

GITA ENLIGHTENED

YOGI MAHAJAN

**Dedicated to Her Holiness
Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi**

Daring warriors and terrific kings flash and fade on
battlefields.

Whence descends on the battlefield the mighty
Krishna;

He sorts good and evil.

Brings victory to the righteous and vanquishes evil.

Praise be to him, salutations Lord Krishna.

Where descends the Primordial Mother and vanquishes evil.

She nurtures the roots of life.

Transforms desolate deserts of the mind into singing
gardens of Almighty's Glory.

Praise be to Her, Salutations, O Mother of the universe.

In compassion She bears all human pains.

Exuberantly restores all nature's care.

Her mighty hand protects the tender shoots of
innocence.

Patiently, gently she guides the seeker's ascent

In the battle between myth and reality

Her nature gives and not receives.

To her nothing can be offered.

A humble mortal bows before Her resplendent glory.

In gratitude from the deepest core of his being.

Before the battle cry, pray for Her compassion to all beings.

Author's Note

When a plane is ready to takeoff, below a certain speed it is possible for the pilot to cancel his takeoff. But once he breaks that speed, he has to takeoff, no matter what. But what if he refuses to do so?

Take the case of the Pandava Prince Arjuna who refused to takeoff because his emotions blocked the runway. My case was no different - apart from emotions, my runway was also blocked by overthinking.

Fortunately, my runway cleared by the grace of Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, "When a tree tries to outgrow its resources, it has to find out the source of its existence, otherwise it will be destroyed. Human civilization has grown so much on the outside in expression and experience that it is absolutely out of proportion. Having concentrated solely on the growth of the extravert expression of its nature, it must now turn to the introvert or inner nature of its existence. It must study its roots. It must find out the source of its existence."

The way to find the source of our existence is to inverse our attention inwards. But as our attention is geared outwards, we can't magic it inwards by the headwind of overthinking – we need the tail wind of Self-

realization. Though apart in time and space, Lord Krishna, Lord Jesus Christ, Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, Prophet Mohammad, Lao Tse, Confucius, Socrates and Guru Nanak spoke about it. Lord Krishna was more explicit – you cannot takeoff without the tail-wind of the Spirit.

For sure I could not have taken off without Shri Mataji's enlightening the verses of the Gita. I can only express my deep gratitude by passing on her light to the seekers of truth.

- Yogi Mahajan

Introduction to Mahabharata

by Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

To overcome all kinds of ritualistic nonsense of religion, Shri Krishna's advent was there. It was a very important event but I don't know how many people understand that. Shri Krishna has said it as clearly as anybody could say it. - Very, very clearly - that you have to go beyond your dharmas, that means you have to become a person who is innately religious, and not to become a person who is just outwardly something like Christian, Hindu; Muslim. No! Inside! Inside you have to become. You cannot bind God in any rituals. That's why he came on this earth; to tell you that you should not try to bind yourself by rituals which are nonsensical. These were his teachings, so many years back, six thousand years back.

Shri Krishna treated Draupadi as a sister. As you know, they tried to insult Draupadi by pulling out her sari. It was Shri Krishna who helped her because she was his sister and she was such a powerful lady. She is also responsible for the Mahabharata. She is the one who brought forth, she is the one who told that you have to fight the Kauravas. She absolutely told them very clearly that you have to fight the Kauravas. And in such a way that they should not only be defeated but that they should be destroyed. Because the chastity of women is very important and anyone in India who

tries to molest the chastity of a woman is to be cursed, is to be destroyed. And this was a very great message of Mahabharata. That only because she was insulted so much, all the war took place and all of them were destroyed.

When Gita was written down, people started following the book word by word not understanding what Shri Krishna said to Arjuna, 'you have to fight. At this time, you have to fight for Dharma, for the truth. And you have to fight'.

Then Arjuna said, 'I can't kill my uncles, I can't kill my grandfather and I can't kill my relations'

Lord Krishna said, 'who are you killing?' They are already dead because they have no Dharma. If you have no Dharma then you are already dead. So, what is there to kill or not to kill? And this message he gave to Arjuna in Kurukshetra.'

But then Arjuna said, 'you have asked me to kill these people because I have Dharma in me. I am killing them all right. What is beyond that?'

So, Lord Krishna described Sahaja Yoga. Beyond this was Sahaja Yoga. Firstly, he described in the second chapter the nature of a balanced person. Then he says that there is no anger in such a person because he is absolutely at peace within. So, what he described later on is really the modern times or we can say our Sahaja Yoga. In which he said how a person should become. He did not say how to become that. But the description is just like Christ said that if somebody

slaps you on one face you put the other face, other side of the face.

All this is actually description of Sahaja Yoga, of the future. Not at the time when Kauravas were fighting the Pandavas, it was not at that time. During that fight Lord Krishna told Arjuna that if you become balanced, then you can transcend all these problems, all these understandings that you have and you become absolutely peaceful with yourself. And on one side he said you have to fight.

Now in modern times we do not have to fight Kauravas. There are no Kauravas. The five Pandavas had to fight the Kauravas. So now what are these five Pandavas? They are our senses. Or we can say they are the cosmos divided into various elements. They have to fight the Kauravas which are within us. Now there are 100 Kauravas, not one. It is if you extend it then we can say the nature has to fight something that is against the nature. Now people will say anger is natural. To be aggressive is natural. But now we have reached a certain stage where we have attained the natural capacity to ascend beyond them. It is natural to go higher. It is natural to be balanced. It is natural to be a Sahaja Yogi. This is also within us. Now the building up of the spiritual self is our work. And that's what we have to do.

Chapter One

What if the Pilot Refuses to Takeoff

The Gita weaves a spiritual journey into a realistic account of war set in the battlefield of Kurukshetra in north India between the cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Kaurava King is anxious to know the proceedings of the battle between his sons, the Kauravas, and his nephews, the Pandavas. But he is blind and therefore confined to his palace.

. However, Sanjay, the charioteer of the Kaurava King is blessed by the power to hear and see the battle long distance, and thus the king asks him to narrate the battle scenario.

In the arena of dharma, in the arena of Kurukshetra, where my sons and the sons of Pandu have assembled, tell me what is happening, O Sