You fool, you pretend to be wise and quote the scriptures. Who do you think you are quoting the scriptures to? What can you understand of what I, Myself have said?’

Krishna continues: ‘Never was there a time when I did not exist or you and all these kings, and never in the future shall any of us cease to be.’

With this verse begins the essence of the whole Gita.
This is the gist of the whole Gita. This is atmagnana, Self Realization. If you can understand this one verse, you can become enlightened straightaway and enter into eternal bliss.

Krishna says there was never a time when I, you and all the kings did not exist. If you think our souls will also die with our bodies, you are wrong. We were there before our birth and this death and will remain after death. It is not true that any of us will not be in the future.

In Zen Buddhism there is a beautiful meditation technique to achieve enlightenment.

You are asked to meditate on the face you had before your birth. The koan or sutra, a technique for meditation says, ‘What was your face like before your father and mother were born?’

Upon meditating on this koan you realize that you existed in the past, exist in the present and will exist in the future. Your face and body may change but you continue to exist. Then why do we think we will die and why do we fear death? If what Krishna says is true, why are we worried about this life and about death? You need to first understand the concept of the past, present and future to enable you to understand what Krishna says.

Let me explain this concept first.

Time is like a shaft continuously moving from the future on the right into the past on the left. The future is
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You cannot have any thoughts if you stop thinking about the past and the future. Your thoughts consist of nothing but the constant movements between past and the future. The more your thoughts shift from past to future or future to past, the higher the frequency of thoughts. The less you shift from past to future or future to past, less the number of thoughts. Try to think of something in the present, you will find that you cannot. You can think of it only by taking it into the past or future. You are either worrying about the future or remembering the past.

The higher the frequency of thoughts, the more you are caught in the physical and material world.
For example, if you have 100 Thoughts Per Second (TPS), it means you have jumped 100 times between the past and future back and forth in one second. If you have 80 TPS, it means you have jumped that many times between these two dimensions. The higher the frequency, the more you will be away from the present. The higher the frequency of thoughts, the more worries and problems you have. If the number of thoughts reduces, you fall into the present moment.

When your frequency of thoughts is high, you are in the physical body or the *annamaya kosha*. When the frequency is a little less, you move into a higher energy layer called *praanamaya kosha*. When your TPS is say 60 (here the reference is just proportional), you move into the mental layer or *manomaya kosha* or the next layer – pleasure layer or the *vignanamaya kosha*; you come a little close to the *atman*. If you fall in the present moment, you are in the inner most layer, that is the *anandamaya kosha*; you are *atman* or the soul.

The past, present and future, all the three put together are eternal, *nithya* or *atman*. Only when you come to the present moment do you experience *atman* – your true Self, but as of now you are constantly shuttling between the past and future.

The *Upanishads* talk of these five body layers. The *vignanamaya kosha* is where the TPS is still less, say 40. When your TPS is very low, say 20, you come to the *anandamaya kosha*. 


When the number of thoughts reduces, you will not even be aware of the passage of time. For example, when you are with someone you love, even two or three hours will seem like a short while. On the contrary, when you are with someone whose company is boring, even a short time seems very long. You will keep glancing at your watch and wondering why time does not move!

Time is more psychological than chronological. That is why, in our scriptures or Vedas, we have the word *kshana* to describe the unit of time. *Kshana* does not denote one second, but is defined as the gap or time interval between two thoughts. The larger the *kshana*, or the gap between two thoughts, the more in the present we are. Each person’s *kshana* will be different depending on how busy their mind is! Normally, our *kshana* will be in the region of microseconds because we are continuously flooded with thoughts.

When our TPS is lower, we will naturally be in ecstasy, in bliss. When our thoughts are less, we will not know how much time has passed and we live in heaven. When the number of our thoughts is high, we are in hell. Hell and heaven are nothing but the number of thoughts that we entertain, that’s all. That is why I say heaven and hell are not geographical places, but psychological spaces.

With a higher frequency of thoughts, you are in hell, caught in the physical layer; you think you are the body. When the frequency of thoughts reduces, you think you are the mind and just emotion and bliss prevail. When the
thoughts become zero, you realize you are *atman*- Self; you are there in the past, present and future. Only a man whose TPS is zero can realize what Krishna says - *You will be there forever*. The past, present and future are just words; you exist throughout.

But right now the frequency of thoughts is very high. You do not have the patience or the energy to understand who you are, your base and your nature. The moment you fall into the present moment, you experience that you were there in the past, are in the present and will be in the future. Krishna says, ‘You were there in the past, you are in the present and you will be in the future; you do not die.’

When He says that, He means that you are *nithya atman*, eternal consciousness; you are beyond your mind and body. But you are restless and know only this space of moving from past to future, that is why you are unable to believe that this space of the present exists within you. You are away from the present moment, away from the eternal consciousness, therefore unable to see the truth of eternal consciousness. The higher the TPS, the farther away you are and from there, you cannot see it clearly. When you come down in your TPS, you can see and experience your nature more clearly, more deeply.

When Krishna says, ‘You are the eternal *atman*’, He means that as a being, you are beyond time, but as of now, you are caught in the mind between the past and the future.
He says beautifully, ‘There was never a time when I, you and all these kings did not exist. If you think that our souls will also die along with our bodies, you are wrong. We existed before our birth and will remain after our death. It is also not true that any of us will not be in the future.’ We will be in the future as there is no death of our being or consciousness. Whatever dies, can never live. Whatever lives can never die.’

Here, your deep consciousness says that something is living in you. This quality you attribute to your body and mind. Do not misunderstand your consciousness to be your body and mind.

You are not the body or the mind. As long as you are caught in the past and the future, you think that you are the body and mind. The moment you come down to the present moment, you experience that you are beyond the body, beyond the mind.

Krishna does not mean that we existed in the form that we are here now or that He was present always as Krishna in the form we imagine Him to be, with a flute in His hand and a peacock feather on His head. He means that our spirits which are eternal, always existed and will always exist. In our spiritual state, that of our atman, we are divine, one with the universal energy, Brahman.

The gist of the second chapter is that you are atman, that you are divine and that you are God.
Even as the spirit resides in this body, the body passes through its seasons of childhood, youth, middle age and old age as the seasons of nature do in each year. Finally, it passes through death, and then reappears, just as trees shed leaves in autumn and produce new leaves in spring.

Transition of the spirit through the body as it ages is no different from the transition of time through the seasons. One does not grieve as one enjoys the pleasures of childhood, youth and middle age. Why then should one grieve the onset of old age and then death?

At death the spirit passes from one body into another body. It has three *kshanas* to achieve this, each *kshana* being a time period between thoughts. A person who is in a high thought frequency state, a high TPS (thoughts per second) state, has a much shorter time to shift from one body to another compared to another person whose TPS is low, whose frequency of thoughts is low.

A person in a no-mind, no-thought state has infinite time, as the time between thoughts is infinite. His spirit is at liberty to stay free without taking another body as long as he chooses, or more correctly, as the universe chooses.

All enlightened Masters are in this category. When the spirit leaves the mind-body system, it becomes one with the universal energy.

Imagine a number of circles drawn on a whiteboard. Think of the whiteboard space as the universal energy.
Individual body-mind systems are represented by the circles drawn on the whiteboard. The white space enclosed in the circles is the spirit and this is the same energy as the white space outside the circles. The space within is *atman*, and the space outside is *brahman*.

When a body mind dies, when an individual dies, all that happens is that these perimeter lines get erased, that is all. The space within the circle merges with the space outside the circle. White merges with white. Energy merges with energy.

When the spirit, the energy, is ready to move into another mind-body system, it enters another circle. It is a continuous, ongoing process and a natural process. One
who understands this process and accepts it is an integrated person. Krishna refers to him as a ‘dheera’, one who is firm, centered and aware.
When You Mourn, You Mourn for Yourself

Q: The question I have is about the past and the future. This has to do with astrologers and palmists who tell us our past and future. Some of them are correct and some of them are wrong. Does astrology have validity?

See, if you are sitting in a low point or a valley, can you see what there is at a distance? You cannot. That is how it is when your thoughts crowd your mind and the TPS (thoughts per second) is high. If you sit higher or
closer you can see a little more clearly, like the Indian television, Doordarshan! Closer still, with fewer thoughts, you can see still more clearly like a private television channel. From up close, you can see like your own personal computer.

A person with a low TPS can see very clearly. He can see through time. He can predict your past and future properly and clearly. If the person’s TPS is high, he cannot predict at all because his mind is constantly moving between past and future. A person who has established himself in the nithya atman or eternal consciousness can not only predict but also change the future!

There is a beautiful verse in the Vedic scriptures that says that all the letters so painstakingly written by Brahma - the Lord of Creation - on your forehead can simply be erased by the Guru’s left toe when the Guru casually walks past! The man who is established in the eternal consciousness can recreate the future.

Astrology, Jyotisha in Sanskrit, and any form of prediction, whether palmistry or tarot cards, is not so much about the science as it is about what state the individual who predicts is in. Yes, astrology is a science and it is based on valid principles of how the universal energy field affects individuals. In the Vedic culture, astrology was rarely used beyond adolescence and even then only as a guidance to evaluate the aptitude of a student. A guru at the Gurukul - Vedic school, used
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astrology to determine the aptitude and potential of a young student, much as you would use SAT tests today, the student aptitude tests.

Using astrology to decide what you have to do day after day is a misuse of that knowledge. When you understand that you are part of the flow of the cosmic energy, which is what astrology teaches, you need to have the intelligence to flow with that energy and allow what happens to happen.

Q: How can we not grieve for the dead? Perhaps it is possible for Krishna and great Masters like you, but for ordinary mortals this is not feasible.

Please understand that you not only grieve for the dead but for the living as well. Constantly you grieve, you suffer, you regret because you expect and you get attached. Do you grieve for those who you think are evil? You celebrate, don’t you? You only grieve for those who are close to you, those who you consider your possessions.

What you grieve for has to be connected with the ‘I’ and ‘mine’, otherwise there is no grief. Grief can arise only from your perceived loss. You feel pain only when you think you have lost something you consider valuable. It need not be death; it can be anything that you consider you must have and you feel you are losing. It could be
material possessions, relationships, name and fame and many other things that are totally insignificant but have assumed serious value to you because of your attachment to them.

If you truly are compassionate and you did think that death is a punishment, you should grieve for all who die, be it a gangster or murderer. No, your grief is selective and judgmental. That grief also happens whenever something does not go the way you wish for you and those who you are attached to.

You may ask what is wrong with that behavior. What is wrong with that behavior is that it brings you grief. Instead of centering in on your blissful natural state, you settle yourself into an unnatural state of grief and sorrow. What is it that brings about this state of sorrow?

All your grief for someone’s death arises out of selfishness, nothing else. The person who has died has gone. He no longer has any problems. You have problems about that person leaving you. So you grieve. Psychologists say that the mourning process goes through stages of grief and anger before there is acceptance. Both grief and anger arise from selfish reasons.

The newly widowed lady was shrieking her head off in grief. Neighbors were surprised because she always quarreled with her husband and every day would curse him to die.

‘You are now free’, they said, ‘you can do what you want. Why are you crying?’
The lady asked, ‘But who will I curse now?’ And wailed some more!

In the case of Arjuna, his grieving is based on his perceived attachment to his kinsmen and elders and the fear of losing them. Ultimately this fear is related to the fear of losing himself and his identity. Krishna gets him out of this primal fear of losing his identity by showing Arjuna that he is much bigger than his mind body.

So it is with all of us. We are all far greater than our mind body systems. When the body and mind perish at death, we do not perish. Our energy lives on and reappears in another body again as matter. What is there to grieve once you understand this simple truth?

Every one can understand and accept this truth. What is feasible for Arjuna is feasible for you. What was feasible for me is feasible for you. What is the alternative? What is the point in wallowing in sorrow when you can be liberated into bliss?

Q : You said earlier that you are repeating the Gita. Do you mean you are Krishna? Many proclaim they are God. Are you also in the same business?

Nice question! I am not here to proclaim that I am God. I am here to proclaim that you are God. When Krishna says he is God and proclaims or proves His divinity, He creates a situation and prepares you to
receive His message and realize that you too are divine. That is why Krishna has to prove and express his divinity.

So understand that I am not here to prove that I am God, I am here to show that you are God. If you can experience that you are God, it is enough; nothing more is necessary. You do not need to accept or believe I am God. You do not even need to bother about my divinity. Just understand and experience that you are God; nothing more is necessary.

I answered a question earlier on the process of the guru disciple relationship. I said that the guru is a bridge between man and god. This bridge is a short cut. It is not essential that you use this bridge. There are Masters who have realized themselves, who realized the truth of their divinity, without any external assistance from another Master. I am one myself.

Understand, this is not a business. Business implies that there is some kind of a two way transaction. As I mentioned earlier, any business is a win-lose relationship. One has to lose if another wins. A guru disciple relationship is a win-win relationship. Neither can lose.

If a Master treats his mission as a business, it will be a lose-lose relationship, similar to warfare. The guru will not gain ultimately. In fact from a psychic perspective he will invite deep suffering. The disciple of course will be misled and will suffer.
How does one determine whether one is with the right Master? More importantly, how does one determine whether the Master, however good he may be, is the right one for you?

Ask my disciples and they can tell you. Whatever I say may not be convincing to you, since your query itself is one of doubt.

Some say that all questions that they have just disappear when they come in front of me, like dewdrops in front of the morning sun. Many ask me at first how they can remember me, what should they focus on? I tell them, if I am truly your Master, your problem will not be in trying to remember me, but in forgetting me!

There are others who tell me that for the first time they felt they had come home. They had been searching ceaselessly, not even knowing what it was that they were searching for, and suddenly the search ended. It was a deep feeling of fulfillment, as if they had come home.

Spirituality can never be a business. It is a mission. It is a mission of compassion. What a Master gives is unconditional, with no expectation in return.

You say I implied I am God. I am one with the divine energy; so are you. The difference is that I am aware of this truth; perhaps you need to realize this truth. When you do, there will be no difference.

For you the word God is a mere concept, something intangible. All you are focused on is your identity - your
name, your status, your family etc. Without these you think you are nobody. You cannot introduce yourself to any one else in any other way except through your material identity.

To me, God is reality. Every movement I make is with the permission of Existence. I am part and parcel of that Existence. I am aware every moment that I am one with that Existence. This body means nothing to me. Even my name is borrowed. The clothes that I wear are as irrelevant as my skin is to me. Every home on this planet is my home.

When you reach that awareness, you too will realize that you are nothing short of being divine, that you too are God.

This is my mission. My mission is to create that personal transformation in individuals so that they too realize that they are God, and nothing less.

Q: Is death the thoughtless state that you talked about? Does that mean death is the ultimate present moment?

The thoughtless, no mind state is beyond death and beyond life. Death is a mere rite of passage. It is a transition between one life and another. As I explained, the spirit has only three kshanas to leave one body and
take up another. When the spirit is without body and mind, it has no thoughts. It is the body-mind system that is responsible for creation of thoughts.

Death can become a permanent passage into liberation and a celebration if you are prepared to let go. If you let go of all your attachments and all your desires, your inner space becomes pure. It can then merge effortlessly with the outer cosmic energy.

I described earlier drawing circles on a whiteboard. The whiteboard is the *brahman*, universal energy and the space within the circles is *atman*, individual energy. In this situation the space within the circle seamlessly merges with the space outside. There is no distinction. There is no taint that separates the inner space from the outer space when the body-mind perimeter disappears. The spirit that leaves the body does not have to look for another body to move into. It stays in the thoughtless pure energy space.

Thoughts, memories and desires are all creations of matter. They are part of the body-mind system. Bodies buried after death can still hold these memories. That is why people see spirit forms in burial locations. One of the reasons that Hindu customs require the body to be burnt after death is to remove these memories. Only the bodies of enlightened beings are buried under Hindu customs since these are no longer matter but pure energy. Many Hindu temples are built on such burial spots, *jiva samadhi*, of enlightened Masters and still radiate the enlightenment energy.
The thoughtless state can be achieved while living. One does not have to wait until death to reach the present moment. Meditation is the key to the thoughtless state. Meditation brings you to the present moment. This is the reason why meditation is often equated with death.

Through meditation you touch your inner space. You realize that you are no longer merely the mind body that perishes but that you are the undying spirit. When that realization happens you are indeed reborn. You come out of the womb of knowledge, \textit{gnana garbha}. Until then you had only experienced \textit{bhoo garbha}, the physical womb.

Death is a rite of passage. Krishna says that in the same manner as the body passes through infancy, childhood, youth and middle age into old age, it also passes into death and then into another body. Shakespeare has described this beautifully in his piece ‘All the world is a stage’ and in his play ‘As You Like It’. He talks about the seven stages of life from the crying infant through the reluctant school going child, and finally to the old man, as seven acts in a play. This wise poet rightly compares life to a play and each stage in the life as an act in the play.

Sankara in Bhaja Govindam says that even when the hair is white, teeth are gone and the old man needs a stick just to stand, he is full of desires. The problem is that we cannot accept getting old and leaving the body. As children we are all rushing to grow up and be adults and there we would like to stay. It does not work like
that. The body-mind is dying every second and is getting reborn every second. Of the many trillion cells that we have in our system, many millions die every second and as we grow older some do not get reborn. This is a biological fact.

What is there to worry about it? You throw away a piece of cheese when it gets old and moldy. However much you may like that cheese, if you have any intelligence, you do not frame and gaze at it, but just throw it away and move on. Treat your body the same way. You do not own it. Don’t get attached to it. You are only a tenant in the body. Your spirit is the owner. Identify with your spirit. Forget about the body. When it gets to be a problem, when it is time to leave, just leave without packing your bags. There is no need to pack for where you are going. You will be provided for.

Yogi Baba was sowing seeds in his garden. His wife watched him for a while and saw that he was planting the seeds faster and faster as he went along.

‘Yogi,’ she cried out, ‘what is the hurry, why don’t you plant more carefully and slowly?’

‘Oh no, I cannot,’ Yogi shouted back. ‘I don’t have too many seeds left and I have to finish before I run out of seeds!’

We are just like Yogi. The seeds will take care of themselves. Whether you plant slower or faster, there are only a certain number of seeds in the bag. When you
finish this bag of seeds, another will come to you. Where is the rush?

Death is not the only present moment. Every second of your life is a present moment to savor and treasure. It is because we do not live life in the present moment that we are afraid to let go. This is why we are afraid of death.

Q: Why is it that we do not have memories of our past lives? It would be so easy to know what to do if we knew what mistakes we made in our past lives.

Please believe me, you are very much better off not knowing what happened in your past life or past lives!

What you have experienced and remembered in this life itself is enough to drive you crazy. Why do you want to remember what you did in other bodies earlier? Nature is being kind to you by letting you not remember all this.

What happens is this: when the body experiences death and the spirit leaves the body, the spirit travels through seven layers of energy starting from the physical body layer. In each layer it experiences emotions and memories associated with that layer. When it reaches the subtle body layer, the fourth layer, all the painful memories of the past life surface. Immediately after this, the spirit enters the fifth layer, the causal energy body and the
body-mind goes into a coma. This layer is the layer of darkness which people experience when they go through Near Death Experiences (NDE). The light they see at the end of this layer is the sixth layer of energy, the cosmic energy layer.

The fifth layer of causal energy body is when the spirit detaches from the body. Until this point, the spirit has the option to return to the body-mind. That is how many people come back to life after having been in coma for years. They had stayed in their causal layer. Once the spirit crosses this layer into the cosmic layer, it has no option but to move on.

If it is a spirit that has fulfilled all desires in its lifetime, it moves on to the final energy layer of Nirvanic energy. A spirit with unfulfilled desires for which it took birth originally, will move into another body to fulfill these desires. The spirit will seek a body that has similar inclinations in terms of environment, culture, parental background and so on.

When the spirit moves through the pain and coma in the fourth and fifth layers, all memories of the previous life are lost along with the body-mind. This passage through the darkness of the fifth causal layer corresponds to the passage though the mother’s womb. This is the point at which the spirit enters the new body. This is the reason why you do not remember what you experienced in your past lives.
However, there are points in every one’s lives when some experiences or more are recovered when a state of intuition is reached. This corresponds to a very low TPS or thought frequency state. Experiences recounted by Dr. Brian Weiss and others in their work with regression of people into past lives, use techniques to induce such states.

In general, such adventures into past life memories may be quite harmful unless undertaken by someone who is spiritually aware and understands the implications. Someone who is spiritually aware may be able to use less harmful techniques to heal a person without having to put them through past life experiences.

There are people who say that Existence is not fair in subjecting them to \textit{karma} and the effects of \textit{karma}, without their being aware of what brought about that \textit{karma}. All I can say is that there is no such thing as fairness in Existence as these people imply. Existence just is. It does not judge. You cause what happens to you. There is no accident in nature. Everything is an incident caused by another incident.

Nature is protecting you by helping you not remember all your past memories. If you did, your entire life would be spent on a psychiatrist’s couch!
The Only Reality in Life is Impermanence

2.14 O son of Kunti, contact with sense objects causes heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and these have a beginning and an end.

O Bharata, these are not permanent; endure them bravely.

2.15 O chief among men, these surely do not afflict the man who is centered,

Pleasure and pain are the same to him and he is ready for enlightenment.
2.16 The nonexistent has no being; that which exists never ceases to exist;

This truth about both is perceived by those who know the Truth.

2.17 Know It to be indestructible, by which all this body is pervaded.

Nothing can destroy It, the Imperishable.

2.18 These bodies of the material energy are perishable.

The Energy itself is eternal, incomprehensible and indestructible.

Therefore, fight, O Bharata.

Krishna says here that the sensory experiences are all temporary. Feelings of hot and cold, sweet and sour, wet and dry, experiences of pain and pleasure, as well as other experiences of like and dislike are all temporary. These experiences do not affect the centered person who is qualified to be enlightened.

Buddha refers to sensory experiences as anichha or impermanent and unreal. That they are impermanent is easy to understand. These experiences last only as long as the sensory stimuli are in place. Moreover, they are relative. What may be considered hot by one person may not be perceived as hot by another. Certainly, the conclusions that heat is pleasurable or cold is pleasurable are both specific to individuals and circumstances. These are related to time, space and individuals.
There are many sadhus - ascetics, who stay in the higher reaches of the Himalayan mountains with very little clothing, in what everyone would consider bitter cold. There are those who carry out the parikrama, circumambulation, of Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar with meager clothing and footwear. Studies have been conducted on Tibetan Lamas in their high altitude snow-covered monasteries that show how the Lamas can bear extreme cold without any discomfort. Renowned scientists from reputed institutions such as the Harvard Medical School have conducted such studies.

When nature is accepted totally, heat, cold, rain, dryness and all these changes do not affect the mind-body system. If we walk around without footwear, the earth that we walk upon becomes our friend. As long as we wear footwear with the intention of protecting ourselves from nature, we are treating nature as an outsider, as an enemy. We can therefore never be comfortable with nature because of this attitude.

One who is firmly grounded in himself is grounded in nature. To such a person, changes in nature’s parameters such as heat and cold, rain and shine, make no difference. They do not give him either pleasure or pain. Such a person treats them naturally, equally, with no difference.

Krishna says that such a person is qualified and ready for enlightenment. Such persons have brought their senses under control, and as a result have their mind too under control.
What Krishna says here, and what was understood by the wise sages of the East for thousands of years, is only now being grasped by scientists and researchers.

The mind-body system that we are born with is transient, in the sense that it is perishable and ceases to exist at death. No human being, or for that matter, any living being on this planet Earth is exempt from this rule. Everything in material form ceases to exist in that form at some point in time, and in that sense, does not have permanence or a basis in Truth.

It is now accepted by medical science that the mind-body dies many deaths before its final exit. Cells within our body die in thousands everyday and get reborn. Over a period of a few years, every single cell in the mind-body system is replaced and renewed. What you were two or three years ago is not what you are today. What you are today is not what you will be in two or three years from now. Every single cell in your mind-body system, and therefore, every single bone, muscle, tissue, artery, vein, limb and body part are new, completely different from what they were two or three years ago.

The mind-body continually ceases to exist and gets recreated. It is not permanent. It is transient.

Separate from the mind body system is our spirit that lives on eternally. The spirit remains the same throughout our life with no change, despite all the changes to the mind body system. It continues to be, to exist, even after
our death. The spirit does not die with the body. It lives on. It is permanent and true.

When one understands this difference between what is eternal - *nithya*, and what is transient - *mithya*, one becomes a seer and knower of Truth.

*Nithya* and *mithya* do not translate into real and unreal. In the same way *maya* is not unreal. *Maya* and *mithya* are real and perceived by our senses but they are not true, they are not lasting. They are not *sat* - truth, they are *asat* - untruth. They are factually real but truthfully unreal. That which is true will always be true, it cannot cease to exist. Truth here refers to the state of permanence, of being eternal.

I say a living Master is not present as you feel, and a dead Master is not absent as you think. The presence of a dead Master, an enlightened dead Master, is permanent and always real. A living Master’s form is not His presence. He is present in His absence as well.

Our perceptions through our senses may be real but not necessarily true. What is an observed fact is not necessarily true. A dream is very real when it happens. You may get angry, frightened, excited, lustful and all of these when you dream. Your body responds to these emotions that you feel in a dream and your senses react to what you observe in the dream. Yet the moment you start witnessing the dream, you awaken. You cannot dream when you become aware. The dream is not true, though it seemed real.
The same happens when you are awake and daydreaming, which is most of the time. You are awake but you fantasize. The fantasies are real when you undergo the experience; they exist in your mind and even your senses but they are not true. They are not permanent and you cannot do anything tangible with them.

Even when you think you are fully awake, what you perceive through your senses may not be what you interpret them to mean. Your mind always filters its own lens of the ego. You judge whatever you perceive through your conditioned memories. In almost all cases, your judgment has already been made. All that you do is selectively put together pieces of what you perceive, to support your judgment.

That is the reason why the great Masters have always urged their disciples to wake up. *Jagrat* is the word used to awaken them. This is not the call to wake up from sleep but the call to wake up into awareness! It is the call to emerge from the non-existent reality of facts and observation into the truly existent Truth of self-experience.

Most of the time we exist in our past or future. We are constantly caught in the experiences of the past, reliving them under the excuse of learning from them, but in actuality, we are caught in guilt, regret or pleasure from remembering the past experiences and memories with no ability whatsoever to do anything about them. They are the ghosts hovering in our lives. The past is
history. It is gone. The moving finger has written and moved on. There is no way that it will erase even a single thing that has been written. Our intelligence, creativity and bliss can be accessed only in this present moment, not in reviewing the past.

Our other mistake is to speculate about the future. The future is just as unreal as the past. If anything, it is more unreal, as it has not even happened. Yet, we build castles, we plan, we dream, and we fantasize about the future without the capacity to execute any of it. We are not even confident of taking our next breath that is not under our control. How can we control events of the future when we cannot control our breath?

The futility of our constant movement between past to future and back again is the greatest wonder of it all. It is merely the stuff of our thoughts and our belief that it is real. And it is the source of all of our suffering!

The only truth, the only true reality, is the truth of this very moment. As long as we focus on this present moment, we are truly aware and centered. The present moment never ceases to exist. In fact, that is all that does exist. The present moment alone is sat, truth, everything else is asat, untruth.

One who realizes this and acts accordingly, says Krishna, is enlightened.

We are all made of body, mind and spirit. The body is tangible; we can feel its boundaries. When a part of the
body is sick, we can feel the discomfort. As long as we feel the body working smoothly, the parts of our body, we say we are in good health.

Our mind is subtle. We do not feel the mind in the same way as we feel the body. We do not feel its boundaries. Yet, we feel the effects of the mind: thoughts, desires, emotions etc. Modern scientific studies have shown that what we term as mind is spread all over the body. Mind and its intelligence are inbuilt into our cellular structure.

Recent studies have shown that it is our belief systems, which in turn arise from our experiences that define the development of our mind, and in turn influence the cellular structure. Earlier it was believed that genetic modifications to the cellular structures influenced the way we behaved. Now it is proven that it is our behavior that leads to our beliefs and thereafter determines our genetics.

Even subtler is the spirit. In fact, many people question this entity called spirit. What is it, they ask? What is this thing called spirit or soul? We cannot see it and we cannot touch it. Becoming aware of this subtle spirit or soul is just what Self-realization is all about.

In these verses, Krishna says first that the spirit pervades the body. His definition of body is the mind-body system. Secondly, He states that the body and mind are destroyed at death. Thirdly, He declares that
the spirit does not die at death. Fourthly, He explains that the spirit is beyond our mental comprehension.

When death happens, body functions stop. Senses that are a function of the mind stop working. The brain which processes thoughts stops working. The entire mind-body system is then left by itself and it degenerates. This part is clear to all of us who have seen death.

What is unclear or unknown to us is that there is something within us that does not perish at death. Krishna clarifies here that this is the Self, the Atman, the energy that never dies.

Upanishads talk about this spirit as dwelling deep in our hearts and being of such minute proportions that it is smaller than a fraction of a fraction of one’s hair!

What is death? Is it the spirit leaving the body that causes death or is it that death forces the spirit into leaving the body? This argument becomes irrelevant once one understands that the body and the mind-body systems are perishable, that it has a definite shelf life. It comes with an expiry date, whatever that date may be. However, beyond this expiry date, there is something that lives on and that is the spirit.

This spirit is energy; it is the energy of life. As I explained before, after death this energy moves from within the body that it occupied temporarily to the energy that is outside the body, the universal energy that surrounds the body.
Krishna urges Arjuna to fight, with the full understanding that what he thinks of as real is unreal, that what he thinks of as permanent is impermanent, and what he thinks he is about to destroy can, in truth, never be destroyed.

Arjuna is overcome with remorse, guilt, pity and insecurity at the very thought of killing his kinsmen. He believes that he is committing a mortal sin by killing them, since he thinks it will be the end of them. Krishna tells him to open his eyes. He tells Arjuna that what he is about to do will only destroy that which is going to perish anyway. Even if he wanted to, Arjuna cannot destroy the imperishable spirit that lives on.

Arjuna’s concern about the death of his kinsmen and elders arises out of his insecurity about his own death. He does not realize his true imperishable nature and therefore he is afraid of dying. By extension, he is afraid of others’ deaths as well, especially at his own hands. Krishna tells him that there is no such thing as death. He tells him that death is unreal.

All our lives we see people around us dying. We all know that there is no one who is immortal. We all know that death is the only certainty in this otherwise uncertain world. Everyone, whether a beggar or a prince, must die.

When we wake up from a dream, we don’t mourn our dream lives, as real as they felt at the time. Do we? No. In the same way, when we awaken into the highest state
of consciousness, we have the same experience that this ‘real’ life was only a dream. There is nothing to mourn or fret over. The lineage of all enlightened Masters the world over has again and again supported Krishna’s declarations with their own direct experience. The body is just the shell that houses your spirit. Even when the body perishes, you do not. It is impossible because you are eternal. You are bliss.

Krishna is stating this reality, straight out. He says firmly that there is no such thing as death. He says what dies or seems to perish is unreal; it had no permanent existence any way.

What does have existence, what is truly real, exists now, has always existed and will exist forever!
Inner and Outer Violence

Q: *Is it possible to be detached without being indifferent? How do we keep our hearts open along the spiritual path?*

Please be very clear: only a person with an open heart can be detached.

If you are indifferent, you will only be dull, not detached. Only a person who can give himself completely can also detach himself completely. Understand that you never shower yourself on anybody because you are afraid that you may not be able to detach. The power to share and detach
You Are God

is one and the same. If you cannot share yourself intensely, you cannot detach yourself. The person who struggles is half of everything, being able to neither attach nor detach. The one who can attach fully can also detach himself.

Many of you are so much in need of attention yourselves that it is difficult to express love and affection to others all the time. Your heart energy center, the anahata chakra, is blocked by a desperate need for attention. You suck energy from others, since attention is energy. The main reason for this is your upbringing. Since childhood you are conditioned to please others and over time you cannot exist without approval of others.

Many of you may have experienced this. When someone is bitter and grieving and you give him or her a shoulder to cry on, you are left feel drained of energy. You are not doing anything physical. You are not even experiencing anything emotional directly. You are only listening to some one cry. Yet, it affects you, it drains you. This is real. People suck energy from you. If you are not centered in your heart center and your heart center is not open, you will feel drained. This may then affect you physically.

By unblocking and energizing your anahata chakra, the heart center, you become a permanent source of energy and become capable of showering attention, affection on others without expecting anything in return and without feeling drained. We teach a simple meditation technique.
to activate and energize the *anahata chakra* in our first level chakra energization courses, the Life Bliss Program level 1. Not only is this capable of giving love without expectation, but it is also a powerful self healing meditation.

When you do not expect anything in return, you have no attachment and you become detached. Detachment does not refer to a state of non-caring, it is in fact just the opposite. The right word is nonattachment, not detachment. When you are not attached, you do not differentiate between strangers and family and friends. You shower attention and affection equally. There is no boundary to your circle of care; it is infinite.

Attachment binds you to the past and present. Nonattachment centers you in the present. When you genuinely care, and care unconditionally, you are no longer bothered about what a person did in the past and how he or she behaved with you. You are also no longer concerned about how they may act with you in the future. All that matters is that you care now.

That is why true love is always in the present. That is why it is blind; it is blind to the past and future. Real love only has eyes to see in the present moment. So long as the love has a fixed object, it remains blind.

When you let go the object and let the love flow wherever, to whomever and however, love blossoms into compassion; it is love expressed in a state of total awareness.
Q: Some Masters talk of the Self as poorna and some as sunya. These have contradictory meanings. How can both be correct?

Buddha refers to the ultimate stage as sunya, nothingness. Sankara refers to the same stage as poorna, the fullness stage. Both Masters refer to the same state. Sankara refers to Self-realization and liberation from all bondages of life and death. Buddha also refers to liberation from all bondages though he says there is no Self and all that there is, is nothingness.

Nothingness and fullness are opposite sides of the same state. They are not different from each other. They are just being viewed differently. When we refer to sunya, we negate; when we refer to poorna we include, that’s all.

The Vedic chant ‘poornamadah poornamidam’ says that from fullness arises fullness; when fullness comes out of fullness, fullness still remains. One can replace the word fullness in this chant with nothingness and the meaning will not change. Just as there is nothing beyond nothing, there is nothing beyond fullness.

Whatever you may add or subtract or multiply or divide from infinity, it will remain infinity. In mathematics if you add to zero you may get something, but if you add anything to nothingness, it will absorb the nothingness into it like a black hole and there will be nothing to show.
Sankara, who talked about *poorna*, fullness, was the ultimate denier of everything. ‘*Neti, neti, not this, not this,*’ was his motto. At eight years of age, he responded to his guru Govindapada, on the banks of the river Tungabadra with six verses that form Atmashataka. Every verse in this response is denial. ‘I am not this, I am not that,’ Sankara says. I am not the five elements. I am not the emotions. I am not the enjoyment. He says, ‘I am Shiva. Nothingness leads to fullness.’

**Q: Krishna urges Arjuna to fight. Many Westerners say that Krishna preached and practiced violence. Is this correct?**

People whose mental tendencies are violent pretend to be shocked at what they perceive as physical violence. They do not understand that there is no difference between the physical and mental violence; one cannot be without the other.

In so-called civilized societies the rule of law controls and inhibits people from exercising the violence of their minds. You do not even find people smiling. If at all they do smile, the smile does not move beyond their lips. The smile is a dead smile. Suppression of the mental violence within does not make a person non violent; it does not make a person peaceful. It just makes the person a time bomb.
People call this privacy. Suppression of feelings is not privacy. It is a disaster waiting to happen. Not letting others into you is not privacy. It is an invitation to depression. You cannot become free by encasing yourself in seclusion.

It is like a monk running away from home thinking that he has renounced everything and that he will be free of all desires. Desires spring from the mind. If the inner maturity does not happen then even if the monk sits far away from everything in a forest, fantasies will crowd his mind.

You cannot run away from your family and become a monk. You can be with family and renounce. You have to be awake and aware to renounce and be a true monk. You do not need to run away to the forests or the mountains to be awake. You can be awake wherever you are.

The Master awakens you most often with a hard slap. Ramana Maharishi says that the Master is a simha swapna, lion nightmare! The Master is a nightmare that wakes you up from unreality into reality.

Krishna is removing the fantasies of Arjuna’s mind. He is clearing the cobwebs of pretension that Arjuna and mankind have about what is good and what is evil. Truth is beyond good and evil. Dharma, the universal law of righteousness, is far different from society’s law of morality and immorality.
We all are brought up with role models and behavior templates of what is right and what is wrong. This is based on societal conditioning. These guidelines and regulations are to ensure that society operates as smoothly as possible. When we do not have the awareness and intelligence to see beyond these rules and regulations and to understand the reason for their existence, we are constantly tempted and yet afraid to break them. We are like the toddler testing the parent’s rules.

The Ten Commandments was the truth that Moses experienced. They were expressions of his experience. For his followers they were mere commandments that had to be enforced through fear and greed. What was a deep spiritual experience of awareness for one enlightened person, degenerated into guidelines for sin and merit, and gateways to hell and heaven.

Many Eastern scholars also have not understood Krishna. They either gloss over what He says as something metaphorical to escape addressing the apparent violence of His statements or they criticize Him for advocating violence.

Krishna is not advocating violence. He is advocating awareness. He says that what we perceive as life and death is a dream. He says that what we perceive as good and evil and as right and wrong are relative, cultural, impermanent and unreal. These dualities are born out of our conditioning and our ignorance. In reality there is no duality. There is no right or wrong, there is no good or evil.
It is this conditioning that makes people constantly ask why God is so cruel. This is why people question situations in the world like the death of a young child or the natural disasters that kill thousands. There are no logical answers except that this is the way of Nature. Nature’s way is impermanence. Nature’s way is unpredictable.

Krishna takes a sledgehammer to break our conditioning. He says to Arjuna, ‘Fight!’ knowing fully well that much of humanity will be shocked. People are shocked because this is what they have in their minds but are afraid to reveal. Constant suppression of violence in the mind breeds depression and leads to violence towards oneself. Some destroy themselves while some are in the process of destroying themselves and others.

It is good to accept the violence within. It is good to reflect upon and examine the violence within in order to understand wherefrom this violence springs. Once the understanding happens the violence will disappear.

A person who has the awareness to realize the impermanence of body-mind and the permanence of the spirit within has already developed within himself the intelligence to know whether the fight and the killing are needed or not. That is why it is said that even if Buddha kills, it is no sin. It is an act born out of awareness that had to happen.

People who preach about non-violence need to understand that *ahimsa*, the Vedic concept of non-violence,
goes well beyond physical non-violence. It is a comprehensive expression of an integrated person. It is non-violence of thoughts, words and from that, non-violence in action. Such non-violence can only happen through complete awareness. It can only happen when there is awareness that every being, animate and inanimate, is part of the same, interconnected cosmic energy. It can only happen when there is the awareness of boundarylessness.

In such a situation, with such awareness, when destruction happens it is an integral part of creation; without such destruction there can be no further creation.

What Krishna says here cannot be understood just through simple logic, by reading or listening. It can only be understood through experience. Krishna is not saying that you logically determine what is right and what is wrong and then decide to fight against what is wrong. He does not give that choice to Arjuna because he does not trust Arjuna’s logic. He does not trust any logic. He says that whatever you think of as good and bad, right and wrong, moral and evil, whatever you think of as opposing dualities are only figments of your own imagination.

There is no duality, there is no difference. The difference is in your awareness. When you shift your awareness beyond this duality you are in a state of Oneness, Wholeness. In that state of Oneness there can be no violence.
Q: Based on beliefs of Christianity and Islam, rebirth or reincarnation is denied by the majority of the world’s population today. Why do these religions deny this phenomenon if this is true?

The socially correct answer to this would be not to get into this controversy and carry on with one’s own belief systems.

Judaism, the religion that spawned both Christianity and Islam, believed in the concept of the spirit living on, moving from one body into another. The concept was called *gilgulim*. While modern Jews may discount this concept, orthodox Jews still believe in reincarnation.

Christian groups such as Gnostics and Islamic groups such as Sufis have repeatedly confirmed their belief in reincarnation. The Bible as it is read today was recompiled in the fourth century A.D. and in this process many scriptures that did not appeal to the Romans were discarded. This is a historical fact. Similarly, in the Koran there are verses that refer to a life before and after birth.

It is true that in these religions reincarnation is not as central a concept as it is in the *Vedic* tradition. There can be no doubt about this.

Disregarding what religions may say for and against reincarnation, one should look at this concept empirically and scientifically. Instead of dismissing evidence of people with past life memories as hallucination, it is necessary to keep an open mind and investigate. Science today
confirms that matter and energy are inter-convertible and while matter can be destroyed, energy cannot be destroyed. There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that the human system operates on energy. So what happens to this energy at death? It has to go someplace.

Even if one assumes that energy does not move from body to body, one has to concede that it goes into a central pool of energy. This is what we call the Brahman in Vedic tradition. Since the newborn has to derive energy from somewhere, that energy has to come from a central pool, the same Brahman. Whichever way one argues, the energy of the spirit lives on and moves from one body to another, even if not directly, but indirectly through a storehouse of energy.

From this agreement to actual reincarnation is a leap of faith. Actually it is a leap of experience. Every great Master who has realized his Self has declared that he was one with Existence, one with the Brahman. From this the concept of the individual Self, the atman, developed, which is the same energy but contained in that individual.

Krishna says that the individual energy, the atman, has the choice to move either into another atman, like a person changing clothes, or to be liberated into the Brahman. When the desires of the atman have been completely fulfilled, it moves on to the Brahman. When it has unfulfilled desires it enters into another body.
Q: Master, the concept of reincarnation gets even more complicated when we are told that we can be reborn as animals or even insects. That is pretty tough to swallow isn’t it?

Yes, it does get more complicated.

We can so easily accept the concept of evolution that human beings evolved from single cell beings. However, even for those of us who can accept reincarnation it is very difficult to accept that human beings can also devolve into what we consider ‘lower’ forms. It is a threat to our identity. How can I turn into a fly or a fish or whatever?

What the spirit chooses in the future body depends upon the mental setup or tendencies of that person during the previous incarnation. It all depends on what kind of a life one led and with what unfulfilled desires one left the body. I say jokingly to my disciples sometimes that if they are over-fond of sleeping they may be reborn as a buffalo and if they are gluttons they may take birth as pigs! There is an element of truth in this.

Do not imagine that human beings are so unique. They are to the extent that they are the only species that can think and have consciousness that can elevate them to beyond this body-mind. Animals need to pass through the human body to be liberated. However, we have the same energy as animal, just in different form. The highest energy center of an animal is the root energy center or


muladhara. When the spirit of an animal evolves into a human, the higher chakras are developed. If a person lives throughout his life only in the muladhara chakra, in lust and greed, there is every possibility that the person can be reborn as an animal. The spirit will move towards the lower energy centers at the time of death.

What is more difficult to grasp is how an animal moves up to become a human. Even though they lack the consciousness of a human to be liberated, animals can reach the highest levels of their own existence and can move up in the next birth. That is how evolution works.

People ask: A few centuries ago there was only a fraction of the current world population. Even if you add animal population there would not have been six billion spirits. So, how did the population grow to six billion and continues to grow? If new lives are based on rebirth where did all these new bodies come from?

Relax. All living beings are energy. Moreover this universe extends far beyond planet Earth. The entire space is energy. So there is enough energy to populate many planets, not only to overpopulate this Earth.
You are immortal!

2.19 Neither understands, he who takes the Self to be slayer nor he who thinks he is slain.

He who knows the truth understands that the Self does not slay, nor is It slain.

2.20 Self is neither born nor does It ever die. After having been, It never ceases not to be.

It is Unborn, Eternal, Changeless and Ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.
2.21 O Partha, how can man slay or cause others to be slain,

When he knows It to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, and unchangeable?

2.22 Just as man casts off his worn out clothes and puts on new ones,

Self casts off worn out bodies and enters newer ones.

2.23 Weapons do not cleave the Self; fire does not burn It; water does not moisten It; wind does not dry It.

2.24 The Self cannot be broken nor burnt nor dissolved nor dried up.

It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.

2.25 The Self is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchangeable and able.

Knowing this to be such, you should not grieve.

Krishna directly addresses some of Arjuna’s earlier doubts in these verses. Arjuna has claimed that destroying his relatives and his mentors will bring him untold grief, not only in this world but in future births as well. He claims that his future generations will suffer as a result of such evil deeds.
Krishna explains to Arjuna that all his fears are misplaced. There is no death in reality. What is seen as death is the destruction of the impermanent body. No one therefore can kill another person or be killed by another person. Both are illusions.

The spirit that occupies the body lives on forever. It occupies the body temporarily but by itself the Self is eternal, indestructible, and it has no births and deaths. It is the body, the sheath that covers it, that dies and is reborn. The spirit or the Self lives on forever.

What Krishna says here is radically different from what any other scripture has said. Krishna denies the concept of death here. He says there is no such thing as death. He is not saying: be good, and you will be taken care of when you die and if you are bad, you will suffer. He says there is no death, that’s all.

Just imagine that as an infant, you are cast away on an island with no other living being. As you grow older will you have any idea of what it is to die? When indeed your body gives up what will happen? Nothing. You will not know anything, that’s all. It is as Socrates said as he died, ‘How does it matter if I am going into nothingness and I never come back? Birth, rebirth and all this will also not make a difference.’

Here Krishna is talking to someone who has witnessed death. So, He has to explain to him that death does not exist; that it is a mere passage from one shell into another; it is a transfer from one body into another.
It is the individual’s attachment to the body that creates the illusion that the individual also perishes with the body.

Attachment to the body is the most intense of all attachments. We also get attached to material possessions as well as our relationships. The potential loss of these attachments leads to fears similar to that of losing one’s body.

One who understands that all these attachments are temporary and are the cause of all our suffering, understands the Truth.

Understanding this truth removes all fears.

Cultures that do not accept the concept of the continuance of the spirit incubate this fear of loss of identity deeply into the individual psyche. People are bred on the belief that one’s life ends at death. It is a permanent end. This belief leads to desperate behavior, as if there is no further time for the individual to seek happiness. Hell and heaven have been created based on this concept of having a single life and the permanence of death. Concepts of hell and heaven are used by all cultures to control people through fear and greed.

Once a person understands that death, like birth, is a merely a passage, and sees the continuity of being, the fear of losing one’s identity disappears. One is relaxed. One is no longer terrorized and controlled by fears of sin and hell.
This is why religions that accept the continuance of life after death, as Hinduism and Buddhism do, breed a culture of tolerance amongst their followers. There is no rush to live and extract the maximum juice out of one’s life in a single birth. These religions state that we all come from a common energy source and we go back to this source, and the cycle continues. Those who understand this spiritual truth in these religions preach the concept of acceptance, inclusion and compassion, and they have no desire to convert others to their beliefs.

It is easy to misinterpret these verses and say that if there is no one killing or being killed, then what stops us from mindlessly killing. That is not what Krishna intends.

One who truly understands that death is not the end of the path, but only a milestone in the journey, is not perturbed by death when it happens naturally or when it is caused for a purpose.

These truths are preached to Arjuna who already understands the basic truths of *yama* (the first step of the philosophy formulated by Patanjali, a great ancient Master). These are the principles of *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *aparigraha* (living simply), *asteya* (non-covetousness) and *brahmacharya* (living without fantasies). Arjuna fully understands the implications of killing, and that, as a *kshatriya*, it is his *dharmic* code of conduct that requires him to slay his enemies.

Here Krishna preaches to the person about a more subtle level of truth that he hasn’t yet grasped. Arjuna
shies away from killing, not because of his conviction of *ahimsa*, non-violence, but because he identifies with the people he has to destroy. His hesitation is from the ignorance of attachment and fantasy, not from the wisdom of non-violent compassion.

Krishna’s message to Arjuna is as it would be to someone who has to uphold *dharma* at all costs, and in today’s context that would apply to a soldier or a policeman. However, it would not be a blind acceptance of orders that would compel such people to take lives. It would not be an action driven by fear and greed. It would not be killing for gain and it would not be killing out of fear that one would be killed. It would be an ultimate action, born out of the knowledge that such destruction is needed for universal good and that such destruction would lead to creation.

Such is the destructive aspect of Nature. Nature destroys to recreate. Shiva is the Rejuvenator not the destroyer as we normally refer to him. This is what Krishna preaches to Arjuna within this context.

You may ask, ‘If nothing is destroyed and nothing can be destroyed, is there no sin in killing at all? All the people whom we call villains like Hitler, Bin Laden and others, do they commit no sin by killing? They are only killing bodies that will perish anyway. So Krishna is indifferent to mass violence, isn’t He?’

No, He is not. For one thing, Krishna speaks as an enlightened Master from an existentialist perspective and
says that, even when the body perishes, the spirit lives on, and therefore, there is no death.

Violence and killing are not merely physical acts. They are psychological compulsions acted out. A person with Hitler’s mindset but without Hitler’s power, would have behaved similarly but on a smaller scale. The generals who ordered the bombing of Hiroshima were far more violent than the poor pilot who was ordered to press the button that dropped the bomb. The ruler of a country who orders warfare against others is the violent one, even if he hides behind his throne.

Violence of the mind is fatal; violence of the body is not. Violence of the mind carries on as the \textit{vasana} or desires; the essence of the spirit, that incarnates from birth to birth. That is the horror that does not end with the act of killing. The spirit is violated, degraded, and degenerated by this attitude of violence.

A violent man is always a coward. He does not have the courage to face the truth. He does not have the courage to treat others as he expects to be treated.

He isolates himself in a cocoon of lies, using the excuse of defending himself, and commits offensive violence against others.

In modern times, violence has increased because it is so much easier to kill than to work through problems and find solutions.
Most often we do not even have to face the person we want to kill. We can fire a pistol or a rifle; we can throw bombs; we can detonate bombs, and if one is a ruler with power, he or she can press a button or convince a nation that unleashing havoc is the safe and best option available. We do not have to face the consequences of what we are doing and can pretend we know nothing about it. We can even pretend that we are committing these acts in the name of God and righteousness.

When we become aware, when we become conscious that the person next to us is actually an expression of the energy of God, how can we possibly respond with violence? It has nothing to do with whether someone is family, part of our culture, part of our religion or part of our nation. It does not matter if the other person shares our history, habits or beliefs. The other person may oppose all that we believe in. Yet he is as much a part of this universe as we are.

That is why Krishna says, ‘How can that man slay or cause others to be slain, who knows Him to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, unchangeable?’

How can we? How can violence develop in us when we recognize ourselves to be God, which automatically enables us to be aware that every other living being, animate and inanimate too is God’s image.

If this message of Krishna is truly understood, there can be no violence in this world, no killing at all. You will
not even kill an insect. You will not kill even in self-defense because once you are in awareness, your awareness is transmitted to the other being and that being will not even attack you.

Once in Omkareshwar, a forest region, I ran into this huge bear when I got up from meditation. It was very close to me. I felt no fear. The bear looked at me and walked away. I have come across deadly cobras many times very close by. They just look at me and go away. When I feel no fear, and therefore no enmity to them, they understand and accept. All this talk about killing others in self-defense is a lie.

All the nations in this world claim they have standing armies because they need to defend themselves. The right to defend is enshrined in all self-respecting constitutions. So, if everybody is only defending, who then is offending? Does anyone think about that?

Even a domesticated dog reacts in anger only when it detects our fear. Our violence arises out of our own fear. Even that dog knows that because it is intelligent, naturally intelligent, unlike us humans. Only humans have the choice to deny nature and be idiotic.

Understand what Krishna says and you will never have fear, either for yourself or for others. You are imperishable; everyone around you is imperishable. Shed your fear and violence. Let love for others fill your being.
Krishna continues:

_Just as man casts off his worn out clothes and puts on new ones, Self casts off worn out bodies and enters newer ones. Weapons do not cleave the Self, fire does not burn It, water does not moisten It, and wind does not dry It. The Self cannot be broken nor burnt nor dissolved nor dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient._

These verses are amongst the most quoted verses of Bhagavad Gita. Here, in very few words, Krishna expounds upon the entire truth of life and death, mind, body and spirit. He clarifies why we should accept death gladly, as a matter of fact and course, instead of grieving over it.

He says this so simply that even an innocent child can understand this truth.

One does not have to be learned in scriptures. In fact, it is a great liability to read the Gita when one is well versed in scriptures. We then miss the truth, the simplicity, the innocence of what Krishna says.

What makes Gita stand apart from all other scriptures, and yet be considered one of the most sacred scriptures amongst the _Vedas_ and _Upanishads_, is this simple authority and clarity with which this _jagat guru_, Master of the Universe, this _poornavataara_, the complete incarnation, speaks.
So simply He says: ‘Just as you cast off your shirt when it is dirty and put on a new one, so does the spirit cast off this body and enter into a new one.’

Do we grieve over a dirty shirt that we have cast away when we know we will have a new one? Do we say, ‘Oh, I was so attached to this shirt. I cannot let it go. Let me keep wearing it. I shall be heart broken if I have to take off this shirt?’

When we see a new shirt, a new garment, the feeling is automatic. We let go the old and take on the new. Why then this hesitation, this fear, when the spirit says, ‘Let me get out of this body; it is so old and decrepit; it is diseased and foul. Let me go find a newer, better body.’

If only we understand that a body needs to be changed when it grows old, in just the same way as the shirt does when it is dirty, there would be no grief, no attachment.

This simple truth is so profound that it takes the greatest Master of all to say it.

‘Don’t worry’, He says, ‘what you will find is a newer, better and more attractive model. Let go of your fears; let go of your attachment. Look forward to what is to follow with joy and a sense of anticipation and celebration. Celebrate death. Do not mourn over it.’

Krishna goes on to explain further what that unchanging continuity is, even as the spirit moves from
one body to another. What is the nature of that spirit? How is it that it is everlasting?

Krishna says, ‘Please understand, Arjuna, the Soul is not destroyed as you think. It cannot be destroyed at all. No weapon can destroy It. No astra, no brahmastra, no nuclear weapon can destroy the energy within the body. Fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It, and air cannot dry It. It is not made of the elements and cannot be destroyed by the elements. Neither can the absence of the elements destroy It. It is beyond the five elements. It is the energy behind the elements. It is the energy that creates the elements. How can It then die?’

‘It cannot be disintegrated in any manner, by breaking, dissolving, burning or drying, as one could do to any other substance made of the five elements of nature. It is eternal. It transcends all the elemental powers. It pervades the Universe. It has been there always. It never had to be created. Therefore, It never can be destroyed.’

An understanding of the truth that Krishna unveils here is the key to immortality. It is the key to liberation from the bondage of life and death. It is the doorway to enlightenment.

‘Do not fear death,’ Krishna says, ‘neither yours nor that of others. It is just a passage. It is the disappearance of this material body. However, you are beyond this material body. Even if the body perishes, you live on, so you do not have to worry or fear.’
What survives death is the sacred spirit in you that can never be destroyed. This spirit is not matter; it is pure energy. How can you destroy energy? Science tells that energy can only appear in another form; it cannot be destroyed. As I have said, the energy of the spirit reappears in another form as matter or it stays as energy.

It is the energy behind the elements; it is that source which creates the elements. It is the energy that is the universe that has always been and will be, never created, never destroyed. It is unchanging, neutral, eternal and all pervading. The experience of every enlightened being verifies the truth that Krishna is uttering.

‘When you are that spirit, that energy,’ asks Krishna, ‘what is there to grieve about? When you are the Divine yourself, what can you fear? What can you want? What more can you ask for?’

The same answer, the same explanation holds good for every one of us. We are Divine. We are the universe. We cannot be destroyed. We live on despite what we see to be the destruction of our body and identity. Once we understand this truth, nothing can disturb us. We can be in bliss.

In the Mundakopanishad there is a story of two birds.

Two birds were sitting on a large fruit-bearing tree that had many branches. It had many fruits on each of its branches. One of the birds was a golden-hued bird with a lovely plumage. It had a serene calmness about it and was
perched silently upon one of the upper branches, which had fewer fruits. It spent most of its time unmoving, showing no interest in the fruits around it. The second bird was smaller and livelier. This bird was always restless and kept jumping from one branch to another branch searching for fruits to eat.

The second bird felt very happy when it tasted sweet fruits and chirped happily. When it came across a bitter or sour fruit that was often, it made irritated noises and looked unhappy. More the sour and bitter fruits that it tasted, more sorrowful this bird became. It said to itself that there is no joy in these fruits and there is no joy at all in living like this.

It then looked up and saw the blissful golden bird perched above it, sitting in silence, calm and relaxed. The golden bird seemed to light up the entire tree. The smaller bird flew up to look at the golden bird more closely. On the way up it saw some juicy fruits and it stopped to peck at them. The fruits were tasty and it settled down to eat more. Then some fruits turned bitter and some sour, and it grew disappointed. It looked up and saw the golden bird again, calm, happy, and relaxed. It moved up again.

It flitted up and down, right and left. Each time it saw the golden bird it would fly up closer. It would then stop to taste a fruit that first tasted sweet, only to move on to bitter and sour fruits as it stayed on to eat more.
Finally, it reached the treetop where the golden bird was perched. It looked at it closely and was startled to find that the golden bird was none other than its own self! It went closer and closer, becoming happier and more relaxed. The smaller bird felt a deep connection with the golden-hued bird. It was love, not falling in love, but rising in love. Soon it lost its own identity and merged with the golden bird.

When we realize that we are one with the golden bird, our inner divinity, there is no longer any fear of death. There is no longer any question about who we are. We know.

‘Weapons cannot cleave It, fire cannot burn It.’ If only the so-called leaders of this world understood what Krishna is saying! Then, there would then be no need for United Nations, Peace Days, Friendship Days and so on. Everyday would be a Peace Day.

What are we trying to do by killing people, by eliminating the physical evidence of their existence? We are trying to eliminate the evidence of people who do not believe us, who dare to question us, and who dare to laugh at us. We would only like to be surrounded by people who fear us, and out of that fear, pretend to respect us, like us, love us. Hitler killed Jews, not because they offended him in any way but because he was afraid of them. Stalin and such other dictators killed to protect themselves, out of fear. Externally they projected an image of great courage, but inside they were cowards. These dictators would have people eat their food first in case it
was poisoned. They would have their ‘twins’ following them to mislead people. They all live their lives out of utter fear.

At the heart of all torture and killing is fear and greed. When we sincerely contemplate these teachings, and this verse of Gita in particular, such concerns dissolve and we live peacefully with ourselves and others.

If you are courageous, you will face up to anyone and state your case. In the event you cannot convince the other person, you will accept the situation and walk away. In life, in this world, there is enough room for different opinions. It is when we get opinionated, fixed in obsessive beliefs, become intolerant to others who share different values and belief systems that we become afraid. We become afraid that we too may lose our belief, that we may lose our identity. That insecurity and fear of loss of identity is greater than the fear of death. It is in fact nothing but the fear of death, since we see death as the ultimate elimination of our identity. So we respond violently. To avoid being killed, we kill. We kill out of fear.

Once we understand what Krishna says, that death is like changing a worn out garment, our fears will disappear. If we are truly wise, this false identity itself will disappear. Why do we need that garment at all? We will feel freer, fully liberated when we do not have that garment. Then there is no need even to worry about that change.
In fact, of the deeper level understanding of this truth is that there is really no need to change the garment. It is only when we have the garment that one has to worry about whether the garment is dirty or torn and how to replace it. If there is no garment at all, there are no more concerns. Going beyond the garment is going beyond the body mind. It is going beyond the cycle of life and death, the cycle of *samsara*. It is going to the ultimate liberation in this life itself. It is the ultimate relaxation.

Sankara says hauntingly in Bhaja Govindam: Again and again one is born and one dies; one keeps going back into the mother’s womb. Oh Lord, the rower of the boat that would help me cross this ocean of life and death, please help me across.
Q: Master, You talked earlier about depression of success, which affects many people around the world. What if a young person has experienced this several times? Is there hope?

Please be very clear: whatever you may have experienced is not depression based on success but depression based on just failure. If you are still struggling to reach the material goals that you have set for yourself and you have failed repeatedly, then you have yet to succeed.
Depression of success happens only to mature people. It is a gift from the Divine and a luxury in life. I tell you, depression of success is the ultimate luxury; all cannot afford it. To experience this depression you need two things – all your material needs must be fulfilled and you need to have intelligence. Only when you have both, the external comforts and the intelligence to look beyond, you will experience the depression of success.

If you are depressed because of failure, it cannot be called depression. It is just failure.

There are people who come to me and say that when they came to USA as immigrants, they had hardly any money, but they are millionaires today. They have everything that they want but now have forgotten why they wanted all this in the first place. Of course, the easiest answer to why you want wealth is to say that you want to be happy. But, when you have amassed wealth far beyond your expectations and still happiness as you imagine it is as far away as before amassing the wealth, it should make you wonder why you worked so hard.

People keep acquiring, and possessions no longer mean enjoyment to them. There is no time for enjoyment since acquisition takes up all their time and effort. Then they experiment and keep changing all that they have, in the hope that the next possession may bring about happiness.

This happens a lot with the modern day men. They change cars every year, homes every three years and
their spouses every fifth year! And after all that, although latest models should bring in greatest joy, unfortunately they don’t.

In our *Vedic* tradition there is no concept of divorce. There is no word in Sanskrit for divorce. It is not that our ancient *Vedic* sages lived in an unreal life and expected that there will be no marital problems. Their tradition was not based on changing the person but changing the personality.

You can keep changing the objects and persons; there will be no end to it and no satisfaction. With each change your mind will demand more change. In French I am told there is a saying, change leads to more change. Then the French are far wiser than other Westerners! Unless your mind changes you cannot reach satisfaction and fulfillment. It is this change in mind, this transformation that the *Vedic* tradition suggests and trains you for.

Success of failure is easier to solve. Just work hard and smart. Focus on the present moment without worrying about the end result. This is what Krishna advises and it works. Nonattachment to possessions works just as well as nonattachment to people and relationships. It takes the stress out of your action. Instead of chasing deadlines and goals, you focus more on what needs to be done now, and make sure it gets done. This will solve your failure issues.

Giving up attachment to what you acquire and enjoying what you have in the present moment will solve your problem of depression of success.
Q: In many countries the death penalty has been banned as being inhumane. In others it is maintained as being essential to law and order. Which approach is correct?

In ancient Sumerian civilization the code of Hammurabhi declared: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Some cultures still follow this logic. If everyone were to demand the next person’s eye soon the entire world would be one eyed at best!

Will it solve any problems? No.

Has killing reduced homicidal crime rates anywhere? Statistics show otherwise. In fact the most peaceful cultures are the tribal cultures in which all problems are resolved through mutual discussion and agreement. Courts of law, prisons and such other civilized societal solutions have not helped crime rates.

It has been established that meditation reduces crime rates. The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Institute has done remarkable work in this field. They say that if the square root of 1% of the population meditates together, then in that location mental attitudes change and crime rates reduce. Experiments have been conducted successfully in Washington D.C using this approach.

If a group of just about 10,000 people were to meditate together at one time, they can bring about a beneficial change in the attitudes of people and environment. But this is too easy for most people. Our conditioning is such
that we cannot believe such things can work. Human nature is violent by nature. We demand an eye for an eye, a body for a body. It is this inner violence that fosters crime. Rules and regulation, courts and prison cells can do nothing to change this. Violence cannot cure violence.

Transformation needs to happen within. No one can transform another person, especially by force. However, you can transform people by example. That is what Buddha meant when he urged his followers to light more lamps with the lamps that he had lit within them.

We have been doing meditation courses in prisons. Other organizations have also done this. We find that we are able to make a difference. Through the process of meditation, inner violence and negativities can be dissolved and genuine transformation takes place.

Instead of finding lasting solutions to why the inner violence builds up and how it can be diffused, there is a lot of debate that goes on about how to murder people painlessly.

When you condemn people to death by law you are still committing murder, make no mistake about that. You are not in the enlightened state of Krishna to proclaim that the spirit lives on forever and therefore governments are free to kill in the name of justice.

People who have no qualms about sentencing someone to death wince when they witness bodies twitching and turning in agony when they are hung or electrocuted or
poisoned. Isn’t this just hypocrisy? If you are so seriously worried about not harming the body, then abolish capital punishment, that’s all. If you believe that the spirit lives on and body alone perishes then there is no need to punish someone for destroying someone else’s body. Either way, putting people to death for logical reasons makes no sense.

Q: Master, please comment on desires. Most Masters recommend sealing of desires. How can this be done?

I can comment on desires but do not want to comment on what most Masters recommend. I tell you honestly that sealing of desires cannot be done. Suppression will only lead to perversion and other difficulties. Transformation is the only possibility; suppression cannot be practised. Whether it is related to the senses, enjoyment or name and fame or anything, the more you suppress, the more you poison your system. All you can do is transform the desires. If you want this to happen, enter into meditation and let your energies be transformed. Except transformation, there is no other way to escape from desires. Just divert the energy and let it become pure. When you transform, you will have the pure desire without it being directed towards any object.

Desire without object is energy. When your energy is attached to an object, it becomes desire and when the desire is detached from the object it becomes energy. That
is why in *Vedic* systems we call desire *ichha shakti* or desire energy. As long as there is no object, it leads you to bliss. When there is an object, it leads you to bondage. You can only transform or purify it through meditation. Never suppress it. Suppression only leads to more problems.

A small story:

An 80 year old monk is interviewed by a junior novice monk. The junior monk asks the old monk, ‘Master, how does one control bad thoughts? How long do the bad thoughts continue to occur in the mind?’

The senior monk says, ‘I don’t know how long they continue to occur but I do know that they last at least to the age of 80!’

So please be very clear, suppression leads nowhere. Work for transformation, not for suppression.

*Q: If the Self cannot be destroyed or harmed, it cannot be hurt. Why then do we feel pain and why does the body get hurt?*

This was the question that in a way sparked off my spiritual quest!

When I was about 10, I went to listen to Annamalai Swamigal, an enlightened saint in my native place of
Tiruvannamalai. He was giving a discourse on the great *Vedantic* truths and said that we are immortal and do not feel pain. That surprised me! I thought, ‘I have pain. If I am yelled at or if someone beats me, I feel pain. Then how can this statement be true?’ I had already a passion for the truth and the willingness to experiment. So I went home and cut myself on my thigh to check it out! It pained like crazy. I was scolded and taken to the doctor to be sewn up. It took something like thirteen stitches. The scar is still there! I went back to him and asked why he told me there is no pain. He laughed and lovingly said, ‘Don’t worry my son. Your courage to test these truths will be enough to lead you to experience them.’ He then initiated me into a simple but powerful meditation technique that eventually led me to my first glimpse of the truth.

The body is the material aspect of the spirit; body is matter and the spirit or Self is energy. Body is the shell for the energy or light of being. Body and matter perish, while the Self, the energy lives on. This body or body-mind is the collection of all our thoughts, desires, emotions and experiences. It is driven by our senses.

As long as we feel the difference between matter and energy, body, mind and spirit, we shall continue to feel the pain. When the understanding dawns that matter and energy are one and the same, that the Self is what drives the body-mind, then all the differentiation stops. You may still feel some pain in your body that is matter, but there will be no suffering.
This is why when great Masters like Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi and Ramakrishna had cancer, they were still blissful; they had no suffering at all. Bhagavan used to say, ‘Whose body is this?’

Look at it this way. When you hammer a nail into the wall or a chair you do not worry about whether the wall or chair is getting hurt, do you? Why not? That wall and the chair are also made of the same elements, the same atomic structure as you and me.

Take it a step further. A butcher who kills a chicken does not feel the pain. Why not? These are living beings, the same as the butcher. If you pull out a chicken from a coop with the intention of slaughtering it, every other chicken in that coop feels the pain. Why don’t we?

Take it even further. A surgeon does not feel the pain when he operates upon someone else. He does not feel the pain even when he is operating on a deeply beloved family member or friend. Why? He may feel emotionally connected, but physically there is no pain.

When we do not associate ourselves with those objects and beings that we hurt, we do not feel the pain. It is happening to something else, someone else, that is why. If we are only emotionally connected, we feel the separation, we feel the boundary between body and body and so there is no pain.

Pain can happen when that separation disappears, when the boundarylessness happens, as in enlightenment. But
simultaneously the awareness also happens that the body is mere matter; it is any way perishable; there is something beyond that matter. Then there is no pain.

I am not advocating that you go burn yourself or cut yourself to test this truth. But the next time you have pain, intensely focus on the pain. People normally advise you to divert yourself from the pain. That does not work; it returns the moment the diversion stops. Instead focus on where the pain is.

Initially you will feel pain all over. Focus and it will get limited. Finally it will reduce to a spot. Focus further and the pain will go away. The very attention you bestow on the body will provide the energy to eliminate the pain.

This is an excellent meditation for you. That focus that you give the pain will make you realize that you are more than the mere body. You will touch your energy base and will realize that you are more than the body-mind.

You then enter the space that Krishna describes; you enter nithyananda, eternal bliss.

**Q: If the body one takes up is determined by what one does in the previous life, would it mean that evil persons like Hitler will continue to be reborn as evil persons? Is there no redemption for such people under this scheme of things?**
One thing is certain; spirits of exceptionally ‘good’ people and exceptionally ‘evil’ people will have a more difficult time finding a suitable body than other more average spirits.

Spirits that inhabited bodies of Gandhi and Lincoln, spirits that lived in the bodies of Hitler and Stalin would certainly need more time to find an environment that would match the mindsets of their previous births.

This does not mean that they have to continue with the same cycle. The cycle need not be always a virtuous or vicious cycle; it need not be one that constantly descends or ascends. Reversals are possible.

In Hindu mythology we have stories of many divine beings who are born as demons because of their mindsets, who after working off their vasana become divine again. The great sage Valmiki who wrote the epic Ramayana was a robber. He was a ruthless killer who was transformed by the name of ‘Narayana’ and while meditating upon that name was liberated. In Buddhist tradition there is the story of Angulimal, a dacoit who had vowed to kill a thousand people. He met Buddha and became a monk and a disciple.

Please understand that the creation of this mindset is not something that is destined. It is a choice we all have and it is a choice that all of us exercise knowingly or unknowingly. The problem is that most of us exercise it unknowingly. We let our mind drive us and form this
mindset. We are like drivers who are driven by the car. But, we have a choice. We can take over and become the master of our minds. It may seem difficult initially but this is what the mind wants. Once you exercise control it becomes your valuable servant. You realize the unlimited potential of what your body-mind can do.

That is why in the true spiritual sense there is nothing that is inherently good or evil. It is all real only within a certain time and space. No one remains evil all the time and no one stays good all the time. We can rewrite our fate. Our destiny is in our hands.
Death is But a Passage

2.26 O mighty-armed, even if you should think of the soul as being constantly born and constantly dying,

Even then, you should not lament.

2.27 Indeed, death is certain for the born and birth is certain for the dead. Therefore, you should not grieve over the inevitable.

2. 28 O Bharata, being intangible in the beginning, being intangible again in their end, seemingly tangible in the middle.
What are we grieving about?

2.29 One sees It as a wonder, another speaks of It as a wonder, another hears of It as a wonder.

Yet, having heard, none understands It at all!

2.30 O Bharata, This that dwells in the body of everyone can never be destroyed;

Do not grieve for any creature.

When you understand what Krishna is saying in these verses you get over any fear of death. In fact you will celebrate death.

Sometime ago when I was delivering a discourse in India, news arrived that my father had died. I continued with the discourse. Later that night many of our disciples traveled with me to Tiruvannamalai where the body lay. If you see the videos of this event, you will find that my mother never once cried. She was a very traditional person, brought up in a rural environment that sets great importance on how one should behave socially. When one’s husband dies one is naturally heart broken; especially as in the case of my mother and father, who were very close to each other. His departure would have been a great loss to her. She understood the meaning of these verses of Krishna without my ever having to explain them to her.

She has such immense faith in me that when I told her my father, her husband, is now in energy form that is eternal, she trusted me implicitly and joined me in
celebrating his release. Many of our followers have seen the video recording of this event. It was made specifically to explain what Krishna is saying here. They could see it in action and get over any fear that they may have still have had about death.

Even more interestingly, another incident reinforced this truth. Soon after my father’s death, the father of a disciple died and the family requested that the body be cremated at our Bidadi ashram and that I do the last rites. People who met the widow after the cremation were astounded to see the peace and calm in her, unlike what one would see in a traditional Hindu widow. When people asked her how she felt she simply replied that she fully believed that her husband’s energy survived the destruction of the body and she was happy that he found peace.

We are not talking about philosophers and saints here. We are talking about very ordinary people whose lifestyle was all about fear of death and grief at death. They understood very easily what Krishna was saying. They understood that the spirit lives on after the body perishes and death is indeed an event to celebrate and not to grieve. It is only the scholars who have a mere intellectual understanding of what the Gita says with no trust in Krishna who still suffer from the fear of death. They may talk philosophically about how to detach from death as long as it does not affect them; the moment they face the death of a beloved or worse still, their own, their logical defenses crumble.
Krishna’s words are not about logic; they are about trust in the Master.

The celebrated Greek philosopher, Socrates, was sentenced to death because the Greek society could not accept his views and his constant questioning attitude. He was asked to take back his sayings, failing which, he was sentenced to die by drinking poison. Since he refused to reject his own philosophy, Socrates was sentenced to death.

As he calmly awaited his death, his disciples asked him, ‘Master, are you not afraid of dying?’ Socrates said, ‘There are two possibilities. One, that there is indeed life after death. In that case I shall go to a place better than where I am. The other is that there is no life after death. In that case I shall not be aware of anything that would happen now. In either case, what is there to worry?’

Death is inevitable. Whether the spirit lives on after the body perishes and locates itself in another body may be a debatable point to some. Krishna says that this is not a reason to lament death. In either case, death can be a passage that one can look forward to as Socrates did.

Whether the spirit goes to a region called hell or another region called heaven is as debatable a point as to whether there is an undying spirit at all, or whether that spirit reincarnates. You may believe whatever you like to believe. Occidental religions profess not to believe in the cycle of life and death. They seem to believe that death is
once and for all. Even then what is there to worry about?

We all know death is inevitable.

A deeply disturbed woman approached Buddha one morning. She brought the body of her dead son to Buddha and said, ‘Master, they tell me that you are the only one in this world with the power to revive the dead. Please give life back to my son.’

Buddha knew that no words of His could console the mother. He merely said, ‘Mother, please bring me a handful of rice from any household that has not experienced death so far and I shall revive your son.’

The woman went door-to-door seeking a handful of rice. Every household she visited was only too glad to give her what she asked for. However, they all said that they too had suffered such a loss in their household. She went to neighboring villages and got the same reply.

She came back to Buddha and said, ‘Master, I now understand that death is inevitable and that there can be no life without death. Thank you for teaching me this invaluable truth. I would like to sit at your feet for the rest of my life. Please accept me as your disciple.’

Bringing the dead back to life is not a miracle. It can be done under certain circumstances, but to transform the individual and to instill truth in them is indeed the miracle that only a true Master can perform.
Many of us do believe that life is a wonder; truly so. Life is wondrous! We do not understand how life is created. We may have a biological explanation as to how a sperm impregnates an egg and cells are created but that is not life at all.

Even today there is no absolute proof as to how the universe was created. All one has are theories such as Big Bang etc. What was there before Big Bang? No one knows.

Buddha rightly observed, ‘The universe creates itself. It always was and always will be.’ No one knows as well, how the first life form originated. Again, there are only theories. The explanation for ‘abiogenesis’, creation of life from non-living matter, has no scientific proof as yet. The first life form just seems to have happened. One fine morning or evening or night, the first amino acid, the first life block, seems to have sprung up from nowhere.

All that we know is that life exists. All we can observe and wonder about is the life form that is in front of us, that is manifest. What was there before and what happened to it thereafter are shrouded in questions and mystery. We can believe in what we believe but we do not know as we have not observed.

From time immemorial this has been the human quest. What happens after life, more correctly after death? Conversely, what were we before we were born?

I mentioned the famous Zen koan, ‘What was your face like before your father and mother were born?’ What was
it indeed? If only you knew, you would have solved the mystery of life and death, wouldn’t you?

The very effort of visualizing the possibility of an existence before this life opens doors. That is what this _koan_ tries to do. There is no need to see your face. The fact that you understand and realize that you existed before, exist now and will exist again makes a difference to how you live your life from now on. You will no longer fear death because you have been there before!

It is unfortunate that the present day version of the Bible discounts the statement of Jesus when He says I was there before Abraham. It is the same as Krishna saying in the Gita that He taught Surya, the Sun God. Jesus implies that the spirit energy lives on and death of the body is not final.

The cycle of life and death is a mystery and a wonder. As yet there is no ‘scientific’ proof as the logic minded would demand, though there is plenty of empirical evidence. Quantum Physics and Molecular Biology are making rapid advances in this area and it is possible that there would be some ‘proof’ soon.

Those who are confident enough to accept the truth of the eternal nature of spirit as it comes are the fortunate, the blessed. Those who fight and grieve are the wretched, the miserable. You cannot fight life or death. They are both beyond you, out of your control. You can marvel at them and be happy and joyous. Or you can keep questioning them and be miserable. This is the choice and free will you have.
The illustrious King Yayati lived for hundreds of years. Bhagavatam, the Hindu epic, says that when Yama, God of Death, came to Yayati at his appointed time of death, Yayati begged to be allowed to live on. He said he had not lived life enough and he needed more time. Yama relented and said if one of his sons would give Yayati the rest of his life time, then he could live that long. Using the life span of his sons, Yayati lived many hundreds of years. Finally the realization dawned on him that no matter how long he lived, his desires would never cease and that fulfillment would never happen through material enjoyment. Yayati gave himself up to Yama once he realized this truth.

It is not death that frightens us. It is leaving our desires and unlived life that frightens us.

The problem is that we do not know how to live a fulfilled life, how to genuinely enjoy ourselves so that our desires are fulfilled. All our desires are partially fulfilled because, before they are fulfilled, we move on to other desires. We do not give our attention or awareness fully to what we are doing and experiencing. The simple fact is that we do not know how to be joyful.

To be truly joyful, to be eternally blissful, is to understand the truth that you are indestructible, that your spirit lives on.

Death is not an end; it is a passage of sorts. The truth is that the spirit is not satisfied with mere material pleasures. However much you please your senses, you
cannot achieve satisfaction. More you enjoy through your senses, more the need for more enjoyment. It never stops. Discontentment with material pleasures alone is hardwired into the human psyche.

People are really confused about the concept of spirituality. Spirituality is not something intangible or something mysterious that religion and religious leaders need to explain.

Spirituality is the total understanding and enjoyment of life, materially, physically, emotionally, relationally and in all senses without discontent and with responsibility. This enjoyment and responsibility arise out of awareness. This awareness arises out of our ability to focus on the present moment. That is when our mind stops flitting from the past to the future, from regrets to speculation.

The present moment is the only moment when we are truly alive. That is the only moment we are awake. The rest of the time we are in deep sleep, even if our eyes are open; we are in virtual death. Yet, we, the walking dead are afraid to die.

Whether one believes in God or not, and accepts the inner divinity within oneself or not, is irrelevant to how one understands life after death.

If, instead of believing in God, we choose to believe in science, we still need to accept that there are no answers to what we were before we were born and what we will be once we are dead. It is still unmanifest at both ends; it is still a mystery before and after, with no answers.
This understanding can only come with the understanding that we live on in spirit.

A Zen Master was asked, ‘Now that you are enlightened, what is the difference in your perception of things around you?’

The Master said, ‘Before enlightenment, I saw a mountain as a mountain and a river as a river. During the process toward enlightenment the mountain was not a mountain and the river was not a river. Now again, the mountain is a mountain and the river is a river.’

The Master here means that before he set out on his spiritual journey, he just saw the physical forms of the mountains, rivers etc. But once he started experiencing the energy behind them, he saw them all as manifestations of the very same energy.

Upon enlightenment, he saw that all matter as the very energy itself that is the real nature of them all.

Krishna says whatever was permanent and real was intangible before it became tangible and again it will be intangible. Everything is in a state of becoming something else. At every moment we die and are reborn; millions of cells in our mind-body system die everyday and are reborn. Yet, through all this change there is continuity. There is a continuity that we cannot see, touch or feel. What we see as manifested, as this body and mind, hides from us the process of constant change that happens within us, as well as the continuous thread that holds the thread of change.
Q: Master, please be very clear (Oh! here we are getting instructions first!). Are Krishna and Christ the same? Both were born in confined places. Krishna was born in Mathura; Christ in a place called Mathiria. Both were shepherds and so on. If so, please explain.

A historical controversy! I do not know the historical part because I am not a historian! I can only say that spiritually they are one and the same. I can only say in terms of spirituality, not
historically. As I do not know history, I cannot make a controversial statement. In the conscious level, they are the same.

There are stories that the idea of Christ is built around the Bhagavatam, the famous book of Hindu mythology. We do not know the truth behind these stories. You may have heard of this beautiful book, The Da Vinci Code. If any of you have read this book, you will find it is controversial but at the same time solid. The writer is clear about what he says. We are not able to deny it completely. I read it, and honestly, am not able to deny the contents. There are so many things he says which make sense.

There are books written and research done about Christ’s time and life after crucifixion, where he was between the age of 7 and 14, etc.

A couple of interesting things I read in the book:

The theory goes that Christ had his training in a Buddhist monastery in Puri. The Sermon on the Mount is an exact replication of a Pali Sutra which is repeated every morning in that monastery as a prayer. In this way, many research reports keep coming out but the only thing I can say is that at the conscious level, they are both the same.

Recently, there have been documentaries aired in the reputed BBC TV that Christ after crucifixion was taken to Kashmir, where he lived till he was eighty. They even showed the tomb where he was buried. This was based on a lot of researched data.
The fact is that the earliest documentation of the life and death of Christ was made a few centuries after he died. It is known that there was a lot of selection in terms of what was officially accepted by the Christian Church, from the vast material that was available as the historical evidence relating to Jesus.

But as I said, the energy of all enlightened Masters is one and the same. Their consciousness is identical.

Q: Krishna says that the truth is seemingly tangible in the middle and intangible in the beginning and the end. If he is referring to past, present and future, the past is also clear to us. Why is the beginning unclear then?

We arise from energy; we disappear into energy; for a while we live as matter even though we are energy.

Our senses can perceive only the material as long as they are focused on the external objects. They can only interact with material objects and experience material pleasures. That is the way our mind is programmed. So tangibility to us is what we can perceive through our senses.

It is when we go inwards that we can feel the energy within. When we lose our external identity and open ourselves to the universal energy, we too can feel that we are energy. We can understand who we truly are now,
before and after. That is what meditation can do for you. It can take you through the inner journey of awareness that makes the truth tangible in the past and future as well.

When you say that the past is clear to you, even what you remember of the past in your own life is actually very selective. Only 5 to 10% of what your senses perceive is stored consciously. The rest is buried deep within. Ironically, the most powerful experiences, whether of pain or pleasure, are rarely in the conscious realm. They are buried deep within and come up without any conscious effort when the unconscious decides it is the right time to reveal them. This is why we are driven by addictions and phobias that are so difficult to let go.

Most of the time, we look into the future that is totally hazy through the mirror of our past. It is like driving a car through the rear view mirror. You know where you will end if you do that. Yet, that is how we drive our own lives.

The present is the only tangible moment. Not because it is about the material body-mind which exists in the present moment, but because only when you are in the present that you are centered in your energy. Your body mind system can focus inwards into your inner energy system only when you are in the present moment. It is because only in this state your inner chatter stops.

Your thoughts are nothing but the movement of your mind from past to future and back from future to past. It
is the constant oscillation of the mind that you call thought and which I term inner chatter. Once you settle into the present moment your thoughts cease and inner chatter stops. You are then in synch with your own energy.

Meditation is the key to bring you into this state.

Q: I read somewhere that the whole concept of rebirth is negative. It is all about continuance of suffering. All those who believe in rebirth are desperately trying to get out of it. So, what is the point in believing in it?

Rebirth is neither negative nor positive. It is a phenomenon of existence in which the spirit continues to exist as energy and the body-mind perishes as matter. There is nothing that anyone can do about it, in the same manner that there is nothing that can be done about death. Death happens and so does rebirth.

If you are at least aware that you are born again and again as a result of unfulfilled desires, then you can make an attempt to fulfill and transcend your desires so that you can be free from this cycle of life, birth and death, called *samsara* in *Vedic* science. One part of what you said is correct. People who are wise try to get out of this cycle of life and death so that they are liberated into energy forever. The concept of Self-realization and enlightenment follow from this effort.
Buddha refers to this again and again. He attributes suffering to desires and teaches methods to overcome these desires and get out of the cycle of birth and death. As I have mentioned elsewhere the desires Buddha talks about are the wants that we pick up through our conditioning in this lifetime, the *samskaras* that bind us. Once these *samskaras* are dissolved we are out of the clutches of *samsara*.

It is not a matter of believing or not believing. Truth does not change if you do not believe. Medieval Europe believed that the Earth is flat and that the Sun revolved around the Earth. So, you too are at liberty to believe that there is no rebirth and that this lifetime is the end of the road for you.

If you believe so, would that make you a better person? Would that belief make you happier? In reality it makes you desperate. Your wish to acquire, enjoy and fulfill may end during this one lifetime. This obsession fills you with greed and fear. The understanding that one’s spirit lives on as energy even after the body-mind perishes gives one far greater freedom.

When you realize that you are forever and not that you live and die only once, you don’t need to be desperate and make choices that you regret later. There is no last train that you need to catch. You can lead a choiceless life, because life is forever.

This is the freedom that our *Vedic* sages experienced and transmitted so that others can experience the same bliss.
Code of the Samurai

2.31 You should look at your own duty as a kshatriya.

There is nothing higher for a kshatriya than a righteous war. You ought not to hesitate.

2.32 O Partha, happy indeed are the kshatriya who are called to fight in such a battle without seeking;

This opens for them the door to heaven.

2.33 If you will not fight this
righteous war, then you will incur sin having abandoned your own duty, and you will lose your reputation.

2.34 People too will remember your everlasting dishonor and to one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death.

2.35 The great generals will think that you have withdrawn from the battle because you are a coward.

You will be looked down upon by those who had thought much of you and your heroism in the past.

2.36 Many unspeakable words would be spoken by your enemies reviling your power.

Can there be anything more painful than this?

2.37 Slain, you will achieve heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the Earth.

O son of Kunti, stand up determined to fight.

2.38 Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat – treat them all the same.

Do battle for the sake of battle. You shall incur no sin.

Krishna works on Arjuna at two levels. At one level He talks to Arjuna at the super conscious plane educating him on what the ultimate truth is.

He talks to Arjuna about how life does not end with the death of the body, about how the undying and
indestructible spirit lives on. Here, Krishna addresses Arjuna’s fears about killing his relatives and elders and teaches him that what he considers to be the end of life for these people is just one step in their journey.

Krishna then descends to the practical level at which Arjuna exists. Krishna explains to Arjuna why, from a societal point of view, he should not run away from the battlefield, but instead, stay on and fight as it behooves a warrior. Krishna here addresses Arjuna as the kshatriya, the warrior.

In each society there are groups of people who are the designated protectors of that society. They are the warriors, the soldiers, who defend their country and countrymen. In the same manner, there are others who are designated as clerics and priests, as teachers and counselors, as traders and businessmen and as workers and manual laborers.

In most modern societies these are commercial as well as societal divisions. They are commercial classifications to the extent that they are the means to one’s livelihood, based on one’s acquisition of skills and education with the expectation of pursuing such a career and vocation. They however become societal classification as well subsequently, as these careers become the tools of building wealth and status. Even in modern societies the wealth and name thus acquired are passed on through generations, even if those born subsequently have done nothing to earn the wealth and status and do not have the capability to maintain them.
In ancient India, the system of education was the *gurukul* system, in which young children stayed with a Master and learned both material and spiritual skills. This education started very early, as early as three and latest by seven, when the children were left in the Master’s care by their parents. The Master gauged the capability and aptitude of each child and trained the child in an appropriate manner. The vocation of the parent or father was not a major criterion in deciding upon the skills imparted to the child. The Master determined the child’s aptitude by its own behavior and through such studies as astrology.

The *varna* or caste system practiced by the Hindus from time immemorial had its roots in the *gurukul* education. Unfortunately, over time, caste determination became based on birthright. Son of a warrior was assumed to be a warrior, irrespective of his capabilities, aptitude or inclination. So, the four *varna* or castes that are *brahmana*, the priest and teacher, *kshatriya*, the ruler and warrior, *vaisya*, the trader and businessman, and *sudra*, the worker, became rigid social structures based on birthright.

This corruption of such a scientific practice has led to many social inequalities and injustices. The son of a *brahmana* has no right to call himself a *brahmana*, unless he has the aptitude and then the learning to be a teacher and a priest. In our ashrams, we now have many young men and women from different castes and religious groups who are being trained in spiritual and religious rituals that so far had been considered the prerogative of only the
*brahmana* caste. We have *brahmacharis* who are of Christian faith, who train others in *guru homa* and *mantra*, the fire rituals, chants etc. In no way are these young priests inferior to any *brahmana*!

When Krishna refers to Arjuna as a *kshatriya*, he is referring to the entire personality of Arjuna, the great warrior, which had been only partly by birth and mostly by training based on his aptitude. Arjuna is the quintessential warrior, the samurai, who knows no fear, and yet is now disturbed by issues of whether he is doing right or wrong by fighting against his kinsmen. The code of *kshatriya*, as with the code of *samurai* the professional Japanese warriors of earlier days and all other soldiers even till today, is a professional code as well. Once you are in the army you fight irrespective of what you think about who you are fighting against. Rights and wrongs no longer apply.

Krishna says, ‘Fight! You are a *kshatriya*. By fighting as your duty demands, you earn merits and go to heaven. If you run away from this war you commit a sin. You will also be termed a coward and people who know you will laugh at you. You will be dishonored, and for a *kshatriya*, dishonor is far worse than death. Do not worry about victory or defeat. If you are defeated and die you will ascend to heaven. If you are victorious, you will enjoy material benefits in this world itself. Therefore, fight as it is your duty as a *kshatriya*.’

Krishna says to treat pain and pleasure, gain and loss, victory and defeat all the same. He says to fight without
worrying about the outcome. To fight is your duty. When the Paramatma – Supreme Soul says this, it means that Arjuna does not have to worry about right and wrong, about sin or merit.

Isn’t fighting, isn’t killing people a sin, you will ask. Then why is it that Krishna recommends Arjuna, not merely recommend, but actually force Arjuna to fight and kill. What is the operative logic here, you may ask?

There is no logic. Krishna’s exhortation is beyond human rationale. It is not what you do that matters. It is who you are that matters. An enlightened Master can do no wrong even if he kills, because when he kills it would be with awareness, not for personal benefit. On the other hand, any average person even while doing an act of kindness may be doing something wrong.

You may have seen movies where an undercover policeman with a gun is arresting some dangerous criminals and suddenly a cop in uniform shows up. This uniformed cop would ask the undercover cop to put his hands up and in the confusion the criminals would escape. This may seem funny in a movie, but it happens all the time in real life. You think you are doing something very good based on your sense perceptions and yet the reality of the situation may be far different.

The problem is that we do whatever we do with a motive. It is all outcome based. What is in it for me is the million dollar question. We do things either out of fear or greed. These are the two most powerful
motivators, the carrot and the stick. What applies to a donkey applies even more relevantly to a human being.

Krishna is not worried about what you do, He is concerned only about who you are. If your actions are innocent of motives, whatever you do is right. If what you do is motivated by fear and greed, pain and pleasure, victory and defeat, you can do nothing right. Whatever we do for gain is sinful.

What if you were in a totally strange place for a very short period and you know nothing that you do will have any repercussions. Will you have any inhibitions based on what your conditioning has been? It is as if you are invisible and you will leave no trace. What will your behavior be like?

What happens when the fear of loss of reputation and loss of identity disappears? Will you be the same person?

What happens when you have an Aladdin’s lamp with a genie, which makes all your dreams come true? How long will the excitement last when you know that whatever you wish will happen? Will your greed still last?

Fear and greed are strong motivators because we are not centered; we are not sure about ourselves; we do not know who we are. Here Krishna is breaking that mould. Act without fear and greed, He says. Do not worry about consequences. This is against all societal and religious conditioning.
Krishna, as the transcendental Parabrahman, is not concerned about the practical and societal consequences of Arjuna walking out of the battlefield. He is only concerned about what that would do to Arjuna’s inner self. If Arjuna had truly been steeped in ahimsa, non-violence, Krishna would have never attempted to persuade Arjuna into violence. Arjuna however, was trying to avoid fighting, not because of any moral and conscientious objection, but from the angle of emotional attachment to his kinsmen and others arising out of his own identification with them.

In these verses, Krishna is trying to bring Arjuna out of his dilemma, his depression, his confusion, and his vishada that has obscured his normally clear vision. Krishna is trying to get Arjuna to transcend his conditioned actions based on fear and greed. He is trying to get him to act without worrying about the outcome.
Jump First, Think Later

Q: Is it normal to speak less and seek silence as sadhana or spiritual practice progresses?

There is a Zen meditation which says, ‘When I was not meditating, a tree was a tree and a mountain was a mountain. When I started meditation, they were both not what they were. When I finished meditation and became enlightened, the tree was again a tree and the mountain was a mountain.’
Before the sadhana you speak a lot. After enlightenment, you may speak a lot but with a totally new awareness, but during sadhana people usually tend to become silent.

As your spiritual awareness progresses, you may find one of two things.

In the past, you had an opinion about everything and you had to express it. If you did not you felt inadequate. You felt that others will not respect you unless you stood up for yourself, expressed yourself loudly and volubly and most importantly argued so that the other person felt small and withdrew.

This is the way we are conditioned. We are taught that to win and to feel good, another person must lose and feel bad. Talking in an argument you feel is less harmful than physical fights, however ill judged this may be, and so you indulge in talking warfare.

As your energy level increases with spiritual practice, you are more centered and you do not feel the need to prove yourself anymore. You also realize that words can harm far worse than physical attacks. So you settle into yourself and become silent.

At another level, you find that you can communicate just as well and perhaps better with others of similar energy just being silent. The need to talk reduces.

Either way, you find silence golden.
**Q: Krishna continuously keeps calling Arjuna a kshatriya and is goading him to fight. Why is Krishna so violent?**

I have talked about this partly earlier. Let me explain more clearly.

First let us understand the word non-violence. The moment you say ‘I’ and ‘mine’, you are violent. Please understand what kind of beings we are. We can be intellectual or emotional or at the being-level.

During our lives we do have stages of each of these three characteristics. How do we know what type of beings we are? The moment you ask this question, be very clear, you are intellectual. Emotional people will never have this question and people in the being-level will not even have this as a doubt.

Before you are married you may be an intellectual. Take the case of young men, especially a young Indian college student. He does not do namaskar or bow down before anyone because of his ego and he considers traditional actions unworthy. He simply stands and looks while his parents pay their respects. Of course, I do not expect this from any devotee, as this physical action is not of great consequence. But I always say to myself, ‘Just wait till you get married, then we shall see!’ Two years later the same young man, now married, falls flat at my feet! In just one year he has grown so much and is now so obedient and polite!
So, before marriage you are intellectuals and after marriage you grow slowly to reach higher levels.

Krishna knows very well that Arjuna is talking emotionally. Emotions of fear and greed have taken over and Arjuna is scared to see the consequences if he goes ahead with the fight because the opponents are his own relatives whom he is attached to. Arjuna wants to run away from the battlefield, not because he is a believer in *ahimsa*, non-violence, but because of his identity with his kinsmen and elders, because of his identification with these people. He would have had no problem battling them had he not known them, had he not been associated with them. Arjuna wants to run away because of this false identification which breeds *himsa*, violence.

Krishna would never persuade Arjuna to stay on and fight if truthfully, Arjuna proceeded from nonviolence. Krishna enlightens Arjuna to the falsehood of his beliefs and destroys his false belief that he is proceeding from nonviolence that had risen out of his attachment to his own identity.

Secondly, you need to have a clear understanding of how the *varna* system that we deride now as the caste system evolved in our *Vedic* culture.

Krishna is referring to Arjuna’s character, his mindset and his conditioning when he addresses him as a *kshatriya*. A *kshatriya* is fearless; a *kshatriya* is power and courage personified; a *kshatriya* acts before he thinks. However, now Arjuna does not act and talk as behooves a *kshatriya*; he is behaving like a *brahmana*. 
A brahmana is an intellectual. A brahmana is focused on knowledge, inner truth. The scriptures are his guideline. His behavior is based on satva, peace. Instead of being a commissar that is his natural state, Arjuna is now trying to quote scriptures and behave like a yogi. Krishna is pulling him back into his natural state.

To a kshatriya, a warrior, the greatest dishonor is to experience and express fear. Krishna says that such behavior will not only taint Arjuna in this life, but in the lives hereafter as well.

In the ancient Vedic system four varnas were classified. The brahmana were the intellectuals who read and maintained the knowledge of the scriptures and focused within. Kshatriya were the warriors and rulers who took care of the brahmana and other people, their citizens and wards. Brahma acted out of satva guna (calmness and peace) and kshatriya out of rajas guna (passion and aggression). One acted out of the word and the other acted out of his sword.

The other two classifications were the vaisya and sudra. Vaisyas were focused on wealth creation and maintenance, the traders and businessmen. Sudras were the workers in various field focused on work ethics. They focused on service.

There never was an attempt to compare one group with another, positively or negatively. The classification was based on natural aptitude. It was a very advanced system of training a person for the vocation for which
that the person was best suited. It was not hereditary. The son of a brahmana could end up as a sudra if his aptitude was different.

A child was handed over to a Master before the age of seven in the Vedic gurukul system. The Master identified the aptitude of the child and classified him into the varna system. There was no bias. It was a very scientific system. Though the system was not designed to be hereditary, the very conditioning increased the probability of a child born to a brahmana parent to be more likely to become a brahmana. It made no difference though, since each group understood its unique purpose and did not in any way consider itself superior or inferior to another group.

Over time the system got corrupted, especially when foreign invaders introduced their cultures into our country. To protect themselves, people made the varna system hereditary. This became even worse when the gurukul system was destroyed by the British in their attempt to conquer the Indians. They realized that the only way to do it was to destroy their culture, and the best way to destroy the culture was to destroy its base of education and knowledge transfer. Millions of gurukul centers that existed even some five hundred years ago have been reduced to a few thousand in existence today.

It is the invaders as well who dramatically vilified and painted the varna system black. This system was what they themselves used as the guild system in their country, which helped them prosper. In the same manner that they
divided and conquered India into subjugation, they also divided the different *varna* groups and set them against each other.

The actions of the British still haunt India in many ways. In regions like Tamil Nadu, hatred created between *varna* groups resulted in destructive atheism and a total lack of respect for the *Vedic* culture that had sustained the country for many thousands of years.

In today’s society where one’s value is measured purely in terms of dollars, it is the *vaisya* group who would be most sought after. Countries are no longer ruled by persons with a warrior mind set. They are ruled by people who are commercially and politically savvy, the *vaisya* class. However, in the *Vedic* tradition, there was no superiority of one class over another as we see throughout the world today.

It is not that someone born in one class cannot become an expert in another field. Drona was a *brahmana*, but became the most feared of all warriors. Buddha and Mahavira were from the *kshatriya* class but became enlightened Masters through the knowledge path. But Krishna is now trying to keep Arjuna on track as a *kshatriya*. There must be a reason for this.

Much depends on the desires with which the spirit leaves the earlier body and the *prarabda karma* with which it enters the present one. This *prarabda* (desires brought for fulfilling this birth) leads in a direction different from the environment into which one is born. This is what
happened to Buddha, Drona and others. This usually happens fairly early in life before too much conditioning in this lifetime happens through the environment. In the case of Arjuna, this was not so.

Arjuna was a prince who excelled as a kshatriya. He was the greatest archer and a fearless warrior. His natural state and prarabda was that of a kshatriya. This is why Krishna time and again pulls him back into that mould. That is why He tells Arjuna that it is dishonorable for him to run away from the battlefield. He tells him to stand up and fight.

Is Krishna being violent?

Krishna is neither violent by Himself nor is He goading Arjuna into violence. As a Master and the greatest of all Masters, Krishna is focused on only one thing, which is to help Arjuna realize his own potential. Each of us is unique. A Buddha cannot become an Arjuna. An Arjuna cannot become a Mahavira. The Master is fully aware of the inner potential of each individual disciple. He knows where that disciple has to go and how. He chisels him into that form and path, which ultimately takes the disciple to enlightenment.

This is what Krishna is doing here on the battlefield. If for one moment Krishna thought that Arjuna was sincere in his desire to walk away from the fight, Krishna would never have urged him to fight. Arjuna was not shying away from killing. He was reluctant to kill a few people whom he felt attached to. This is not non-violence or
This is arising from the fear of losing one’s possessions, one’s relationships and ultimately one’s own identity.

Arjuna’s behavior is based on ego, the fear of losing his identity. This is not non violence; it is a form of inner violence that differentiates between one and another. Arjuna’s reluctance arises from discrimination between those whom he considers his own and others who do not belong to him.

You may ask how you can call this fear violence. It is this fear of losing one’s identity that breeds terrorists. Terrorists are not courageous people. They are cowards who are desperately clinging to some actions and philosophy that can justify their existence and that can justify their importance. Their fear erupts into violence. It is like a rat being cornered. Even a rat will bare its fangs when its identity or life is threatened. Fear and survival instinct breeds violence.

This can be proved scientifically as well with the theory of the fight or flight response. It is the same chemical, adrenalin, which causes both reactions. Any trauma or fear makes a part of the brain, the hypothalamus, trigger the master gland pituitary to release the adrenalin chemical into the blood stream. Adrenalin activates the extremities, hands and feet. Depending upon the situation, you use one or the other or both!

You either run with fear or fight with fear!
Krishna does not want Arjuna to operate out of fear. He is dissolving the fear that fills Arjuna. He is transforming Arjuna so that he will act out of conscious awareness instead of unconscious patterns and fear. Krishna wants Arjuna to move away from the unconscious fear that has gripped him. The only way to do that is to bring him to his natural state, which is that of the kshatriya.

Q: I have read that we have three bodies. You had talked about seven energy layers. Are these similar?

In our first level course of Life Bliss Program, LBP 1, we cover the energy centers in the body, the seven chakras. These chakras govern our emotions and therefore our behavior. They control our emotional and physical wellbeing. When these centers are blocked we feel uncomfortable; we are in dis-ease. We get well and we move into ease when these centers are energized.

In the second level LBP 2 course, earlier called Nithyananda Spurana Program or NSP, we take you through the seven energy layers in the body-mind system that the spirit passes through at the time of its departure from the body. The three bodies you refer to are part of these layers.

These three bodies are the Physical body, the Subtle or Etheric body and the Causal body, corresponding to the
first, fourth and fifth energy layers. These are termed as *Sthula sharira* or gross body, *Sukshma sharira* or subtle body and *Karana sharira* or Causal body. They also correspond to the states of wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep.

Our body-mind system operates at the first two levels of gross and subtle body layers. The gross body is the material physical body and the subtle body is the collection of our emotions and thoughts. We can see, touch and feel the physical body; it is made of flesh and blood. In comparison, the subtle body is atomic; it is intangible.

The subtle body comes from the past life, as desire, and becomes the *prarabda karma* in the present body. The subtle body enters the gross body in the womb. The
subtle body searches and finds a suitable carrier and when it does, it enters that material gross body in the womb.

During the process of death and rebirth it is the subtle body layer that travels. It is not the Self, the atman that travels. The atman energizes the subtle layer, the etheric layer, which moves from one physical body to another. It is like a train system driven by electricity. The electricity is atman, which powers the train system. The train carriages and what is inside are the subtle and gross layers.

At death, the subtle layer and the gross layers perish. The spirit, the atman, is separated from these two layers. The physical and emotional boundary that was created between the atman and Brahman, the individual energy and cosmic energy, disappears. It is not that the atman and Brahman were unconnected before; they were not; but the mind-body system, the ego and identity, provided a barrier of ignorance between them and the realization that we are one with the cosmic energy.

Without the subtle layer, the physical layer cannot exist. It cannot exist in the fashion that we know. Spiritual efforts aimed at Self-realization are exercises to destroy the subtle layer. Once the subtle layer is destroyed, once the collection of emotions, expectations, unfulfilled desires, thoughts and samskaras which form this subtle layer are destroyed, then the boundary between us and the cosmic energy disappears. We become one with the Divine. We reach our natural state.
The Causal layer is the transition point between the present life state and the next. It is the passage of death. Once this layer is crossed the spirit cannot return to the previous physical and subtle bodies. During the transition one is in a coma and can still return. This experience of the Causal layer is the near death experience of those who experience death but do not die. Every day during deep sleep, the body-mind system passes through to this layer and returns. It is a regenerative process without which we cannot survive.

With meditation we transcend these three layers into a fourth state, the state of consciousness with awareness but no mind and no thoughts. This is the state of the atman, realization of the Self.
What Matters is Experience, Not Knowledge

2.39 What has been taught to you concerns the wisdom of Sankhya. Now, listen to the wisdom of Yoga.

Having known this, O Partha, you shall cast off the bonds of action.

2.40 There is no wasted effort or dangerous effect from this.

Even a little knowledge of this, even a little practice of Yoga, protects one from great fear.
2.41 O Joy of the Kuru, all you need is single-pointed determination;

Thoughts of the irresolute are many, branched and endless.

2.42 Foolish ones speak a lot, taking pleasure in the eulogizing words of Vedas, O Partha, saying, 'There is nothing else.'

2.43 Men of little knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas that recommend various fruitful activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resulting in good birth, power, and so forth.

Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this to living.

2.44 Those whose minds are diverted by such teachings and who cling to joy and mere devotion,

Are not determined or resolute and are not fit for steady meditation and samadhi.

2.45 O Arjuna! Be you above the three attributes that the Vedas deal in; free yourself from the pairs-of-opposites and be always in satva (goodness),

Free from all thoughts of acquisition or preservation and be established in the Self.

2.46 The Sage who has known the Self has little use for the Vedic scriptures as these are like a pool of water in a place that is already in flood.
Krishna begins his teachings of *Karma Yoga* to Arjuna in these verses. These verses should be read carefully by those who believe solely in scriptural authority, based on their superficial understanding of the meaning of what has been said.

Krishna unequivocally says here, ‘Forget the *Vedas.*’

He says, ‘All the knowledge contained in the *Vedas* is of as much use as water in a flood to one who has realized himself. *Vedas* is self-limiting; it concerns the three attributes, *satva, rajas* and *tamas,* the attributes of calmness, aggressive action and lazy inaction. The time has come now to move beyond these attributes; at least move from *rajas* into the state of *satva,* calmness.’

‘Do not quote to Me what the scriptures say,’ Krishna says. He continues, ‘Do not tell me about what you should do and should not do in this life through rituals and practices that will please the deities and ancestors so that you will benefit materially in this life and spiritually in some after life. All this is for people with limited understanding of their own Self, people who have not experienced the Truth. These are the people who still hanker after fulfilling sensual pleasures and name and fame.’

‘Move beyond them to the single pointed determination of Yoga that I shall teach you,’ Krishna says, ‘and be installed in a state where you are no longer concerned about creation, preservation and destruction. You will be beyond these and reach the state of the *Parabrahman.*’
Only a Master, the Master of the universe, the Jagat Guru, can say such things and get away with it. Krishna’s authority as He speaks these words is compelling. He is casting away the divinely transmitted scriptures, the Vedas, to instill truth in the mind of Arjuna.

It is the truth as spoken by the Divine who Himself has all the knowledge contained in the Vedas.

Vedas, the collection of knowledge as experienced by the great sages, the rishis, was conveyed for generations by word of mouth and was referred to as sruti, transmitted to the ear. This knowledge was really experiential knowledge. The real meaning of the sruti is that it was heard internally, not by expression. The moment an experience is expressed, it is no longer the truth of that experience.

All great Masters, the enlightened ones have had the same experience of nithyananda – eternal bliss. However, each expressed it differently. Mahavira went without clothes. Buddha taught very differently from Mahavira. Both were princes from the same period. The truth of one Master is not and cannot be the same as that of another Master.

As the Masters shared their experiences through body language and verbal language with close disciples, different interpretations arose. Vedanta, Sankhya, Mimamsa and such other philosophical paths had their origins from the Vedas, as learned men over generations contemplated upon these truths and added their own learning and sometimes their experiences.
Sankhya philosophy is about the apparent duality, Purusha, the static male principle, and Prakriti, the active female principle. Though Sankhya accepts that one cannot exist without the other, the two are deemed separate. Kapila is credited to the author of Sankhya. Vedanta on the other hand, credited for its brilliant exposition and subsequent development by Sankara, is all about non-duality. It says, Brahman or collective consciousness and Atman or individual consciousness are one and the same and what keeps them separate is ignorance, maya.

All these apparent contradictions arise from the superficial understanding of the Vedic knowledge. All the great scriptures, Vedas, Upanishads and Gita, exist at different levels of understanding, seven levels, to be precise, depending on the energy level that one dwells in. At the highest level one understands that all that there is, is ONE. There is no experiencer, experienced or experience as separate entities at the highest energy level; ALL is ONE.

Krishna refers to that truth here in these verses, the truth of the highest energy. ‘Do not be carried away by the apparent ritualistic approach of the Vedas as propounded by half learned scholars,’ the Master says, ‘go beyond; go beyond duality. All these seem to bring joy but it is transient; that joy is the brief intermission between periods of sorrow. Go beyond and seek the firm truth of the ONE, the union, that is yoga,’ He says to Arjuna.
'There is something beyond these superficial understandings,' Krishna says, ‘that will take you beyond the three human attributes of *satva* (calmness), *rajas* (active action) and *tamas* (passive inaction) and into liberation arising out of true understanding. At that stage you will be beyond creation, preservation and destruction, as these would have no meaning in the understanding of the permanence of the ultimate energy.’

Krishna finally says, ‘Once you understand and realize the *Brahman*, all the knowledge of the *Vedas* that you quote so passionately, will be of as much relevance to you as a lake in the midst of an ocean.’

Krishna is leading Arjuna step by step as if teaching a baby to walk. One by one the Master demolishes Arjuna’s arguments and fears, dispelling his dilemma.

These first baby steps address Arjuna’s intellect, for that’s all Arjuna was using till then. Krishna shows Arjuna how inadequate and meaningless his intellectual knowledge is. It is all borrowed with no experiential backing. He now seeks to lead him into experiential knowledge.
Half Knowledge is More Dangerous than Ignorance

Q: Master, if Krishna is the Jagat Guru, Lord of the Universe, why was he only with the Pandava and Kaurava princes. Why did he not help the world?

Again and again, Krishna happens on planet Earth, but nowadays He simply does not bring his peacock feather! Krishna is the only Master who has assured that He would be here again and again.
To protect the good and to destroy the evil, and to establish righteousness

I shall incarnate again and again.

Krishna always fulfills his promises. It is only you who needs a little openness to experience Him, that is all. Never think that He is not here.

A group of devotees was telling Ramakrishna that if they had been there during the period of Chaitanya, then they would have received his Divine love. Ramakrishna replied that there were some fools who were sitting before Chaitanya and said that they missed Krishna! These were the same people who were now before Ramakrishna saying that they had missed Chaitanya! These were the people who would tell Ramana Maharishi that they had missed Ramakrishna, and today, one of these people would be sitting here to say that they missed Krishna!

Understand that all you need is a little openness and sensitivity. If you can, you may listen to Krishna’s flute here and now! If you miss it, you are missing it but Krishna comes down again and again to fulfill His promise. With a little more openness and sensitivity, you can experience Him wherever you are.

Krishna’s Gita had very little to do with Pandava and Kaurava princes. The Parabrahman delivered it to every ordinary being, so that this individual mortal can realize that he too is an inherent part of the Parabrahman.
Krishna has done His job by giving you the Gita. His purpose is to help the entire world over time and space. It is for you to sit up and listen.

Do not sit here and complain or wonder what there is for you in the Gita. Open your mind and receive. You will be helped. That is the promise of the Master.

**Q: How can Krishna who is Vedas Himself denigrate the Vedas saying that they are useless?**

The differentiation that Krishna makes here is between acquired knowledge and experiential knowledge. He refers to *Vedas* and *Sankhya* as acquired knowledge, at least in so far as Arjuna and the rest of humanity are concerned.

As I mentioned before, no experience remains an experiential truth once it is expressed. Acquired knowledge can never be your truth. It is some one else’s truth, not yours.

In Mahabharata there is this description of how Duryodhana borrowed the invincible armor of his teacher Drona.

Jayadratha killed Abhimanyu, Arjuna’s son. Arjuna swore to kill Jayadratha before the next sunset. Arjuna was wreaking havoc in his fury and Duryodhana wailed in frustration to Drona, the Commander. Since Drona was
protecting Jayadratha he lent his invincible magical armor to Duryodhana and told him to stop Arjuna’s onslaught.

When Arjuna rained arrows from his mighty gandiva at Duryodhana they seemed to have no effect at all. Arjuna understood what had happened. He cut loose Duryodhana’s chariot from the horses, got Duryodhana down on foot upon the ground and disarmed him. He then pierced parts of his body not covered by the armor till Duryodhana fled from the battlefield.

Like the uselessness of borrowed armor, borrowed knowledge is useless; in fact it can be more dangerous. It can boost one’s ego to a point of self-destruction.

That is what happens to many philosophers and preachers. With a superficial knowledge that they have acquired by reading the scriptures, they believe that they have the same powers as the Masters who experienced and expressed those scriptures. They consider themselves as experts in Sankhya, Vedanta, Mimamsa and so on, and argue endlessly with no idea of what they are saying.

For someone who understands the oneness of divinity, there is no difference between what Sankara says and what Ramanuja says. There is no difference ultimately. It is only the approach that is different.

In a book store there was a display of the commentaries of Sankara and Ramanuja on Gita. A learned scholar puffed up with his own importance went to the bookseller and demanded, ‘Do you know the
difference between the commentary by Sankara and the one by Ramanuja? I see that you have them both here.’

‘Oh, just forty rupees Sir,’ said the bookseller. Just one dollar, that is all.

That is all the difference! No need to be puffed up in knowledge as if one knows the difference. You may say Sankara is steeped in *gnana*, knowledge, and Ramanuja is steeped in *bhakti*, devotion. No work of Ramanuja or anyone else can match the devotion of Sankara in his description of Devi in Soundaryalahiri. Ramanuja’s commentaries are no less compared to those of Sankara. An enlightened Master’s experience is always total. There is no separation as *bhakti*, *gnana* or *dhyana*, devotion, knowledge or meditation paths of excellence. They all lead to the same point.

Krishna tells Arjuna here to go beyond the three attributes explained in the *Vedas*. Once expressed, even the scriptures are governed by the attributes; they are in *satva* or goodness. Krishna urges Arjuna to transcend them and also transcend like and dislike, *raga* and *dvesha*, in order to reach the state of equanimity of a sage. In that state, He says it is as if the knowledge gained from the *Vedas* is as irrelevant as water to a person sitting in a river.

Krishna is not degrading knowledge; He is not insulting the scripture. He is telling Arjuna to go beyond acquired knowledge represented by the *Vedas* and *Sankhya* into the experiential knowledge of Yoga. Here the Yoga
that Krishna is talking about is not the noun form of union, but the process of uniting.

Yoga is often referred to as union. As long as you call it this, you are only talking about the acquired knowledge of this great science and art. It becomes ‘uniting’ when you practice it, when you experience the process of uniting. This is what Krishna is referring to.

When a water drop in the ocean unites with the ocean, it is undifferentiated. It has no attributes any more. It has merged with the source from where it came. As long as it feels separate and retains its individuality, however much it may know about where it came from, it will remain separate. It has to drop its identity. This dropping of identity can never be intellectual; it can never be based on knowledge. It must be experiential; it must arise from the being.

Q: Krishna mentions Sankhya as the knowledge that has been taught to Arjuna. He says He wants to take Arjuna through Yoga. What is the difference?

Arjuna had earlier quoted extensively from the scriptures in the first chapter of Gita, Arjuna Vishada, Arjuna’s dilemma. He said that if he killed his leaders, the Kuru race would be destroyed. The destruction of the lineage will bring in social evils. Social evils would then break up families and women will go astray. This will
lead to degeneration of morals. Moral degeneration will lead to neglect of rituals to ancestors. Finally there will be destruction. This was the sum and substance of Arjuna’s understanding of what would happen if he continued to battle his foes.

Arjuna quoted the scriptures with his understanding of what he had been taught and understood. Krishna refers to all this as Sankhya. Sankhya here not only means the Sankhya philosophy developed by Sage Kapila, but encompasses all scriptural knowledge as well. As I said earlier Krishna does not pull down this knowledge, but implicitly warns that knowledge without experience is dangerous. So, He says he will take Arjuna from knowledge into experience, from Sankhya into Yoga.

Scriptures of all evolved cultures have arisen out of the experienced wisdom of enlightened beings. They get diluted and distorted as others without the same experience, start expounding on that experience. Most others understand these scriptures at only the physical or gross level of knowledge as it is understood literally. There are many other layers of understanding.

For instance, in this verse about Sankhya alone, one can get into endless arguments about the different interpretations of the Vedas such as Sankhya and others without coming into any practical conclusion. Such argument is the territory of philosophers. What Krishna tries to do is to take us beyond these arguments.
Act, Don’t Worry about the Result

2.47 You have a right only to work, but never to its outcome.

Let not the outcome be your motive; but do not move into inaction.

2.48 O Dhananjaya! Do what you have to do with no attachment to outcome, being centered in Yoga.

Be balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is Yoga.
The entire teaching of the Bhagavad Gita can be summarized in the above two verses. The sheer brilliance of the wisdom of the Jagat Guru is reflected in these verses. Whenever I get a chance I refer to these verses to explain how one should lead one’s life.

Krishna says many, many things in these few words. He says, ‘You have the right and responsibility to work. You have no responsibility or right to the results of that work. Do not focus on the result and make it either an object of greed to chase or fear to stay away from. Do what you have to do with a centered mind without worrying about whether you will succeed or fail.’

Nothing more can be said or ever needs to be said about why and how one should perform.

Many people miscommunicate these verses and misunderstand these verses. There are people who stay away from work that they fear may end in adverse results. As long as results can be positive either to themselves or others, they will carry out what they are assigned sincerely. But when they think that something bad may happen, they will stop doing whatever they are doing.

There are others who feel that doing nothing and disengaging from all action is the best solution, since all actions result in reactions and they accumulate karma.

Of course, almost all of us go blindly doing whatever we are told to do when we see money or material rewards dangled in front of us.
Krishna says, ‘Stop! Who do you think you are? You are here to do My work. You have no right to take the results that are Mine.’ His position is similar to that of a landowner who has sharecroppers working on the land. The sharecroppers have no right to anything but their sustenance wages. Theirs is not to worry about whether the land will yield well or not well. All that they need to do is meet their own responsibilities caring for the land. The landlord is the owner and ultimate beneficiary.

Awareness of what Krishna says here is the solution to almost all our day-to-day problems. Do what you have to do, without worrying about the results.

Do not do only what you want with hopes of a certain reward. Do not stop doing what you need to do because you are afraid of what may lie ahead.

Many of us in corporate life are focused on results. We will do something only if we think that it will be effective. We get caught up in the result even before we start. So how do we define what is effective? For whom should it be effective?

Ninety percent of the time effectiveness is interpreted as something that benefits our self interest. Even if it benefits the organization, we do it because our performance will be recognized and we will be rewarded. How often do we do anything knowing fully well that we will be caught and punished? If we are sensible and law abiding, I doubt if we will have. So in a company also we will do such things that will reward us, and avoid what will cause problems.
We learn this lesson early in life. Our parents and elders teach us this rule from infancy. ‘Do this and we shall reward you; do that and we will punish you.’ We are all brought up with the conditioning of what is good for us and what is bad for us, what will be successful or what will be a failure. Both success and failure are based on anticipated rewards or punishments.

Society operates on this principle of greed and fear to prevent us from doing actions that the society does not want us to do. Religions do the same. Society threatens you with legal punishment here and now; religion threatens you with punishment in the hereafter, in hell or heaven. What is hell or heaven? Do they exist? No, they do not. Be very clear, they exist only in the minds of priests and preachers so that they can download the images into you and control you. If there were indeed a hell, it would be populated by preachers because hypocrisy is a bigger sin than many others.

You are not true to yourself, your spirit, your energy, when you say one thing and do another. You do not walk your talk. The word *acharya* in Sanskrit is the word for a true teacher. It means one who walks with the student, one who walks his talk, one who is true to his word. When I ordain my *acharyas*, teachers of my practices and mission, I apply honey on their tongues and tell them that I shall be on their tongues, so they better be careful of what they say and what they do. ‘Walk your talk,’ I tell them.
When you walk your talk and your talk is true, then you do not have a problem, but if the talk itself is untrue, then your walk and your actions will also be untrue. Ultimately it is all about the truth, your awareness, and being in the present moment. If what you preach comes from awareness and the truth of your own experience and you act in accordance with that truth and awareness, then there is no differentiation between thought, word and actions. All will be true.

In the Bible there is the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son.

A man has two sons. He splits his wealth between the two of them. One of them goes away with the money and spends it foolishly. The other stays with the father, takes care of the wealth and the father. Years later the son who went away comes back penniless. The father welcomes him warmly and throws a party to welcome him and kills the ‘fatted calf’ on this special occasion. The other son is very annoyed and expresses his displeasure. The father says, ‘You are always with me and you can count on my love; this guy, this prodigal son, needs my attention.’

If you look at this parable deeper than the mere words, you will understand that the father is acting on the truth of his experience and the son is acting out of expectations.

The son feels he has been good, so he needs to be rewarded, and that the prodigal son has been bad and needs to be punished.
We are all prodigal sons in this world. If the universal energy, who we call God, were to treat us based on what we may seem to deserve, then none of us perhaps will have any hope! All of us will end in hell as the preachers promise.


People ask me, ‘Master, why is nature so cruel? Why are there natural disasters? Why do young children die?’ The answer is what Krishna gives. Nature goes about its job without any thought about what the end result is. What happens will happen. It is bound to happen. Nature follows its dharma, its path of righteousness. The problem is that we do not understand the dharma of nature; we measure natural actions by our yardstick of logic.

You will then ask me, ‘How do we know what to do? How do we know what is the path of righteousness? How do we know what our dharma is? Is it something as simple as saying, you are a kshatriya, therefore you should fight and kill and don’t worry about who dies. That’s not your problem? Or, that you are a vaisya, a businessman, your dharma is to make money and therefore you need not worry about how you make money and that is not your problem?’

No, Krishna is not talking about acting in selfishness; the Jagat Guru is talking about acting in awareness. He
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says, ‘Be centered in Yoga and drop all attachment to results; do what you have to do.’

What beautiful wisdom!

Yoga is union, union of man and Divine. It is your realization of your own Self, your realization that you are divine. It is the state of awareness, state of truth, state of the present, when all that you do will be in righteous consciousness. When you perform in this awareness, and with no expectations, you will perform what is right and just.

Our thoughts are unconnected, illogical and unpredictable. It is only when we link thoughts together that problems start and suffering happens. We remember a few out of hundreds of events and try to make a link between these few. Ninety percent of what we observe and experience is never recorded by our conscious memory; it just slips into our unconscious. So what we remember is ten percent of what we experience. Within that, what stays in our memory is always that which falls outside the pattern. If it is part of a normal pattern we will almost always ignore and forget the event.

Just think... when you drive to work, if you see a beggar every day at a street corner, after a while his presence is no longer noteworthy. It is only if he is absent you will say to yourself, ‘Hey, that guy is not there today!’ If your spouse is always nasty, it is no surprise if he or she is nasty today too. But if your spouse is specially caring and loving today then that would be a miracle and noteworthy!
The trouble is that our mind picks up these exceptions, because that is what it remembers and uses to form a pattern. It forgets all other evidences and remembers only the exceptions. It then expects that exception to happen. When it does not happen we are unhappy; if it does, we are happy till the next time when it does not happen.

So, do not link thoughts and create a shaft of thoughts. Un-clutch from your thoughts, and automatically the mind will drop. This is the way to stay in the present. Some of you misunderstand the word un-clutched as not to do anything. You think that to drop the mind is to be passive, inactive, doing nothing. No, not at all!

You can be doing nothing and yet occupy your mind fully. That is what they mean by saying that an idle mind is the devil’s workshop. When you have nothing to do, what you end up doing is creating fantasies.

Inaction is not what is advised. Understand: when your mind drops, when thoughts cease, and your energy level is high, you cannot be inactive. You will act spontaneously out of sheer necessity. Physical and mental idleness are never produced by a no-thought mind. One must not link idleness with calmness. One with a no-thought mind dwells in peace, calmness and harmony, but is all alert to act spontaneously in a way that would best suit each situation and every moment.

With a no-thought mind comes great awareness and energy; idleness or lethargy is far from it. A confused and furiously overworked mind is constantly occupied in
chatter and fantasies that can result in apathy and idleness.

When you are in such a state of un-clutched mind, you are in awareness and you are in the present moment. What ever you do in such a state of awareness would be the right thing to do. When you are in the present moment, regrets of your past and expectations of the future are absent from your mind. You are not influenced either by fear or greed regarding the outcome. You do what you have to do.

That is why Krishna says that you must act in the present moment. He says, ‘Do not get attached to the results of your action nor get attached to inaction, thinking that it could be an easy way out of this problem.’
If Your Path is Right, Your Destination Will Be Right

Q: Master, It is a natural response to look towards the end result whenever we do something. How can we give up thinking about the outcome?

We always work for an outcome. We don’t realize the irrationality of focusing our mind on the result before we even embark on the activity. We are so conditioned to this response that anything else seems bizarre. How can we even consider doing something if we do not know what we are going to get out it, you will ask?
What is wrong if you do something just for the sake of its own enjoyment? What about looking at the sunset or sunrise, for example? Can you even think of a result of watching the sun? Those of you who are so conditioned to the goal response may say, yes, we need to feel happy watching the sun. How then are you going to measure that happiness factor? What are you going to compare it against?

Let us learn from children and from enlightened Masters who have become children again. Children are so curious and carefree. They have no expectations. They do things without knowing what will come out of it. They don’t even have an idea of what an outcome is. Gradually, unfortunately, they learn from elders that each activity has an outcome. Then they start placing the outcome ahead of the activity. Then, and only then, do they lose their innate happiness.

Can we say that we shall live today only if we have a guarantee of tomorrow? Do we even know for sure that the sun will rise tomorrow? Do we know whether or not we will be breathing to see the sunrise tomorrow?

A small story:

Birbal, the wise minister of emperor Akbar, often got into trouble because the other ministers were jealous of him.

They told Akbar that Birbal could do anything. Akbar said, ‘How can he do anything, he is only
human?’ They said, ‘No, he is super human. See, he can make even a dog talk.’ They pointed to a stray dog that was passing by the palace and said, ‘Just threaten him, he can do it.’

Akbar called Birbal and told him that he knew Birbal had super human powers and unless he made the dog talk he would be put to death.

Birbal said, ‘Sire, even with my powers I cannot do it immediately. Give me one year and I shall make the dog talk.’

Birbal’s friends were shocked. They said, ‘Birbal, what have you done? How can you make a dog talk? You will surely die!’

Birbal said, ‘In a year’s time many things can happen. The dog may die. The king may die. I may die. Who knows, the dog may even learn to talk!’

When you go with no expectations, whatever happens is a miracle.

There is a very deep truth that is embedded in this statement of Krishna. The core of all *Karma Yoga* is that you must act without expectation of result.

When we perform with expectation we are always focused on the future. We are in speculation. We are in greed. We are in fear as to whether we can achieve or not. The more we expect the more stressed we become. We cannot focus on what we are doing. The chances of a
positive outcome diminish when we place excessive importance on the outcome.

When you are focused on the outcome, you lose the journey. When you are so focused on the destination you miss all the scenery that you pass by. Imagine that you are driving through a beautiful scenic road, by a seaside or a mountainside. There is so much to see and enjoy. You can only enjoy the scenery if your mind is attentive to the scenery. If instead, all that you can think of is when you would reach your destination and you are impatient, you may not even notice the landscape you are passing through.

When you are on a project under time pressure and someone is constantly looking over your shoulder to see whether you are performing right and performing on time, do you really think that you can perform well? The next time you are on such an assignment, convince yourself that you have all the time in the world and just focus on what you need to do instead of worrying about when you have to finish. You will find that you will complete the job in less time and in a better manner.

People think that living in an ashram is easy, especially when I have said in public that no one will be pressured to work. That is true, no one is pressured. But if you ask my ashramites they will tell you that they rarely go to bed before two or three early morning, and they are up again at dawn for Gurupuja! There is no pressure. I never ask them why they are not at Gurupuja or why they have not completed some work. They do it because that is their
passion. When you are engaged in what you are passionate about and yet not worried about the outcome, you can never be stressed. You will only be in bliss instead.

Working without a goal keeps you in the present moment. That is the secret. That is why time and again in the Gita, Krishna pleads with Arjuna to drop all expectations of outcome while in action. Action carried out this way is meditation. That is Karma Yoga. There is no better route to liberation than this.

Activity is a natural attribute of any living being. Otherwise you would be dead. Not acting is the state of tamas, of passive inaction and ignorance. You are in darkness. On the other hand, acting with a goal is rajas, of aggressive intent and activity. When you act without a goal, you are in the present moment, in satva, in peace and bliss. You are in the realm of light.

The Master, the supreme Guru, is leading you from darkness into light, from tamas into satva and beyond, by telling you to drop all expectations and act.

The highest state of satva is when you act without any expectation and with the outcome dedicated to the Divine. You then transcend satva and go beyond the three attributes. Krishna says, ‘Do what you have to do and leave the result to Me.’ He says, ‘The fruits of your action belong to me.’ This is the state of true surrender.

In Mahabharata, one of the most poignant scenes is when Draupadi is insulted in Duryodhana’s court when
his brother Dushassana tries to disrobe her. Draupadi cries out to Krishna, ‘Krishna, save me, save my honor.’ Her garment, the sari that she wears, gets longer and longer and Dushassana gives up finally. When she meets Krishna after that incident. Draupadi complains to Him and asks, ‘Krishna, what took you so long to come to my rescue?’

Krishna say, ‘My dear Draupadi, while you kept calling me, your hand was still clutching your garment in an attempt to help yourself. It is only when you gave up and completely surrendered, and with your hands held high, you called for Me, that I could come to your rescue. I could only come when you really surrendered to me.’

The Lord can only step in when your ego falls. This is the problem we all have. We are full of ego and the belief that we can control everything around us. We are so sure that we control the outcome of our actions. So, Krishna watches in compassion and waits. There is nothing He can do. Our ego prevents Him from reaching out.

Krishna has nothing to gain by telling you that you should sacrifice the results of your actions to Him. Don’t think He wants to get rich and famous by grabbing the results of what you do. Out of deep compassion He tells us, ‘Surrender to Me, surrender the outcome of all that you do to Me, drop your ego and reach out to Me; I am waiting and I shall come to you.’

When we do this, miracles happen!
2.48 O Dhananjaya, centered in Yoga, balanced in success and failure, act with no attachment

Such evenness of mind is called Yoga.

2.49 O Dhananjaya, beyond the Yoga of wisdom, is action.

Wretched are those whose motive is the outcome; surrender yourself to wisdom.

2.50 Endowed with the wisdom of
evenness of mind, move away from both good and evil deeds in this life;

Devote yourself to Yoga. Skill in action is Yoga.

2.51 The wise, having abandoned the outcome of their actions and possessed of knowledge, are freed from the cycle of birth and death.

They go to the state which is beyond all sorrow.

2.52 When your wisdom takes you beyond delusion,

You shall be indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.

2.53 When you are not confused by what you have heard and your wisdom stands steady and unmoving in the Self,

You shall attain Self-realization.

Krishna reiterates and emphasizes what He has said before and ends with a punch line.

He says, ‘Act without attachment. Do not worry about success or failure in results. Center yourself in wisdom that takes you beyond action and the desire for fruits of action. Once you are centered in wisdom you will act wisely. Once you give up attachment to results, you will be freed from the cycle of birth and death and will be beyond sorrow.’
He then adds, ‘When you are centered in wisdom you will no longer be deluded by what you have heard and are yet to hear. When you are no longer deluded by what you have heard and are centered in wisdom, you are liberated.’

Krishna’s immediate reference here is to the scriptures, the Vedas, an oral tradition. Arjuna earlier quoted these scriptures to Krishna, using them to emphasize the potential implications of his actions. Krishna chides Arjuna and says, ‘Don’t be confused by what you hear, even if it is supposed to be divine knowledge, the Vedas. Remember: if you are really centered in wisdom, you can never be deluded; you will be in awareness.’

Krishna’s words resonate even today, and perhaps are far more relevant today. We are bombarded by information from all sides 24 hours a day, whether we like it or not. When something is stated repeatedly, especially by an authority, we tend to believe and accept it without reservation. No one even needs to force you to believe; your brain can be washed without any pressure, without coercion.

This is what many political and religious institutions use to instill fear and greed in people to obey their commandments. This is also what all marketing and advertising executives do to convince you about their products. This is what someone called a ‘Hidden Persuader’.
A small story:

A CEO died and went up to the gates of the higher world. There was a beautiful receptionist who welcomed him with a huge smile. She said: You have a choice. You can choose between heaven and hell, but once you choose, it is final. We shall now take you on a preview tour.

The CEO was taken to heaven first. There he saw many old bearded men sitting with closed eyes and once in a while some angels playing soulful music on their harps. It all looked pretty dull.

Then they took him to hell. Hell was rocking. Rock bands were playing, people were dancing and every one seemed to be having fun. It was very different from what the man thought hell would be.

The receptionist then queried him, ‘Where do you wish to go?’

‘To hell,’ announced the CEO.

‘Are you sure?’ she asked, ‘you cannot change your mind later.’

‘Oh, I am sure,’ he responded.

The next moment he found himself in a hot and dirty place where he was set upon by tough guys with whips. ‘Come on,’ they yelled, ‘you have work to do. Move!’
‘What is this?’ the CEO gasped. ‘The hell I saw a few minutes ago was very different. They have brought me to the wrong place.’

‘No, no,’ the guards answered. ‘This is hell alright. What you saw before was our marketing department’s promotional tour! This is reality!’

We all tend to believe all that we see, hear and read. Often, what we perceive is not the truth.

The first response of most of us is to believe rather than doubt. This is especially true when what we see, hear and read was already instilled into us from childhood. If we are told again and again from childhood as most of us are, that we must listen to elders and read figures of authority, we grow up tending to do just that. It also happens that when what we see fits our fantasies, we don’t bother to question.

Social, business and religious institutions use this power with great effect upon us. All religions and cultures have some book or other that is believed to be divine in origin and which must be obeyed implicitly. Does our inner experience tell us that whatever such a book says is relevant to us? More importantly, do we perceive it to be relevant today?

The Vedic scriptures, the sruti, divine in origin, and the smriti, rules and regulations laid down later by Manu and other sages, make no such claims. In fact, Hindu scriptures have both the humility and the arrogance to
challenge us to transform ourselves according to the needs of the day, but stipulate that we first experience what is said. Vedic scriptures are not dead knowledge that is a burden upon us to abide by, but living guidelines that lead us into wisdom and liberation.

‘So,’ Krishna says, ‘let the Vedas say what it wants. You may hear whatever you must, but put what you hear, see, and read to the test of wisdom to take you beyond delusion.’

He asks Arjuna to experience what he is exposed to and then to decide what he must do. Krishna has already said in the Gita that He is the Vedas; He is knowledge, and yet He asks him to experiment and be guided by his inner wisdom, not by what he merely hears.

What courage, what authority! Only one who is so sure about the truth can say, ‘Do not listen to what I say and how I act, but listen to your inner voice of truth born out of your own awareness and experience.’

One can write hundreds and thousands of pages but they will be meaningless when judged against these words of the Master.

Some of the social and corporate institutions are quite direct in imposing their truths on us without giving us a chance to verify and accept them. ‘You must fall in line with our mission if you want to included in our corporate family,’ they would say. That is why sanyasis, monks, get out of the rule-bound world, seeking the freedom of
truth, but unfortunately, many get caught in the rules of religion. In society, wise men have been punished for expressing truths that they experienced which violated the beliefs then held by their leaders. Socrates, Copernicus, Da Vinci and many others suffered when they refused to accept what they heard. They were revered as visionaries years after they passed away.

In today’s corporate world, people who stand up to what they believe is right when they see their companies doing unethical things are referred to as ‘whistle blowers’. Today it is a respected word. Even three decades ago this was a derogatory word, referring to traitors.

Why is such a person a traitor? Is it because he or she sees a truth that is at variance to what his institutions, the company, the Government or religion tells him? If, in the wisdom of one’s experience, one realizes a truth different from what one has heard, the individual not only has the right but also the responsibility towards humanity to tell them about that truth. The truth may be joyful or painful but it must be told.

Krishna is taking Arjuna through the path of enlightenment through simple steps. He says, ‘Don’t be inactive, do what you need to do. Do it with no expectations and no attachment to results. Do it with a centered mind and in wisdom. Do it with the wisdom of your own inner calling and not because of something you have heard. You will then go beyond all suffering and be liberated.’
These steps are so simple that everyone can practice them; in fact every one should practice them. Stay in the present moment of your awareness without worrying about what you have heard and experienced in the past or what you expect to hear and experience in future. Stay fully centered in the experience of the present, and based on the truth of that experience, act. You can never go wrong. I promise you that.

**Q:** Master, in the corporate world everything revolves around budgets and objectives. How realistic is it to work without goals in such an environment?

Please understand, not only is this possible, but this is also the only way to live in bliss without suffering.

You seem like a professional or a corporate person. You will work to some budget, forecast, milestones, goals, objectives and so on. How many times can you honestly say that you achieved all that you planned and budgeted? I have talked to many CEOs. They have been honest in saying that in their budgets what is met is the cost projections but not profit projections. This is a universal truth. Expenses always exceed the budget while profits fall below the budget.

Yet, the whole corporate system swears by budgets and stresses everybody in trying to meet them.
Krishna does not tell you to destroy budgets. He advises you not to be obsessed with budget and goals. He tells you, ‘Do what you have to, act for the sake of action, fight for the sake of the fight, without worrying about the outcome.’

He says to focus on the present moment.

This is the full circle your management science has now come to. Everyone talks about process control. What does that mean? It means to focus on what is happening at this moment! Unless you get what you are doing now right, there is no way you are going to do it right any time in the future. The future becomes the past through the present only.

I am told by my disciples from the business world that it is only recently the discovery has been made that even you inspect 100% of what is produced in a factory of office, there will still be about 1% of defectives. You cannot reduce it to zero.

They say that the Japanese developed the method of focusing on the process instead of the product and this led to zero defects! All your great systems of Six Sigma are based on the belief of being in the present moment.

This is what Krishna said over 5000 years ago. ‘Forget about the end product,’ He said, ‘focus on the process of what you need to do.’ Can anything be simpler?

Krishna’s message is very simple. He says: surrender the outcome to Me and focus on your action. Why is it
difficult to do? In fact this will lift a huge weight off your shoulder. You will no longer be stressed constantly about the result. Instead, you will focus on the activity and will perform better.

Just try this approach. Relax completely and completely focus on what you have at hand at this point in time. Make sure that you do it with awareness and well. You will see that the results follow automatically without you having to worry about them.

Understand this: when your path is right, your destination will always be right. You will travel light and you will travel in bliss and whichever destination you reach will be the one most suited for you.
2.54 O Kesava! What is the description of one who stays in the present moment and is merged in the awareness of truth and wisdom?

How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

2.55 Sri Bhagavan said:

O Partha, A man who casts off completely all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self,
He is said to be one of steady wisdom.

2.56 He whose mind is not disturbed by adversity and who in prosperity, does not go after other pleasures,

He who is free from attachment, fear or anger is called a sage of steady wisdom.

2.57 His wisdom is fixed on one who is everywhere without attachment,

Meeting with anything good or bad and who neither rejoices nor hates.

2.58 As the tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides, when a person withdraws his senses from the sense-objects,

His wisdom becomes steady.

2.59 From the body, the sense objects turn away, but the desires remain;

His desires also leave him on seeing the Supreme.

Arjuna is now curious and wants to know more. He asks Krishna, ‘Fine, you are telling me all this, that is great. You tell me that I must perform without expectations and attachment and that I must be centered in wisdom. Sure, I would like to live that way and move in the path of wisdom. Pray, tell me what kind of a person is this, the one who is always in awareness in the present moment? How does he behave, walk and talk? Let me model myself after him.’
For the first time in this dialogue Arjuna expresses serious interest in what Krishna is saying. Arjuna knows well that whatever he has said earlier arises from his confusion. Arjuna is intelligent enough to know that he does not know. When Krishna tells him to behave in a manner befitting the code of the warriors, this piece of advice certainly makes good sense to Arjuna, since this is the conditioning that he has been brought up in.

However, what Krishna says further confuses Arjuna. Krishna says to do what you have to do without being concerned about the outcome. This is news to Arjuna. He has rarely done anything in his life without first thinking about what is going to happen as a result of his action.

Arjuna is the greatest of marksmen. Once he fixes his bow on a target, he never misses. He is used to aiming at targets. He is conditioned to first define his target and then act. Krishna has confused him totally now. Krishna says, ‘Release your arrow; where it lands that is my business.’ At least, this is how Arjuna understands what Krishna says.

Arjuna has enough trust in Krishna not to ignore this instruction from the Divine. So, he asks, ‘Tell me who is it that acts without any interest in the outcome. Who is he that is not concerned about the result, whether it is good or bad, painful or joyful, and how do I identify such a person?’

There is a branch of behavioral psychology called NLP or Neuro Linguistic Programming. In NLP, the basic
belief is to model our activities based on those people we wish to emulate. If you talk, move, walk like Gandhi, you too can become like Gandhi, says NLP. There is some truth in this. When you immerse yourself in the mould of another person, imitate him completely, you start thinking like that person and become a lot like that person. Arjuna is asking Krishna for the specifications of the person he should emulate so that he too can become what Krishna wants him to become.

Krishna responds, ‘This man is free from desires and emotions. He has neither greed nor fear. He is always centered in himself. Pleasures through the senses do not interest him. He has withdrawn his senses from the external world and has focused them inwards, directed towards that Supreme Truth which is beyond all pleasures, attachments, emotions and sense objects. Once he realizes that truth, even the longing for that truth leaves him.’

Krishna thus describes the realized Yogi to Arjuna so that he too may emulate him and realize himself.

Once again Krishna teaches through simple steps. ‘Nirmohatve nischalatatvatvam,’ says Sankara, taking a cue from the Master. Absence of desires leads to a clear and still mind, steeped in wisdom. Dropping expectations, letting go of attachments, moving away from the regrets of the past and the fantasies of the future, if one brings the mind to the present, the mind stops and desires drop. When there are no desires, there are no emotions that normally arise from the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of
such desires, such as joy, elation, depression, sadness, anger, disappointment, jealousy and so on.

When the mind is without fear and anger, without expectations of success and failure, the unattached mind seeks that which is unattached. It seeks the ultimate truth, which is beyond all desires, emotions and attachment. The mind and the senses that the mind directs move away from the external objects of attraction to within. First the objects drop, then the desire for the objects disappears as truth dawns.

This may sound complicated, but is as simple as counting ‘1, 2, 3’.

This universe is responsible for all of us. We exist not because of ourselves and our actions but in spite of such. When we let go, when we listen to the universe, it gives us all that we need to live with abundance, but the problem is that we don’t listen. We do not stop with our needs but get greedy with our wants as well. There is no way all our wants can be fulfilled without taking away the needs of other beings in this universe.

The law of the jungle operates beautifully without man. Animals act based on needs and not on wants. A lion kills because it has to eat, not because it sees another lion killing. It would kill only to appease its own hunger or when its own life is threatened. Once the human being enters the scene, this equation changes. Man engages in wanton killing, without caring about what he needs. Man no longer expresses his innate intelligence, unlike animals.
Once we choose to live based on our real needs, we choose to live on present needs and not futuristic wants. We rise into the present moment. Desires based on past and future dissolve. We start understanding our role in our relationship with the universe. We realize that we too are the universe and that we can have all that we need without desire, emotions, fear and greed, and most importantly without suffering.

Krishna aptly provides the example of the tortoise to illustrate how to withdraw one’s senses inwards. The tortoise follows its instincts to obey nature; it lives in the present moment. It moves when its sensors report that there is no danger, and it withdraws completely when it senses threat. It lays its eggs, wading out of the sea onto the beach and moves back in when the hatching is done. Its entire cycle of life is tuned to the wisdom of nature. It is not an active and adventurous living being but it is celebrated in all ancient cultures for its longevity and steadiness. So Krishna gives the analogy of the tortoise withdrawing itself completely from the external world into its shell, to explain how man should withdraw from the dictates of the senses and be centered in his Self.

The human is an obviously different being compared to the rest of the animals. He alone of all living beings has the capability to think and act. He alone has the power to decide whether he follows the wisdom of nature endowed in him as in all other beings or rejects it and decides to be ‘unintelligent’. An animal, when it indulges in any act, whether of mating, caring, killing or saving its
own life, does all and any of these, with tremendous focus. When it mates, all it does is mate; it does not engage in conversation or watch television out of the corner of its eye. Its lust is all fulfilling. It consumes its attention and therefore energy of that moment. The animal always lives in its present moment. Not so the human. For the human, where his body is his mind never is.

Corporate people ask me how to make right decisions. It is simple. When you focus intensely on the job at hand and make a decision based on the information of that present moment, your decisions will always be right. The universal energy guides you in your decision when you settle into yourself, focus inwards and withdraw your senses as the tortoise does.

What do you all do instead? Half the time you postpone decisions because you are afraid of the consequences of the decision. So things happen without your control and which do not favor you. The other half of the time you are led by greed and prejudices based on past experiences and future fantasies and you decide with no relevance to issues of that moment.

Do you even eat properly? When have you last eaten, when you can say with your hand on your heart that you focused only on the food that you ate, instead of chatting, reading, watching someone or something? When have you last done anything whatsoever with one hundred percent focus on what you did?
You may say that we are only human, we wish to enjoy life and we wish to enjoy sensual pleasures. Please do! However, when you enjoy, enjoy fully. Be fully focused on that object of enjoyment and with all your senses focused only on that activity.

When you do whatever you do with one hundred percent focus, you are in awareness. You become God!
Trust Existence, Not Your Logic

Q: Master, you spoke about needs and wants, and that needs carry their own energy for fulfillment. Does this mean that we can do nothing and things will happen?

When you have unconditional faith in the power of the universe, yes it will happen. Whatever you need you shall receive, without doubt. This is my experience.

When I left home at seventeen, I swore never to touch money again. All
I had were the clothes on my body, the two-piece saffron cloth I was wearing, a water pot and a stick. With just these, I traveled the length and breadth of India for over six years and a distance of thousands of kilometers.

Not only did I not die, I became enlightened!

I was not the only one who achieved this. There are millions like me in India who choose to give up and surrender themselves to the energy of Existence. In the Western world they would be called homeless and would be hounded. They may be taken to prison. In India, wandering monks are respected and given free food and shelter. No one says, ‘Why are these able bodied fellows doing no work and begging for food?’

Honestly, I never begged for food. When I was really hungry, someone brought food from nowhere. I stayed under trees and out in the open, even in the Himalaya Mountains at 17,000 feet altitude, at Tapovan and such places. I had absolute trust in Nature. ‘Whatever had to happen will happen’ - such was my faith.

When you do not have that faith, of course it is a different story. I send some of my disciples, the brahmacharis, on such trips, the parivrajaka – wandering, with no money. They too travel all over India and return with wonderful experiences. This is the only way you can understand how the world lives.

There is freedom in whatever you do. You are answerable only to yourself. Western societies are afraid
of this. That is why they control such behavior. If too many people do that then society cannot control them. Society loses power and it can collapse.

In fact outside India, even religious institutions do not allow such freedom. I have not seen any wandering monks out on their own like our *sannyasis* on *parivrajaka*, the wandering monks, in India.

It is bondage if one lives even as a monk in a place that is regulated. You can never be free within a disciplined environment.

That is why our ashrams are not regulated. Each person does what he or she can. No one is forced to do anything. It is a different matter that they perform far above their normal levels, but that is out of freedom and love, not out of greed and fear.

**Q: When Krishna advises Arjuna to withdraw his senses as a tortoise does, is He advocating the practice of pratyahara?**

Patanjali’s concept of *Ashtanga Yoga* that includes the part of *pratyahara* or sense control is derived from what Krishna says.

*Pratyahara* literally means stopping the feeding of the senses. It does not mean removing objects that senses are attracted to or getting frightened of the field of the
senses or even shutting off the senses so that these objects cannot be sensed.

No, that will never work. If one’s senses can be controlled by removing sense objects out of the way, all you need to do is go into the Himalaya and be enlightened. Moving out of the range of sense objects is a helpful condition but not the only and essential condition. There are thousands of sannyasis out there in the mountains, forests and monasteries in seclusion, out of contact with women who still have not dropped their fantasies of lust.

A young novice monk went up to his Master and asked him how he could get rid of lustful thoughts that kept bothering him and disturbing his meditation.

The older monk asked him to describe his thoughts and fantasies in detail and listened with great interest. There were many ‘wow’ and ‘tell me more’ comments in between.

When the novice finished, the older monk said, ‘You have given me a lot more material to think about. I am ninety and I still have lustful thoughts, plenty of them. Let us go to my Master who is a hundred and twenty. He may perhaps have an answer!’

Shutting your eyes and ears is no solution either. You see people trying to meditate by shushing every one around them and trying to concentrate. Meditation is not about becoming deaf and dumb. You can close your eyes
and plug your ears to shut off all external noise signals. But then your inner movies will start playing; your inner television will start to play instead.

You may have heard about and met people who have had their limbs amputated but feel pain in the empty space where their limbs had been. They call this ‘phantom pain’. You do not need the physical entity to feel pain; the nerve endings imagine that lost part and convey pain.

Blind people dream. They have dreams as vivid as any sighted person. With your eyes closed, you dream during the day as well as in the night. Shutting off a sense organ physically has no effect on the perception of that sense organ. It plays back from stored memories.

There is an energy called chakshu behind your five sense organs, the gyanendriya. It is not the physical and material objects that you perceive which threaten your senses but this energy that interprets them. What the chakshu reports to your body-mind system is interpreted by your unconscious mind based on your conditioning. You act based on that interpretation. Your actions further reinforce that conditioning, and the cycle continues.

The only way to stop this cycle is to disengage the chakshu. It does not help if you run away from the scene of action; the action will follow you through the fantasies of your mind. It does not help if you close down your sense organs physically. Images stored within will still continue to play.
Pratyahara or starving the senses refers to starving or stopping the energy behind the sense organs, or stopping the chakshu from operating.

What Krishna implies is more. It is not merely stopping the chakshu; you will then be the walking dead; He does not want you to be a zombie. He wants your chakshu to operate, but you be non-judgmental. He wants it to be free of all conditioning. He wants you to be freed from your samskaras.

When you can see and hear and touch and taste and smell everything around you without feeling aroused or repulsed, with no feeling of pain or pleasure, with no interest in the outcome, then you are free of samskaras. Your chakshu may function but your mind does not. You perceive but you do not interpret. You move with nature as your awareness dictates. You do what you need to do with awareness with no interest in the outcome.
Monkeys in Your Mind!

2.60 O son of Kunti, the turbulent senses carry away the mind of a wise man,

Though he is striving to be in control.

2.61 Having restrained them all, he should sit steadfast, intent on Me.

Whose senses are under control, his mind is steady in the present.

2.62 When a man thinks of objects, it gives rise to attachment for them.

From attachment, desire arises; from desire, anger is born.
2.63 From anger arises delusion, from delusion, loss of memory, from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination, from destruction of discrimination, he perishes.

2.64 The self-controlled man, moving among objects with his senses under control, free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace.

2.65 All pains are destroyed in that peace, for the intellect of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady.

2.66 A person not in self awareness cannot be wise or happy or peaceful.

How can there be happiness to one without peace?

2.67 He loses his awareness of the present moment when his mind follows the wandering senses,

Just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.

Krishna continues to explain to Arjuna how difficult it is to control the senses and what happens when one loses control of the senses.

A small story:

There was a man who borrowed a car from his friend and drove off. After about an hour he returned and much to his friend’s horror, rammed into a tree in front of his house, as he could not stop the car.
‘Why didn’t you tell me you did not know how to drive a car?’ he exclaimed in anger.

The friend replied calmly, ‘Of course, I know how to drive a car. I just don’t know how to stop it.’

This is the case with most of us. We all know very well how to kick off our senses into action by engaging them in gear and also accelerating into fantasies, but we have no idea how to slow down and stop the senses. We do not control our senses and the mind. Instead, our mind and senses control us.

Krishna says that our senses are turbulent, and however much we try to control them, they stay out of control. Some of the greatest sages, the *rishis*, have been known to succumb to sensual pleasures. There is the legendary story of Viswamitra, a great sage, who was seduced by the nubile celestial maiden Menaka, in the midst of his intense penance.

Do you think the Gods above have no other business than sending young women down to disturb people who meditate? In that case, I am willing to bet that all you men here will start meditating from tonight without any compulsion from my side!

Nothing of that sort will happen, so don’t start meditation for this reason. It was the suppressed fantasies of Viswamitra’s mind that created the celestial nymph. His senses were out of control. Hindu scriptures have referred to *brahmacharya* as a prerequisite to spiritual
evolution and many misinterpret this to be celibacy. *Brahmacharya* is not merely celibacy; it is more than physical celibacy; it is living in reality without fantasies.

There are many out there in the robes of monks and *sannyasis*, trying to control their minds and trying to be celibate, and many of them fail because they cannot control their senses. Suppression does not work on senses. Suppressed emotions explode when they get the chance. They just wait for the opportunity.

Krishna says that the only way is to focus one’s mind on Him once the senses are under control and the mind is steady. The mind cannot be stopped. Thoughts cannot be stopped as long as the body exists. You can only focus your mind on something that transcends sensory pleasures and it will become quiet by itself. Once the mind discovers the bliss of this quietness, this solitude, it will never want to stray again. But remember, if you try to stop your thoughts you will only fail.

A small story:

A man who was intent on spiritual progress went to a Master and begged him to teach how to control his mind. The Master tried to explain that the mind cannot be controlled in the manner he was seeking, by stopping his thoughts, but he wouldn’t listen. Fed up, the Master gave him a bottle of a liquid and told him to drink three drops three times a day.

The man said, ‘That’s it? It will control my mind?’
The Master said, ‘Just one thing, make sure you don’t think of a monkey when you drink the medicine.’

‘Oh, sure, quite simple!’ said the man as he walked out. At the door he turned and asked, ‘By the way, in case I do think of a monkey, what should I do?’

‘Take a shower,’ said the Master, ‘and try again.’

As soon as the man went home, without wasting time, he took out the medicine and opened his mouth to drink. Just then he remembered the Master’s warning and remembered the monkey!

‘Oh, my God!’ he said to himself, ‘Now I have to take a shower. What else to do!’

You can guess the rest of the story. Each time he opened his bottle of medicine, monkeys invaded his mind and all he did was to keep taking showers.

It got to a point, that as soon as he got out of the shower, monkeys arose in his mind.

He ran to the Master and pleaded, ‘Forget the medicine. Just get rid of the monkeys, please!’

You can never destroy thoughts or suppress them. You can only witness thoughts and not get involved in them, and gradually the mind will settle. When you settle into the present moment with no expectations and no attachments, you will find that your mind becomes quiet and your senses slow down.
Krishna says that from attachment springs desire, from desire arises anger, from anger arises delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, and from loss of memory develops loss of discrimination which then leads to one’s destruction. The only way to stop this, the Lord says, is to control one’s senses, center oneself in the present and surrender to Him, the universal energy, and achieve everlasting peace.

The road map to your destruction has been so clearly laid down by the greatest Master of them all, not because He wants you to follow it, but because in His infinite grace and compassion He is making you aware of what is in store for you if you do not control your senses. You will be destroyed.

Go through each of these stages laid down by the Master and the path is crystal clear. Each one of us develops attachment, liking, hatred and dislike for many things through our experiences. These likes and dislikes stay in our unconscious memory and even without any conscious awareness on our part drive us into actions through desires or into inaction through fears. When the desires are fulfilled, there is temporary satisfaction; then the desires grow. When the desires do not get fulfilled we are disappointed, we get angry.

We should be angry with our own selves for having had the desires or for not having worked wholeheartedly towards fulfilling the desire but we actually get angry with other people who we think are responsible for our failures. Rarely do we admit that we are the cause of our
failures. We normally say, ‘Why admit our fault when there are literally millions out there who can carry it for us?’ So we create fantasies and delusions about shifting responsibility and gradually erase the memory of our own responsibility for our actions.

The vicious cycle is now almost complete. The moment we fail to take responsibility for our actions, we lose all our powers of intellectual discrimination between right and wrong and resign ourselves to unawareness and unconscious behavior. This is a one-way road.

Observe a Hitler, a Mussolini, or any dictator, and you will note that their path to eventual destruction followed these lines. Lack of discrimination between right and wrong, because of imposed morality instead of conscious awareness, leads to self destruction and destruction of humanity. The vicious spiral that rapidly leads to such destruction of self and others arises always from desires of power, control, wealth, lust and such other sensory pleasures which, when thwarted, lead through anger and delusion to this loss of discrimination.

Krishna reveals two very important truths here in the last two verses.

One is that you can never be peaceful unless you are aware and conscious. The other is that you cannot be aware if you are led by your senses.

Therefore, as long as your senses lead you into what you think is a pleasurable journey, you cannot really be
happy or peaceful. It is just another trick your mind is playing on you.

There are many who come and ask me, ‘Master, I am so happy just fantasizing. I fantasize about you. It is truly blissful. Yet you say not to do that. You ask me to drop your form. Why?’

Even fantasizing about me or fantasizing about your ishta devata, your favorite God is not going to lead you into happiness. When you lose that form, you will be in depression.

Your happiness is not real happiness. It is just a gap between two periods of sorrow. All this happens when you fantasize about your Master. Imagine then, your plight when you fantasize about other material objects and desires that can only lead you into more greed.

Your senses are unreliable. What you hear, what you think you hear, what you see, what you think you see, and so on, all these sense inputs are all unreliable. You only see and hear what you wish to hear and see, only what your mind, driven by that personal identity, ego, or ahankara, wants you to hear and see. Every single thing that you receive as your inputs through your senses are processed and colored by the filter of your mind and ego and you get to know only what they want you to know.

Your mind is constantly flitting between the future and past in the form of thoughts; that is what thoughts really are, the journey of your mind between past and future, and back again and again.
This journey never stops all through your life unless you make a serious attempt to stop it. Your mind, on its own, would never want to stay in the present moment, which is the only moment of truth.

Your past is history. Your past is the dumping ground of all your regrets and guilt. There is no greater sin that you can commit than carrying these regrets and guilt. Committing an act labeled by society and religion is less of a sin; carrying the guilt of having committed it is the real sin. That is what carries you into hell, even as you live in this world.

There is no hell in some afterlife. There is no Saint Peter or Yama (Lord of Death) waiting at the Pearly Gates to consign you to hell. Those are stories woven into religion to control you through fear.

Do you think God has no other job except to chronicle each and every deed and thought you had in your life, mark them good and bad, give you marks and, like a schoolteacher, send you to suffer in hell because you had poor marks?

He has no time for all that. Hell for you is what you suffer in this life while living. You suffer with guilt, regret and remorse.

You live in hell in this life, you don’t go to hell after you die.

Or your mind dwells in the future, a future that does not exist. You speculate, you fantasize, you dream, you
create stories and arguments, building a case for your future. If you are questioned, you would say, ‘I need to plan.’

How much of what you plan is based on present reality? There is nothing wrong at all if you are grounded in reality and plan to progress in that reality. That is what I call chronological planning. Chronological planning is necessary if you live in the material world. I do it too. It is just for example, planning the day ahead, with what time you will wake up, what time you will leave your house, what time you will have the meeting at the office, what work you will complete for the day, what time return home etc. Planning just once so that you know the target for the day. But most of the time what you do has nothing to do with reality.

You either worry about things that you have no control over and plan how to escape such worries, or desire things not in your reach out of sheer greed. Just think honestly and carefully.

Our senses aid us very ably in these worries and desires. They make us believe that all this is real and make us react to situations as if they are real. It is the same way that we get up from a nightmare sweating profusely out of fear. Although just a dream, it makes us sweat. In the same manner, these projections of our mind, when we think we are fully awake, make us think they are all real.
Krishna says, ‘Get away from your senses; escape from their control; ground yourself in awareness of the present moment. Only then you can be at peace.’

What is this present moment? What is this awareness? When our mind is stopped from moving back and forth between the past and future, it will by itself land in the present moment. The present moment is what we are doing now. If you are reading this book, don’t half read this book and half listen to music; don’t half read this book and half watch television; don’t half read this book and half talk with someone.

Either focus completely on what you are reading or don’t read at all.

When did you really eat last? When I mean eat, I mean eat. When was it the last time that you can remember each morsel that went into your mouth, without reading a book, watching television or talking to someone, without the food going into your mouth on auto pilot? If we treat food as junk it turns into junk in our stomach. So instead of giving us the energy that it should, it makes us want to nap.

Next time you do anything including reading this book, focus completely on what you are doing at that moment. If you brush your teeth, just focus on how the brush moves and how the paste tastes. Stop thinking about the meetings later at your office or getting your children ready for school, or whatever it is that you need to do a few minutes or hours later.
When you settle into the present moment, you are out of the clutches of your senses and mind. You will still hear and see but none of what you hear or see will divert you from what you are focused on. You will be aware of only what you are doing in that present moment. This is what we call meditation. Meditation is nothing but being focused completely on what you are doing at a particular moment. This is what Buddha calls mindfulness.

This is what Krishna says will lead you into peace. When you are aware, your senses are in your control instead of you being under their control. You become peaceful, you are in bliss.
All Desires are Addictive!

Q: Master, you have said that the mind can never be stopped. Yet you speak of the no mind state as the ideal. How can we reach the no mind state if mind cannot be stopped?

As long as you are alive, your body-mind system is alive; by definition your mind is active. Your mind is nothing but the distributed intelligence of your system, collection of your thoughts and memories. So long as you are alive, and your senses are active, you keep collecting data, storing and analyzing them and influencing yourself by all this.
You cannot stop this activity. If you try, you will be like the guy who tried to stop thinking about monkeys. What you can do however, is to decide not to follow the thoughts. You just witness the thoughts as if you are watching clouds in the sky. Do not get involved. This is possible. You then get out of the clutches of your mind. Instead of your mind controlling you, you can control your mind.

I ask participants in some of the programs to write down their thoughts for about 20 minutes, without editing. When they read what they write, they find that what they have inside them is an asylum. Their thoughts are totally unconnected, illogical, random and meaningless. All your thoughts are like this.

Worse still, you connect your random thoughts based on your past experiences of pain and pleasure and make pain shafts or pleasure shafts for yourself. All your problems arise as a result of your connecting thoughts in what you think is a logical manner.

The moment you un-clutch from your thoughts and therefore stop making the shafts, it means that you accept and realize that your thoughts are unconnected. Then, you gain freedom and you reach the no mind state.

This is the state that you should achieve in meditation. You should move into the present moment, being aware of what your thoughts are but without connecting with them and becoming completely un-clutched. You then become truly aware.
This is what is also referred to as the witnessing state. You are just a witness to your thoughts without becoming a part of them. You watch your thoughts without becoming involved in the activity. It is as if you are watching the clouds in the sky; you are seeing but you are separate from what you see. This is possible. All you need is some practice.

Q: How can Krishna generalize saying that desire leads to destruction? The world cannot operate if we have no desires and if everybody meditates!

Well, for one thing, this world operated before you and other human beings came onto this planet; it will continue to operate even after all of us are gone. As Buddha says, this universe was always out there and will always be out there. This world and the universe are in operation not because of us but in spite of us.

We, the humans, are an insignificant part of the entire system. We are just a tiny bit of that energy; but we are so full of ourselves that we feel we help operate this world. That is the irony!

When you realize truly who you are and how you are part of that existential energy, you realize two things simultaneously. Firstly you realize how insignificant you are; that you are just a part of the whole; that you are not separated. At the same time, you also realize that you
have immense potential; that you are the existence; and as part of the whole, you are the whole yourself.

This may seem contradictory at first, but this is the truth. You need to experience the truth to be able to express it. For the time being, please consider this to be the absolute truth whether you understand it not, accept it or not, believe it nor not. It makes no difference to the universe what you think.

Krishna’s route to destruction is this: attachment, desire, anger, delusion, loss of memory, loss of discrimination and destruction. This is the vicious cycle.

There is a virtuous cycle that Sankara presents: getting together to learn the truth, nonattachment, freedom from delusion, equanimity of mind and liberation.

These are one and the same; one goes down; the other goes up. One takes you down to destruction; the other takes you into liberation.

When you take up this body, when your spirit, Self, atman, or soul enters the body, it does so out of desire. It does so out of unfulfilled desires that it carries on from its previous life. The mind set that is the essence of these unfulfilled desires is called vasana and the bundle of carried over desires in the new body is called prarabda karma. If you do not have the bundle of karmas, you will not be reborn; you will be liberated from the cycle of life and death, the cycle of samsara.
This collection of unfulfilled desires that you are born with is energy. It is not something negative or something positive; it is pure energy. You come into this life with this energy that will fulfill itself, if you are aware of it. All you have to do is to live life as it presents itself and accept what happens to you.

Unfortunately, during the process of death, in the causal layer of energy, one loses this awareness. As a result, we spend our lives collecting other people’s desires as if they are our own. Most of our desires are borrowed through comparison and envy and this is greed. Such greed has no end.

It is this aspect of attachment and desire that Krishna is talking about. It is this bundle of desires that we borrow from others that Buddha said causes suffering. This is what Sankara says we must dissolve in our search for truth and liberation.

The meaning of our lives is to be aware and fulfill all our carried over desires so that there is nothing left unfulfilled. This fulfillment leads to moksha, liberation, Self-realization, whatever name you wish to give it. As a consequence you will not be reborn, unless you wish to.

This is not an easy concept to explain in a book. We cover this extensively in our second level meditation program called Life Bliss Program 2, previously known as the Nithyananda Spurana Program. Simply put, when the undying spirit within us leaves the perishable mind-body system at the point of death, it passes through seven
layers of energy. At each layer up to the final layer, it experiences and relives the memories of its past life. Through the meditation techniques that we use with each layer, these memories called *samskaras* are dissolved. As a result there is no *vasana* left in your system and there will be no *prarabda karma* to be carried by the next body.

For now be clear in that all attachments and desires that you have do ultimately lead to grief and destruction as Krishna says. You do not have the intelligence to stop at a point and say I have had enough. Even if a person is eighty he still wants to live. If he has grand children, he would like to see great grand children. There is no end to desires, even though you know that you will die; even though you know that you will carry nothing with you when you die. Yet, you do not wish to die empty handed. You wish to die with name and fame, with possessions, with a dynasty that will carry your name and many such desires. What for?

Do you think you will remember any of this when you are born again? Or even if you do as a result of some malfunctioning of your brain circuitry, do you think you can do anything constructive with all these desires?

We are addicted. We are addicted not merely to what we think are addictive drugs but we are addicted through attachment to many things in this world. When the attachment is positive we are attracted; when the attachment is negative we are repulsed. What attracts us at one time scares us at another. What attracts one
repulses another. This is the delusion that Krishna talks about. We are not in touch with reality; we live in a fantasy world that we think is real.

Buddha says everything is impermanent, *aniccha*. When you understand this, when you understand that all material possessions and relationships that are what attract and repulse you are all delusions, that they are impermanent, only then can you move towards the path of truth. Otherwise as Krishna says these delusions corrupt your mind and destroy you. You become a rudderless boat aimlessly wandering in the vast ocean drifting to destruction.

In His compassion, Krishna offers the solution as well. Restrain your senses He says, and develop equanimity without like and dislike, without judgment of good or bad, without attachment to pain or joy. You will then attain peace and bliss. You will be in *nithyananda* - eternal bliss.
Wake Up!

2.68 O Mighty-armed, his knowledge is therefore steady whose senses are completely detached from sense objects.

2.69 The self-controlled man lies awake in that which is night to all beings.

Where all beings are awake, it is the night for the sage who sees.

2.70 Just as all waters enter the ocean, he attains peace into whom all desires enter, which when filled from all sides, remains unmoved; not the desirer of desires.
2.71 The man who moves about abandoning all desires, without longing,
Without the sense of I and mine, attains peace.

2.72 O Partha, this is the state of Brahman; none is deluded after attaining this.
Even at the end of life, one attains oneness with Brahman when established in this state.

In His concluding words in this chapter, Krishna clarifies to Arjuna once again, how to reach liberation, how to become one with the Brahman which is one’s true and natural state.

We have seen that a person not centered in self-awareness cannot be peaceful or happy or wise. A person who is led by his senses cannot be self-aware and be in the present. A person who is in control of his senses is firmly in control of his mind. He does not let his senses and mind control him. Only such a person is truly awake.

We all think we are awake; are we really? We live in dreams even if we are awake. Only difference is that we are not asleep in a physical sense. So we pretend that we are awake, that we are intelligent, that we are thinking and that we are making the right decisions.

How do we then wake up? It is said that in King Janaka’s kingdom a town crier used to go around shouting, ‘wake up, wake up’ much after sunrise, to remind people that they should be awake and aware!
The only occasion we are truly awake is when we are in the present moment, when we are truly aware of what we are doing at each point in time.

A person in such awareness is what Krishna calls a ‘muni’, a realized being living in the present. Such a person is always awake, whether physically awake or asleep.

Krishna says that such a person is in sleep when others are awake. The realized person, although he may appear to be living and actively participating in the activities of the same world that we live in, in reality, is in passive alertness. This means that his senses are not immersed in worldliness and he is centered in his Self. He is dead and asleep to this world because he has moved beyond his senses.

A truly realized person is also awake when others are asleep. Even in his sleep he is aware, in what is called the state of supta chittam. We all live in four states of our mind. These are the states of being awake, being in dreams, being in deep sleep and being in the state of Self awareness.

When we are awake, we are aware of the ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and we are ruled by our mind, senses and thoughts. We are controlled by our delusion, maya. Maya arises from our identification with the ‘I’ and ‘mine’.

However, a person who is in the present moment is still as the waters of an ocean. Even when desires assail
him, they do not disturb him at all. He has abandoned all attachments of ‘I’ and ‘mine’. He is without thoughts and desires and when thoughts and desires come to him, they merge into him without disturbing him.

You may ask how this is possible.

The ‘muni’, one who is still, in silence, is one who is in total control of his senses. When the senses are controlled, when the ego is out of action, all thoughts and desires are just witnessed. The ‘muni’ does not get involved in these thoughts and desires, he does not even try to stop or suppress them, as he knows it is impossible. He just lets them be. He just watches them go past, just like the ocean watches impassively as other waters merge into it.

We are all enlightened because we are all a holographic part of the reality of the Universe, the Brahman. All that we lack is the awareness of the truth of our enlightenment. There is no path to enlightenment because we already are enlightened.

All that is needed is the awareness of our enlightened state.

What prevents you from realizing that you are enlightened is your ego. This ego is not necessarily about any arrogance. It is the perception of who you think you are; it is the collection of thoughts, experiences and emotions that go to make up that ‘I’ and ‘mine’. This identity is that of the body and mind, not of your spirit. Therefore, it perishes with your body and is transient.
This identity with the transient reality of who you think you are and what ‘yours’ is, is _maya_.

_Maya_ is the illusion that creates a barrier between you and your awareness of your enlightened state.

A person who is in control of his senses, his mind and thoughts, lives in the present moment, in full awareness of his true nature and is one with the _Brahman_. He is the only one who is truly awake, not the rest of you who think you are awake. You are all still in deep sleep. Such a person who is Self-aware is fully awake even when he is asleep.

People with strong consciousness of ‘I’ live out of their blocked _muladhara chakra_, the root energy center. They are at the very beginning of their spiritual evolution. Their main concerns will be about their own survival and the survival of their species and to do with lust, anger and greed. These are the qualities that the ‘I’ evokes in you.

The person with strong attachment to ‘mine’ and the possessions belonging to the ‘I’, constantly lives in fear of losing these possessions. Such people live out of their blocked _swadhishtana_ or spleen _chakra_ - the energy center within that gets locked due to the fear emotion. They live in insecurity of losing possessions, of losing identity, and finally, of death.

Energization of the _muladhara_ and _swadhishtana chakras_ and moving the energy up through the _anahata_ or heart _chakra_ to the _ajna_ or third eye _chakra_ (the energy center
between the eyebrows which is the seat of intelligence) opens up people to the reality of looking at others and the rest of the universe as themselves and finally dropping the ego, one’s identification of ‘I’ and ‘mine’.

Then, true surrender to the universe and identification with one’s true nature occurs, and enlightenment happens. You then do become God!

Krishna completes his description of the person established in Yoga whose profile Arjuna has asked for. Krishna concludes saying that a person steeped in yoga is centered in reality and is one with the Brahman. He says that this person is liberated even if he were to reach that state at the end of his life.

Krishna is in the process of showing Arjuna what Arjuna truly is and how he can realize that truth. Control over the senses, resting in the state of mindful awareness instead of letting the senses control you, surrendering to the universe instead of fighting the universe, dropping one’s mind and identity and staying in the awareness of the present moment are the surest ways to realize the truth, the truth that you indeed are God.

I tell my disciples time and time again, ‘I am not here to prove my divinity. I am here to prove your divinity.’

This is the timeless message of Krishna. This is the message of the Bhagavad Gita.

Arjuna’s confusion is slowly reducing. Actually it is good to be confused. It is much better to accept that one
is confused than to live in the delusion that we know everything. Arjuna had the courage to come out and tell Krishna his fears and doubts. This is the first step towards clarity. However long it takes for that clarity to emerge doesn’t matter. One is on the path and that is what matters.

In this second chapter of the Gita on Sankhya Yoga or Transcendental Knowledge as it is commonly translated, Krishna sets Arjuna on his path of recovery. May all of you travel that path too!

Let us pray to the Ultimate Existence, Parabrahma Krishna, to give us all the experience of Eternal Bliss, nithyananda. Thank you!
Q: Master, when you say that we should live without ego, is it really possible to do that when we live in a material world? Wouldn’t we then become failures materially?

Ego, as I have used the term here, has two aspects. In Sanskrit, we call these ahankara and mamakara.

Ahankara is ego projected outwards. It is about what you convey to others about who you are. This is always more than what you are. You would like
people to think that you are more handsome, smarter, and richer and in all ways better than what you really are.

*Mamakara* is what you think about yourself within you. It is always less than what you really are. People say to me, ‘No Master, I have a very high self-esteem.’ Remember, all along as you do not realize that you are God, your self-esteem is low!

The gap between *ahankara* and *mamakara* is what causes trouble. You like to project something that you do not think you are. You may term this differential ego. This is the differential you need to drop.

When you are the same while looking inwards and projecting outwards, there is no problem. You are quite natural. You are the real self. You do not need to boast, you do not need to hide.

If you reach this state, you will in fact do far better materially, because people will have far greater respect for you. You will be doing what you promise and promise what you can deliver. There will be no differential.

Of course, in a deeper sense, as you progress spiritually, you may drop all attachment to your self, your mind-body system. This does not mean that you cannot function in the material world. Many Masters have functioned in such a state. At such a state, one’s identification is not with this material mind-body system at all, but with the existential energy. Then, your *ahankara* and *mamakara* are harmonizing, at the highest possible level of divinity.
Q: Master, you described four states of mind. How does one distinguish between the state of deep sleep, sushupti, and the mindless state of awareness, turiya, the fourth state?

We have a combination of thoughts and identity to give us four states of the mind.

When we have thoughts in our mind, and we are aware of our identity, we are physically awake. This is the first state, the state in which you are listening to me now. When we are unaware of our identity but still have thoughts, we are dreaming. This is the second state. While dreaming, there is no ‘I’ identity right? This is why we are startled into wakefulness when a nightmare seems to threaten our life, our identity.
Third, when we are in deep sleep, we are neither with thoughts nor with our identity. For all practical purposes we are dead. The body-mind system is refreshing itself by dying and being reborn every day and night. This is why if you lose sleep continuously for a period of time, you will really die.

The fourth state, called by some the Fourth Way, is the state where we are fully aware but have no thoughts! At least there is no attachment to thought, no linking of thoughts. It is only witnessing. This is the state called samadhi. Samadhi means returning to one’s natural state, or simply put, the realization of Self.

Enlightened beings are in the samadhi state all the time. This does not mean that they are withdrawn with closed eyes continuously, not at all. As Krishna says, they are awake when others are asleep and asleep when others are awake. This means that they are always in awareness and that their senses are controlled or asleep.

Let me give you a simple tip to evaluate how evolved a person is. Watch that person when he is asleep, when he is in really deep sleep and he does not know you are watching. If that person is like a flower when asleep, totally blissful, with no movements and no facial changes, that person is in turiya or samadhi state. The body is asleep but the mind while not in thought is fully aware. The mind-body is at rest and in bliss, nithyananda.

Thank you.
Thus ends the second chapter named ‘Transcendental Knowledge’ of the *Upanishad* of the Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.
Scientific Research on 
Bhagavad Gita

Several institutions have conducted experiments using scientific and statistically supported techniques to verify the truth behind the Bhagavad Gita. Notable amongst them is the work carried out by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, whose findings are published through Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetam.

Studies conducted using meditation techniques related to truths expressed in the verses of the Bhagavad Gita have shown that the quality of life is significantly improved through meditation. These studies have found that meditators experience a greater sense of peace resulting in a reduced tendency towards conflict.

Meditators gain greater respect for and appreciation of others. Their own inner fulfilment increases resulting in improved self-respect and self-reliance, leading to Self Actualization.

One’s ability to focus along with brain function integration is enhanced. These have resulted in greater comprehension, creativity, faster response time in decision-making and superior psychomotor coordination.

Stress levels have been shown to decrease with enhanced sensory perception and overall health. The tendency towards depression has been clearly shown to decrease.
There is enough evidence to show that as a result of meditation, individuals gain a better ethical lifestyle that in turn improves their interaction with others in the community, resulting in less conflict and crime. Group meditation of 7000 people (square root of 1% of world population at the time of the study) was significantly correlated to a reduction in conflict worldwide.

Meditation leads to higher levels of consciousness. Through the research tools of Applied Kinesiology, Dr. David Hawkins (author of the book *Power vs. Force*) and others have shown that human consciousness has risen in the last few decades, crossing a critical milestone for the first time in human history. Dr. Hawkins’ research also documents that the Bhagavad Gita is at the very highest level of Truth conveyed to humanity.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work done by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi institutions and Dr. David Hawkins in establishing the truth of this great scripture.
Kuru Family Tree

Dhrtharashtra: The blind King, to whom the happenings on the battlefield are being narrated to.

Kaurava Princes
- Gandhari - 1st wife
- Dhruvaadhana and his 99 brothers
- Yuyutsu

Pandu: the original King who handed over the kingdom and care of his 5 sons to his brother Dhrtharashtra.

Pandava Princes
- Kunti - 1st wife
- Madri - 2nd wife
- Draupadi - wife to all five Pandava
- Abhimanyu - son of Arjuna & Subhadra
- Draupadeya - five sons of Draupadi

Step brothers
Glossary of Key Characters in the Bhagavad Gita

Pandava’s Side:

Krishna: God Incarnate; Related to both Kaurava and Pandava; Arjuna’s charioteer in the war

Drupada: A great warrior and father of Draupadi

Drishtadumna: The son of King Drupada

Shikhandi: A mighty archer and a transexual person

Virata: Abhimanyu’s father-in-law; King of a neighboring kingdom

Yuyudhana: Krishna’s charioteer and a great warrior

Kashiraj: King of neighboring kingdom, Kashi

Chekitan: A great warrior

Kuntibhoj: Adoptive father of Kunti, the mother of first three Pandava princes

Purujit: Brother of Kuntibhoj

Shaibya: Leader of the Shibi tribe

Dhrshtaketu: King of Chedis

Uttamouja: A great warrior
Kaurava’s Side:

Sanjay: Charioteer and narrator of events to Dhritharashtra

Bhishma: Great grandfather of the Kaurava & Pandava; Great warrior

Drona: A great archer and teacher to both Kaurava and Arjuna

Vikarna: Third of the Kaurava brothers

Karna: Panadava’s half brother, born to Kunti before her marriage

Ashvatthama: Drona’s son and Achilles heel; Said to always speak the truth

Kripacharya: Teacher of martial arts to both Kaurava and Pandava

Shalya: King of neighboring kingdom and brother of Madra, Nakula and Sahadeva’s mother

Soumadatti: King of Bahikas

Dushassana: One of Kaurava brothers; responsible for insulting Draupadi
Meaning of common Sanskrit Words

For purposes of simplicity, the phonetic of Sanskrit has not been faithfully followed in this work. No accents and other guides have been used.

Aswattama is spelt as also Asvattama, Aswathama, Aswatama etc., all being accepted.

Correctly pronounced, Atma is Aatma; however in the English format a is used both for a and aa, e for e and ee and so on. The letter s as used here can be pronounced as s or ss or sh; for instance Siva is pronounced with a sibilant sound, neither quite s nor sh. Many words here spelt with ‘s’ can as well be spelt as ‘sh’.

[In the glossary, however, letters have been indicated in brackets to facilitate pronunciation as intended in the Sanskrit text.]

This glossary is not meant to be a pronunciation guide, merely an explanatory aid. It is merely a compilation of common words.

A(a)bharana: adornment; vastra(a)bharana is adornment with clothes

Abhy(a)asa: exercise; practice

A(a)cha(a)rya: teacher; literally ‘one who walks with’

Advaita: concept of non-duality; that individual self and the cosmic SELF are one and the same; as different from the concepts of dvaita and visishta(a)dvaita, which consider self and SELF to be mutually exclusive
A(a)ha(a)ra: food; also with reference to sensory inputs as in pratya(a)ha(a)ra

A(a)jna: order, command; the third eye energy centre

A(a)ka(a)sa: space, sky; subtlest form of energy of universe

Amruta, amrit: divine nectar whose consumption leads to immortality

Ana(a)hata: that which is not created; heart energy centre

A(a)nanda: bliss; very often used to refer to joy, happiness etc.

Anjana: collyrium, black pigment used to paint the eye lashes

A(a)pas: water

Aarti: worshipping with a flame, light, as with a lamp lit with oiled wick, or burning camphor

A(a)shirwa(a)d: blessing

Ashta(a)nga yoga: eight fold path to enlightenment prescribed by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra

A(a)shraya: grounded in reality; a(a)shraya-dosha, defect related to reality

A(a)tma, A(a)tman: individual Self; part of the universal Brahman

Beedi: local Indian cigarette

Beeja: seed; beeja-mantra refers to the single syllable mantras used to invoke certain deities,
e.g., gam for Ganesha.
Bhagava(a)n: literally God; often used for an enlightened master

Bha(a)vana: visualization

Bhakti: devotion; bhakta, a devotee

Brahma: the Creator; one of the Hindu trinity of supreme Gods, the other two being Vishnu, and Shiva

Brahmacha(a)ri: literally one who moves with the true reality, Brahman, one without fantasies, but usually taken to mean a celibate; brahmacharya is the quality or state of being a brahmachaari

Brahman: ultimate reality of the Divine, universal intelligent energy

Brahma(h)man: person belonging to the class engaged in Vedic studies, priestly class

Buddhi: mind, intelligence; mind is also called by other names, manas, chitta etc.

Buddhu: a fool

Chakra: literally a ‘wheel’; refers to energy centres in the mind-body system

Chakshu: eye, intelligent power behind senses

Chanda(a)la: an untouchable; usually one who skins animals.

Chandana: sandalwood

Chitta: mind; also manas, buddhi.

Dakshina(a)yana: Sun’s southward movement starting 21st June

Darshan: vision; usually referred to seeing divinity
Dharma: righteousness

Dhee: wisdom.

Deeksha: grace bestowed by the Master and the energy transferred by the Master onto disciple at initiation or any other time, may be through a mantra, a touch, a glance or even a thought.

Dosha: defect

Dhya(a)na: meditation

Drishti: sight, seeing with mental eye

Gada: weapon; similar to a mace; also Gada(a)yudha

Gopi, Gopika: literally a cowherd; usually referred to the devotees, who played with Krishna, and were lost in Him

Gopura, gopuram: temple tower

Grihasta: a householder, a married person; coming from the word griha, meaning house

Guna: the three human behavioural characteristics or predispositions; satva, rajas and tamas

Guru: Master; literally one who leads from gu (darkness) to ru (light)

Gurukul, Gurukulam: literally ‘tradition of guru’, refers to the ancient education system in which children were handed over to a guru at a very young age by parents for upbringing and education

Homa: ritual to Agni, the God of fire; metaphorically represents the transfer of energy from the energy of A(a)ka(a)sa (space), through V(a)ayu (Air), Agni (Fire),
A(a)pas (Water), and Prithvi (Earth) to humans. Also y(a)aga, yagna

Iccha: desire

Ida: along with pingala and sushumna the virtual energy pathways through which pranic energy flows

Ithiha(a)sa: legend, epic, mythological stories; also pura(a)na

Jaati: birth; jaati-dosha, defect related to birth

Ja(a)grata: wakefulness

Japa: literally ‘muttering’; continuous repetition of the name of divinity

Jeeva samadhi: burial place of an enlightened Master, where his spirit lives on

Jiva (pronounced as jeeva) means living

Jyotisha: Astrology; jyotishi is an astrologer

Kaivalya: liberation; same as moksha, nirva(a)na

Ka(a)la: time; also maha(a)ka(a)la

Kalpa: vast period of time; Yuga is a fraction of Kalpa

Kalpana: imagination

Karma: spiritual law of cause and effect, driven by va(a)sana and samska(a)ra

Kosha: energy layer surrounding body; there are 5 such layers. These are: annamaya or body, Pra(a)namaya or breath, manomaya or thoughts, vigya(a)namaya or sleep and a(a)nandamaya or bliss koshas
Kriya: action

Kshana: moment in time; refers to time between two thoughts

Kshatriya: caste or varna of warriors

Kundalini: energy that resides at the root chakra ‘mula(a)dha(a)ra’ (pronounced as moolaadha(a)ra)

Maha(a): great; as in maharshi, great sage; maha(a)va(a)kya, great scriptural saying

Ma(a)la: a garland, a necklace; rudra(a)ksha mala is a garland made of the seeds of the rudra(a)ksha tree

Mananam: thinking, meditation

Manas: mind; also buddhi, chitta

Mandir: temple

Mangala: auspicious; mangal sutra, literally auspicious thread, the yellow or gold thread or necklace a married Hindu woman wears

Mantra: a sound, a formula; sometimes a word or a set of words, which because of their inherent sounds, have energizing properties. Mantras are used as sacred chants to worship the Divine; mantra, tantra and yantra are approaches in spiritual evolution

Ma(a)ya: that which is not, not reality, illusion; all life is ma(a)ya according to advaita

Moksha: liberation; same as nirva(a)na, sama(a)dhi, turiya etc.

Mula(a)dha(a)ra: the first energy centre, moola is root; a(a)dhara is foundation, here existence
Nadi: river

Naadi: nerve; also an energy pathway that is not physical

Na(a)ga: a snake; a na(a)ga-sa(a)dhu is an ascetic belonging to a group that wears no clothes

Namaska(a)r: traditional greeting with raised hands, with palms closed

Na(a)nta: without end

Na(a)ri: woman

Nidhidhy(a)asan: what is expressed

Nimitta: reason; nimitta-dosha, defect based on reason

Nirva(a)na: liberation; same as moksha, sama(a)dhi

Niyama: the second of eight paths of Patanjali’s Ashta(a)nga Yoga; refers to a number of day-to-day rules of observance for a spiritual path

Pa(a)pa: sin

Phala: fruit; phalasruti refers to result of worship

Paramahamsa: literally the ‘supreme swan’; refers to an enlightened being

Parikrama: the ritual of going around a holy location, such as a hill or water spot

Parivra(a)jaka: wandering by an ascetic monk

Pingala: please see Ida.

Pra(a)na: life energy; also refers to breath; pra(a)na(a)ya(a)ma is control of breath

Pratya(a)hara: literally ‘staying away from food’; in this
case refers to control of all senses as part of the eight fold 
ashta(nga yoga

Prithvi: earth energy

Purohit: priest

Puja (pronounced as pooja): normally any worship, but often referred to a ritualistic worship

Punya: merit, beneficence

Pura(na): epics and mythological stories such as Maha(bha(rata, Ra(yana etc.

Purna (pronounced poorna): literally ‘complete’; refers in the advaita context to reality

Rajas, rajasic: the mid characteristic of the three human guna or behaviour mode, referring to aggressive action

Putra: son; putri: daughter

Rakta: blood

Ra(tri: night

Rishi: a sage

Sa(dhana: practice, usually a spiritual practice

Sa(dhu: literally a ‘good person’; refers to an ascetic; same as sanya(si

Sahasrana(sna: thousand names of God; available for many Gods and Goddesses, which devotees recite

Sahasrara: lotus with thousand petals; the crown energy centre
Sakti: energy; intelligent energy; Para(a)sakti refers to universal energy, divinity; considered feminine; masculine aspect of Para(a)sakti is purusha

Sama(a)dhi: state of no-mind, no-thoughts; literally, becoming one’s original state; liberated, enlightened state. Three levels of samadhi are referred to as sahaja, which is transient, savikalpa, in which the person is no longer capable of normal activities, and nirvikalpa, where the liberated person performs activities as before.

Samsaya: doubt

Samska(a)ra: embedded memories of unfulfilled desires stored in the subconscious that drive one into decisions, into karmic action

Samyama: complete concentration

Sankalpa: decision

Sanya(a)s: giving up worldly life; sanya(a)si or sanya(a)sin, a monk, an ascetic

sanya(a)sin, refers to a female monk

Sa(a)stra: sacred texts

Satva, sa(a)tvic: the highest guna of spiritual calmness

Siddhi: extraordinary powers attained through spiritual practice

Sishya: disciple

Simha: lion; Simha-Swapna: nightmare

Shiva: rejuvenator in the trinity; often spelt as Shiva. Shiva also means ‘causeless auspiciousness’; in this sense,
Shivara(a)tri, the day when Shiva is worshipped is that moment when the power of this causeless auspiciousness is intense

*Smarana*: remembrance; constantly remembering the divine

*Smruti*: literally ‘that which is remembered’; refers to later day Hindu works which are rules, regulations, laws and epics, such as Manu’s works, *Puranas* etc.

*Sraddha*: trust, faith, belief, confidence

*Sravan*: hearing

*Srishti*: creation, which is created

*Sruti*: literally ‘that which is heard’; refers to the ancient scriptures of *Veda, Upanishad* and

*Bhagavad Gita*: considered to be words of God

*Stotra*: devotional verses, to be recited or sung

*Sudra*: caste or *varna* of manual labourers

*Sutra*: literally ‘thread’; refers to epigrams, short verses which impart spiritual techniques

*Sunya*: literally zero; however, Buddha uses this word to mean reality

*Sushumna*: Please see ‘ida’

*Swa(a)dishtha(a)na*: where Self is established; the groin or spleen energy centre

*Swapna*: dream

*Swatantra*: free
Tamas, taamasic: the lowest guna of laziness or inaction

Tantra: esoteric Hindu techniques used in spiritual evolution

Tapas: severe spiritual endeavour, penance

Thatagata: Buddhahood, state of being such...a pali word

Tirta: water; tirtam is a holy river and a pilgrimage centre

Trika(a)la: all three time zones, past, present and future; trika(a)lajna(a)ni is one who can see all three at the same time; an enlightened being is beyond time and space

Turiya (pronounced tureeya): state of samadhi, no-mind

Upanishad: literally ‘sitting below alongside’ referring to a disciple learning from the master;
refers to the ancient Hindu scriptures which along with the Veda, form sruti

Uttara(a)yana: Sun’s northward movement

Vaisya: caste or varna of tradesmen

Va(a)naprastha: the third stage in one’s life, (the first stage being that of a student, and the second that of householder) when a householder, man or woman, gives up worldly activities and focuses on spiritual goals

Varna: literally colour; refers to the caste grouping in the traditional Hindu social system; originally based on aptitude, and later corrupted to privilege of birth
Va(a)sana: the subtle essence of memories and desires, samska(a)ra, that get carried forward from birth to birth

Vastra: clothes

Vastra(a)harana: removal of clothes, often used to refer to Draupadi’s predicament in the Maha(a)bha(a)rata, when she was unsuccessfully disrobed by the Kaurava prince

Va(a)yu: air

Veda: literally knowledge; refers to ancient Hindu scriptures, believed to have been received by enlightened rishi at the being level; also called sruti, along with Upanishad

Vibhuti (pronounced vibhooti): sacred ash worn by many Hindus on forehead; said to remind themselves of the transient nature of life; of glories too

Vidhi: literally law, natural law; interpreted as fate or destiny

Vidya: knowledge, education

Visha(a)da: depression, dilemma etc.

Vishnu: preserver in the trinity; His incarnations include Krishna, Rama etc. in ten incarnations; also means ‘all encompassing’

Vishwarupa (pronounced vishwaroopa): universal form

Yama: discipline as well as death; One of the eight fold paths prescribed in Patanjali’s
Ashta(a)nga Yoga; refers to spiritual regulations of satya (truth), ahimsa (non violence), aparigraha (living simply); asteya (not coveting other’s properties) and brahmacharya (giving up fantasies); yama is also the name of the Hindu God of justice and death

Yantra: literally ‘tool’; usually a mystical and powerful graphic diagram, such as the Sri Chakra, inscribed on a copper plate, and sanctified in a ritual blessed by a divine presence or an enlightened Master

Yoga: literally union, union of the individual self and the divine SELF; often taken to mean

Hatha yoga, which is one of the components of yogasana, relating to specific body postures

Yuga: a long period of time as defined in Hindu scriptures; there are four yugas: satya, treta, dwa(a)para and kali, the present being kali yuga
Invocation Verses

Om paarthaaya pratibodhitaam bhagavataa naaraayanena svayam Vyaasena grathitaam puraanamuninaa madhye mahaabhaararatam Advaitaamrutavarshineem bhagavateem ashtaadashaadhyaayineem
Amba tvaanusandadhaami bhagavadgeete bhavadveshineem

OM, I meditate upon you, Bhagavad Gita the affectionate Mother, the Divine Mother showering the nectar of non duality and destroying rebirth, (who was) incorporated into the Mahaabhaarata of eighteen chapters by sage Vyasa, the author of the Puraanaas, and imparted to Arjuna by Lord Narayana, Himself.

Vasudeva Sutam Devam Kamsa
Chaanura Mardanam
Devakee Paramaanandam Krishnam
Vande Jagadgurum

I salute you Lord Krishna, Teacher to the world, son of Vasudeva and Supreme bliss of Devaki, Destroyer of Kamsa and Chaanura.
Sanjaya uvaacha:

tam tatha kripayaavishtam ashrupoorna akulekshanam visheedantam idam vaakyam uvaacha madhusoodanaha

Sanjaya said:

2.1 As Arjuna’s eyes overflowed with tears of pity and despair, Krishna spoke to him thus
Shri Bhagavaan uvaacha:

cutastvaa kashmalam idam vishame samupasthitam
anaarya jushtam avargyam akeertikaram arjuna  2.2

Shri Bhagavaan uvaacha: Lord said; kutah: why; tvaa: upon you; kashmalam: delusion; idam: this; vishame: in this critical time; samupasthitam: arrived; anaarya jushtam: unworthy of a noble soul; avargyam: not leading to heaven; akeertikaram: disgraceful; arjuna: O Arjuna

2.2 Krishna said,

Where from has this dejection descended on you at this critical time, Arjuna!

You behave unlike a noble man and this will keep you away from realization.

क्लैब्यम् मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वयूपपद्धते।
शुद्ध्रं ह्रदयदीर्घं त्यक्त्योत्तिष्ठ परन्तपः॥ २.३॥

klaibyam maa sma gamah paartha naitattwayyupapadyate
kshudram hrdaya daurbalyam tyaktvottishtha parantapa  2.3

klaibyam: impotence; maa: do not; sma gamah: yield; paartha: son of Partha; na: not; etat: this; tvayi: in you; upapadyate: is fitting; kshudram: mean; hrdaya daurbalyam: weakness of heart; tyaktvaa: after abandoning; uttishtha: get up; param-tapa: destroyer of enemies
2.3 Do not yield to fear, Partha! It does not befit you. Drop this faint-heartedness and stand up, Destroyer of enemies!

अर्जुन उवाच
कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन।
इषुभि: प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजाहर्वविरिज्ञूदन।

arjuna uvaacha:

katham bheeshmam aham sankhye dronam cha madhusoodana
ishubhihi pratiyotsyaami pujaarhau ari-soodana  2.4

arjuna uvaacha: Arjuna said; katham: how; bheeshmam: Bheesma; aham: I; sankhye: in battle; dronam: Drona; cha: also; madhu-soodana: O killer of Madhu; ishubhihi: with arrows; pratiyotsyaami: shall counterattack; puja-arhau: the two worthy of worship; ari-soodana: O killer of the enemies

2.4 Arjuna said:

O killer of Madhu, how can I oppose in battle, Bhishma and Drona who are worthy of my worship?
guroon ahatvaa hi mahaanubahaaavan shreyo bhoktum
bhaikshyamaapeeha loke
hatvaarthaa kaamaanstu guroo ниhaiva bhunjeeya bhogaan
rudhirapradiigdhaan 2.5

guroon: the elders; ahatvaa: not having killed; hi: indeed;
mahaanubahaaavan: great souls; shreyah: it is better; bhoktum: to enjoy life; bhaikshyam: begging; api: even; iha: in this life; loke: in this world; hatvaa: after killing; artha kaamaan: wealth and enjoyment; tu: but; guroon: elders; iha: in this world; eva: only; bhunjeeya: has to enjoy; bhogaan: enjoyable things; rudhira: blood; pradigdhaan: tainted with

2.5 I would rather beg for my food in this world than kill the most noble of teachers.

If I kill them, all my enjoyment of wealth and desires will be stained with blood.

na chaitadvidmaha kataranno gareeyo yadwaa jayema yadi vaa
no jayeyuhu
yaaneva hatvaa na jijeevishamaha tevaasthitaah pramukhe
dhaartaraashtraaha 2.6

na: nor; cha: also; etat: this; vidmah: do know; katarat: which; nah: us; gareeyah: better; yat: what; vaa: either; jayema: shall conquer; yadi: if; vaa: or; nah: us; jayeyuhu:
shall conquer; *yaan*: those whom; *eva*: only; *hatvaa*: after killing; *na*: never; *jjeevishaamaha*: want to live; *te*: all of them; *avasthitaah*: assembled; *pramukhe*: in front of; *dhaartaraashtraaha*: the sons of Dhritarashtra

2.6 I cannot say which is better; their defeating us or us defeating them. We do not wish to live after slaying the sons of Dhritharashtra who stand before us.

कार्पण्यदोषपपहतसवभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढवेता:।
यच्छ्रे: स्याविशिष्ठं बृहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेSहं शाधिः मा त्वां
प्रपन्नमः॥२.९॥

*kaarpanya doshopahata svabhaavaha prcchaami tvaam dharma sammoodha chetaaha*

*yacchreyaha syaannishchitam broohi tanme shishyaste'ham shaadhi*

*maam tvaam prapannam* 2.7

*kaarpanya*: miserly; *dosha*: weakness; *upahata*: being inflicted by; *svabhaavah*: characteristics; *prcchaami*: I am asking; *tvaam*: you; *dharma*: religion; *sammoodha chetaaha*: bewildered; *yat*: what; *sreyah*: good; *syat*: may be; *nishchitam*: decidedly; *broohi*: tell; *tat*: that; *me*: unto me; *shishyah*: disciple; *te*: your; *aham*: I am; *shaadhi*: just instruct; *maam*: me; *tvaam*: you; *prapannam*: surrendered

2.7 My heart is overwhelmed with pity and my mind is confused about what my duty is.
I beg of you, please tell me what is best for me. I am your disciple. Instruct me as I seek refuge in you.

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुदायच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम्।
अवाय भूमावसपतलमृद्धम् राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम्।॥२.८॥

na hi prapashyaami mamaapanudyaad yacchokam ucchoshanam
indriyaanaam
avaapya bhoomaava asapatnamrddham raajyam suraanaamapi
chaadhipatyam  2.8

na: do not; hi: indeed; prapashyaami: I see; mama: my;
apanudyaat: can drive away; yat: that; shokam: lamentation;
ucchoshanam: drying up; indriyaanaam: of the senses;
avapya: after achieving; bhoomaava: on the earth; asapatnam:
without rival; rddham: prosperous; raajyam: kingdom;
suraanaam: of the demigods; api: even; cha: also;
aadhipatyam: supremacy

2.8 Even if I were to attain unrivalled dominion and
prosperity on Earth or even lordship over the Gods, how
would that remove this sorrow that burns my senses?

सज्जय उवाच
एवमुक्त्वा हरषीकेशं गुडाकेशं परन्तप।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूर्णिः बभूव ह।॥२.९॥

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sanjaya uvaacha:  

\[ \text{evam uktvaa hrsheekesham gudaakeshaha parantapa na yotsya iti govindam uktvaa tooshneem babhoova ha} \quad 2.9 \]

\[ \text{sanjaya uvaacha: Sanjaya said; evam: thus; uktvaa: after speaking; hrsheekesham: unto Krishna, the Master of the senses; gudaakeshah: Arjuna; parantapah: destroyer of the enemies; na yotsye: I shall not fight; iti: thus; govindam: unto Krsihna, the giver of pleasure; uktvaa: after saying; tooshneem: silent; babhoova: became; ha: clearly} \]

2.9 Sanjaya said:

Arjuna then said to Krishna, ‘Govinda, I shall not fight,’ and fell silent.

\[ \begin{align*} 
\text{tam uvaacha hrsheekeshaha prahasanniva bhaarata senayor ubhayor madhye visheedantam idam vachaha} \quad 2.10 \\
\end{align*} \]

\[ \text{tam: unto him; uvaacha: said; hrsheekeshah: the Master of the senses, Krishna; prahasan: smiling; iva: like that; bhaarat: O Dhritarashtra, descendant of Bharata; senayoh: of the armies; ubhayoh: of both; madhye: between; visheedantam: unto the lamenting one; idam: the following; vachah: words} \]
2.10 Krishna, smilingly spoke the following words to the grief-stricken Arjuna, as they were placed in the middle of both armies.

Shri Bhagavaan uvaacha

ashochyaan anvashochastvam prajnaavaadaamshcha bhaashase
gataasoon agataasoonshcha naanushochanti panditaaha 2.11

shrī bhagavaan uvaacha: the Lord said; ashochyaan: those worthy of lamentation; anvashochaha: you are lamenting; tvam: you; prajnaavaadaan: learned talks; cha: also; bhaashase: you are speaking; gata: lost; asoon: life; agata: not past; asoon: life; cha: also; na: never; anushochanti: lament; panditaaha: the learned

2.11 Bhagavan said:

You grieve for those that should not be grieved for and yet, you speak words of wisdom.

The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

na tvēvaṁ jātū nāsaṁ na tvam ēko jñātāyaḥ
na cha eva bhavishyām: svar eva vyamataḥ: pṛmac. 12.12
It is not that at anytime in the past I did not exist. So did you and these rulers exist, and we shall not ever cease to be hereafter.

Just as the spirit in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, so does it pass into another body; the man centered in himself does not fear this.
maatraa sparshaastu kaunteya sheetoshna sukhadukhadaaha
aagamaapaayino‘nityaas-taamstitikshasva bhaarata 2.14

maatraa: of the senses; sparshaah: contact; tu: only; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; sheeta: cold; ushna: hot; sukha: pleasure; dukkha-dah: giving pain; aagama: appearing; apaayinah: disappearing; anityaah: nonpermanent; tan: all of them; titikshasva: tolerate; bhaarata: O descendant of the Bharata dynasty

2.14 O son of Kunti, contact with sense objects causes heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and these have a beginning and an end. O Bharata, these are not permanent; endure them bravely.

yam hi na vyathayantyete purusham purusharshabha
samadukhasukham dheeram so’mrtatvaaya kalpate 2.15

yam: whom; hi: indeed; na: never; vyathayanti: are distressing; ete: all these; purusham: to a person; purusharshabha: O best among men; sama: equal; dukkha: sorrow; sukham: happiness; dheeram: brave; sah: he; amrtatvaaya: for liberation; kalpate: is fit
2.15 O best among men, the brave person to whom all these are not distressing, for whom sorrow and happiness are equal, is fit for liberation.

2.16 The nonexistent has no being; that which exists never ceases to exist. This truth about both is perceived by those who know the Truth.
2.17 Know It to be indestructible by which all this body is pervaded. Nothing can destroy It, the Imperishable.

2.18 These bodies of the material energy are perishable. The Energy itself is eternal, incomprehensible and indestructible. Therefore, fight, O Bharata.
yah: anyone; enam: this; vetti: knows; hantaaram: the killer; yah: anyone; cha: also; enam: this; manyate: thinks; hatam: killed; ubhau: both of them; tau: they; na: not; vijaaneetah: know ; na: never; ayam: this; hanti: kills; na: nor; hanyate: be killed

2.19 Neither understands; he who takes the Self to be the slayer nor he who thinks he is slain.

He who knows the truth understands that the Self does not slay, nor is It slain.

न जायते श्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोंयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यामाने
शरीरे ॥२.२०॥

na jaayate mriyate vaa kadaachin-naayam bhootvaa bhavitaa vaa na bhooyaha
ajo nityaha shaashvato’yam puraano na hanyate hanyamaane
shareere ॥२.२०॥

na: never; jaayate: takes birth; mriyate: dies; vaa: either; kadaachit: at any time (past, present or future); na: never; ayam: this; bhootvaa: having come into being; bhavitaa: will come to be; vaa: or; na: not; bhooyah: after; ajah: unborn; nityah: eternal; shaashvatah: permanent; ayam: this; puraanah: the oldest; na: never; hanyate: is killed; hanyamaane shareere: when the body is killed

2.20 Self is neither born nor does It ever die. After
having been, It never ceases not to be. It is Unborn, Eternal, Changeless and Ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.

veda avinaashinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam katham sa purushaha paartha kam ghaatayati hanti kam  2.21

veda: knows; avinaashinam: indestructible; nityam: permanent; yah: one who; enam: this (soul); ajam: unborn; avyayam: immutable; katham: how; sah: he; purushah: person; paartha: O Partha (Arjuna); kam: whom; ghaatayati: hurts; hanti: kills; kam: whom

2.21 O Paartha, how can man slay or cause others to be slain, when he knows It to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, and unchangeable?
tathaa shareeraani vihaaya jeernaany anyaani samyaati navaani dehee  2.22

vaasaamsi: garments; jeernaani: old and worn out; yathaa: as; vihaaya: after giving up; navaani: new garments; grhnaati: does accept; narah: a man; aparaani: others; tathaa: in the same way; shareeraani: bodies; vihaaya: after giving up; jeernaani: old and useless; anyaani: different; samyaati: accepts; navaani: new sets; dehee: the embodied soul

2.22 Just as man casts off his worn out clothes and puts on new ones, the Self casts off worn out bodies and enters newer ones.

nainam chindanti shastraani nainam dahati paavakah
na chainam kledayantyaapo na shoshayati maarutaha  2.23

na: not; enam: this (soul); chindanti: cut to pieces; shastraani: weapons; na: not; enam: this soul; dahati: burns; paavakah: fire; na: not; cha: also; enam: this soul; kledayanti: moistens; aapah: water; na: not; shoshayati: dries; maarutah: wind

2.23 Weapons do not cleave the Self, fire does not burn It water does not moisten It and wind does not dry It.
2.24 The Self cannot be broken nor burnt nor dissolved nor dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.

2.25 (you) should not grieve
2.25 *The Self is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchangeable and able. Knowing this to be such, you should not grieve.*

2.26 *O mighty-armed, even if you should think of the soul as being constantly born and constantly dying, even then, you should not lament.*
birth; *mrtasya*: of the dead; *cha*: also; *tasmaat*: therefore; *aparihaarye*: for that which is unavoidable; *arthe*: in the matter of; *na*: do not; *tvam*: you; *shoci*a*m arhasi*: you lament

2.27 Indeed, death is certain for the born and birth is certain for the dead. Therefore, you should not grieve over the inevitable.

2.28 O Bharata, being intangible in the beginning, being intangible again in their end, seemingly tangible in the middle, what are we grieving about?
2.29 One sees It as a wonder, another speaks of It as a wonder, another hears of It as a wonder. Yet, having heard, none understands It at all.

2.30 The soul cannot be killed; therefore, O descendant of Bharata, do not grieve
2.30 O Bharata, This that dwells in the body of everyone can never be destroyed; do not grieve for any creature.

2.30 This that dwells in the body of everyone can never be destroyed; do not grieve for any creature.

2.31 You should look at your own duty as a kshatriya. There is nothing higher for a kshatriya than a righteous war. You ought not to hesitate.

2.31 You should look at your own duty as a kshatriya. There is nothing higher for a kshatriya than a righteous war. You ought not to hesitate.
2.32 O Partha, happy indeed are the kshatriya who are called to fight in such a battle without seeking. This opens for them the door to heaven.

2.33 If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will incur sin having abandoned your own duty, and you will lose your reputation.
akeertim cha api bhootaani kathayishyanti te’vyayaam
sambhaavitasya cha akeertir maranaad atirichyate  2.34

akeertim: infamy; cha: also; api: also; bhootaani: all people; kathayishyanti: will speak; te: of you; avyayam: undying; sambhaavitasya: of a respectable man; cha: also; akeertiihi: ill-fame; maranaat: than death; atirichyate: becomes more than

2.34 People too will remember your everlasting dishonor and to one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death.

bhayaad ranaad uparatam mamsyante tvaam mahaarathaaha
yeshaam cha tvam bahumato bhootva yaasyasi laaghavam 2.35

bhayaat: out of fear; ranaat: from war; uparatam: retired; mamsyante: will consider; tvaam: you; mahaa-rathaah: the great generals; yeshaam: of those who; cha: also; tvam: you; bahu-matah: in great estimation; bhootva: having become; yaasyasi: will get; laaghavam: decreased in value

2.35 The great generals will think that you have withdrawn from the battle because you are a coward. You will be looked down upon by those who had thought much of you and your heroism in the past.
2.36 Many unspeakable words would be spoken by your enemies reviling your power. Can there be anything more painful than this?

2.37 Slain, you will achieve heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the Earth. O son of Kunti, stand up determined to fight.
2.38 Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat — treat them all the same. Do battle for the sake of battle and you shall incur no sin.

2.39 All these, you; described, in the sankhya Yoga (Yoga of Knowledge); intelligence; in the Karma yoga of selfless action; but; this; hear; by intelligence; equipped; by which; O son of Prtha;
You Are God

karmabandham: bondage of action; praahaasyasi: you shall throw off off

2.39 This which has been taught to you concerns the wisdom of Sankhya. Now, listen to the wisdom of Yoga. Having known this, O Partha, you shall cast off the bonds of action.

2.40 There is no wasted effort or dangerous effect from this. Even a little knowledge of this, even a little practice of Yoga, protects one from great fear.
vyavasaayaatmikaa buddhirekeha kurunandana
bahushaakhaa hyanantaashcha buddhayo’vyavasaayinaam 2.41

vyavasaayaatmikaa: fixed resolve; buddhihi: intelligence; ekaar: only one; iha: in this (karma yoga); kuru-nandana: O son of the Kurus; bahu-shaakhaah: various branches; hi: indeed; anantaah: unlimited; cha: also; buddhayah: intelligence; avyavasaayinaam: of the undecided (ignorant men moved by desires)

2.41 Joy of the Kurus, all you need is single-pointed determination. Thoughts of the irresolute are many, branched and endless.

yaam imaam pushpitaam vaacham pravadanty avipashchitaha
vedavaadarataaha paartha naanyadasteeti vaadinaha 2.42

yaam imaam: all these; pushpitaam: flowery; vaacham: words; pravadanti: say; avipashchitah: ignorant men; veda-vaada-rataah: devoted to the letter of the Veda; paartha: O son of Partha; na: not; anyat: anything else; asti: there is; iti: thus; vaadinah: advocates

2.42 Foolish ones speak a lot, taking pleasure in the eulogizing words of Vedas, O Partha, saying, ‘There is nothing else.’
2.43 Men of little knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas which recommend various fruitful activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resulting in good birth, power, and so forth. Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this to living.
2.44 Those whose minds are diverted and who are not determined are not fit for steady meditation and samadhi.

2.45 O Arjuna! Be you above the three attributes that the Vedas deal in; free yourself from the pairs-of-opposites and be always in sattva (goodness), free from all thoughts of acquisition or preservation and be established in the Self.
2.46 The sage who has known the Self has little use for the Vedic scriptures as these are like a pool of water in a place which is already in flood.

2.47 You have a right only to work, but never to its outcome. Let not the outcome be your motive; but do not move into inaction.
2.48 O Dhananjaya! Do what you have to do with no attachment to outcome, being centered in Yoga. Be balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is Yoga.

2.49 O Dhananjaya! Do what you have to do with no attachment to outcome, being centered in Yoga. Be balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is Yoga.
2.49 O Dhananjaya, beyond the Yoga of wisdom, is action. Wretched are those whose motive is the outcome; surrender yourself to wisdom.

2.50 Endowed with the wisdom of evenness of mind, move away from both good and evil deeds in this life. Devote yourself to Yoga. Skill in action is Yoga.
karma-jam: born of action; buddhi-yuktaah: even minded ones; hi: indeed; phalam: results; tyaktvaa: after giving up; maneeshinah: sages; janmabandha vinirmuktaah: free from the bondage of birth; padam: position; gacchanti: reach; anaamayam: without ills

2.51 Having given up the results born of action, the wise, even-minded ones are free from the bondage of birth and they reach the state beyond ills.

yadaa te mohakalilam buddhir vyatitarishyati
tadaa gantaasi nirvedam shrotavyasya shrutasya cha 2.52

yadaa: when; te: your; moha kalilam: slough of delusion; buddhihi: understanding; vyatitarishyati: will pass through; tadaa: at that time; gantaasi: you shall attain; nirvedam: cheerlessness; shrotavyasya: all that is to be heard; shrutasya: all that is already heard; cha: also

2.52 When your wisdom takes you beyond delusion, you shall be indifferent to what has been heard and what is yet to be heard.
shrutivipratipannaa te yadaa sthaasyati nishchalaa
samaadhaav achalaa buddhistadaa yogam avaapsyasi  2.53

shrutivipratipannaa: confused by much hearing; te: this;
yadaa: when; sthaasyati: rests; nishchalaa: steady; samaadhaau:
on God; achalaa: unflinching; buddhihi: intellect; tadaa: at
that time; yogam: self-realization; avaapsyasi: you will
achieve

2.53 When you are not confused by what you have
heard and your wisdom stands steady and unmoving in
the Self, you shall attain Self–realization.

अर्जुन उवाच
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव।
स्थितधी: कि प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥२.५४॥

Arjuna uvaacha:

sthitaprajnasya kaa bhaashaa samaadhisthyasya keshava
sthitadheehi kim prabhaasheta kimaaseeta vrajeta kim  2.54

arjunah uvaacha: Arjuna said; sthita-prajnasya: of one who
is of secure mind; kaa: what; bhaasha: language; samaadhi-
sthasya: of one established in the tranquility of mind;
keshava: O Krishna; sthita-dheehi: one with stable mind; kim:
how; prabhaasheta: speak; kim: how; aaseeta: sits; vrajeta:
walks; kim: how

2.54 O Kesava! What is the description of one who stays
in the present moment and is merged in the awareness of
truth and wisdom? How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

Shri Bhagavaan uvaacha:

prajahaati yadaa kaamaan sarvaan paartha manogataan aatmany eva aatmanaa tushtaha sthitaprajnastadochyate  2.55

shri-bhagavaan uvaacha: The Lord said; prajahaati: gives up; yadaa: when; kaamaan: desires; sarvaan: of all varieties; paartha: O son of Pritha; manogataan: existing in mind; aatmani: in the soul; eva: only; aatmanaa: by the self; tushtah: satisfied; sthita-prajnah: one of secure understanding; tadaa: at that time; uchyate: is said

2.55 Sri Bhagavan said:

O Partha, a man who casts off completely all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, He is said to be one of steady wisdom.
2.56 He whose mind is not disturbed by adversity and who, in prosperity, does not go after other pleasures, he who is free from attachment, fear or anger is called a sage of steady wisdom.

2.57 His wisdom is fixed who is everywhere without attachment, meeting with anything good or bad and who neither rejoices nor hates.
यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽंगानीव सर्वशः।
इत्रियाणिन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता॥२.५८॥

yadaa samharate cha ayam koormo’ngaaneeva sarvashaha
indriyaaneendriyaa arthebhyas tasya prajnaa pratishthitaa 2.58

yadaa: when; samharate: withdraws; cha: also; ayam: this;
koormah: tortoise; angaani: limbs; iva: like; sarvashah:
altogether; indriyaani: senses; indriya-arthebhyah: from the
sense objects; tasya: his; prajnaa: consciousness; pratishthitaa:
fixed

2.58 As the tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides,
when a person withdraws his senses from the sense-
objects, his wisdom becomes steady.

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः।
रसवर्ज रसोद्धार्य भरं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते॥२.५९॥

vishayaa vinivartante niraahaarsya dehinaha
rasavarjam raso’pyasya param drshtva param drshtvaa nivartate 2.59

vishayaah: sense objects; vinivartante: turn away;
niraahaarsya: of one who does not enjoy them with his
senses; dehinah: of the embodied; rasa-varjam: yearning,
persisting; rasaah: yearning; api: although there is; asya: his;
param: the supreme; drshtvaa: after seeing; nivartate: returns

2.59 From the body, the sense objects turn away, but the
desires remain; his desires also leave him on seeing the
Supreme.
yatatō hyapi kaunteya purushasya vipashchitah
dindriyaani pramaattheeni haranti prasabham manaha 2.60

yatatah: while endeavoring; hi: indeed; api: also;
kaunteya: O son of Kunti; purushasya: of the man;
vipashchitah: the wise; indriyaani: the senses; pramaattheeni: turbulent; haranti: carry away; prasabham: by force; manah: the mind

2.60 O son of Kunti, the turbulent senses carry away the mind of a wise man, though he is striving to be in control.

taani sarvaani samyamy aakte aaseeta matparaha
vashe hi yasyendriyaani tasya prajnaa pratishtitaah 2.61

taani: those senses; sarvaani: all; samyamy: keeping under control; yuktah: yogi; aaseeta: sitting; mat-parah: devoted to Me; vashe: in full subjugation; hi: indeed; yasya: one whose; indriyaani: senses; tasya: his; prajnaa: mind; pratishtitaa: stable

2.61 Having restrained them all, he should sit steadfast, intent on Me. His mind is steady in the present whose senses are under control.
2.62 When a man thinks of objects, it gives rise to attachment for them. From attachment, desire arises; from desire, anger is born.

2.63 From anger, illusion takes place; from illusion, memory loss perishes; from loss of memory, reason loss; from loss of reason, perishes
2.63 From anger arises delusion, from delusion, loss of memory, from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination, from destruction of discrimination, he perishes.

raagadvesha viyuktaistu vishayaan indriyaishcharan
aatmavashyair vidheyaatmaa prasaadam adhigacchati 2.64

raagadvesha: likes and disklikes; viyuktaihi: by those free from such things; tu: but; vishayaan: sense objects; indriyaihi: by the senses; charan: enjoying; aatma-vashyaihi:by the disciplined; vidheya-atma: self controlled; prasaadam: placidity of mind; adhigacchati: attains

2.64 The self-controlled man, moving among objects with his senses under control, free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace.

prasaade sarva dukkhaanaam haanir asyopajaayate
prasanna chetaso hyaashu buddhihi paryavatishthate 2.65

prasaade: with achieving peace of mind; sarva: of all; dukkhaanaam: of miseries; haaniri: destruction; asya: his;
upajaayate: takes place; prasanna-chetasah: of the happy-minded; hi: indeed; aasu: very soon; buddhihi: intelligence; paryavatishtate: firmly established

2.65 All pains are destroyed in that peace, for the intellect of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady.

naasti buddhir ayuktasya na cha ayuktasya bhaavanaa
na cha abhaavayataha shaantir ashaantasya kutaha sukham

2.66 A person not in self awareness cannot be wise or happy or peaceful. How can there be happiness to one without peace?
2.67 He loses his awareness of the present moment when his mind follows the wandering senses, just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.

2.68 O Mighty-armed one, his knowledge is therefore steady whose senses are completely detached from sense objects.
yaa nishaa sarva bhootaanaam tasyaam jaagarti samyamee
yasyaam jaagrati bhootaani saa nishaa pashyato munhe 2.69

2.69 The self-controlled man lies awake in that which is night to all beings. That in which all beings are awake is the night for the sage who sees.

aapooryamaanam achala pratishtham samudram aapaha
pravishanti yadvat
tadvat kaamaa yam pravishanti sarve sa shaantim aapnoti na kaamakaamee 2.70

aapooryamaanam: always filled; achala-pratishtham: steadily established; samudram: the ocean; aapah: water; pravishanti: enter; yadvat: as; tadvat: so; kaamaah: desires; yam: one;
pravishanti: enter; sarve: all; sah: that person; shaantim: peace; aapnoti: achieves; na: not; kaamakaamee: one who cherishes longings

2.70 Just as all waters enter the ocean, he attains peace into whom all desires enter, which when filled from all sides, remains unmoved; not the desirer of desires.

vihay kaaman yaha sarvaan pumaamsh charati nihsprhaha nirmamo nirahankaarah sa shaantim adhigacchati 2.71

vihaaya: after giving up; kaamaan: desires for sense gratification; yah: the person; sarvaan: all; pumaan: a person; charati: moves; nihsprah: desireless; nirmamah: without a sense of proprietorship; nirahankaarah: without false ego; sah: he; shaantim: peace; adhigacchati: attains

2.71 The man who moves about abandoning all desires, without longing, without the sense of I and mine, attains peace.

eshaa braahmee sthitih pari sartha nainaan praapya vimuhyyati sthitvaasyaam antakaale’pi brahmanirvaanam rcchati 2.72
2.72 O Partha, this is the state of Brahman; none is deluded after attaining this. Even at the end of life, one attains oneness with Brahman when established in this state.
Why don’t we find fulfillment even after years of working for success in the world? Even though we face and solve numerous challenges, why do more await us?

How do we cope with the loss of loved ones? What happens to us after we die? How do we overcome the ultimate fear of death that influences every minute of our lives?

In a completely refreshing way, Nithyananda captures the essence of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita called Sankhya Yoga, Transcendental Knowledge, and answers these questions. Here Krishna describes the true nature of the Self, and Nithyananda brings it to life with modern, relevant interpretations.

With incisive clarity, he provides the answers that we need, and points us in the direction of our own enlightenment - the path of Self-discovery, just as Krishna, the Master of Masters, leads Arjuna.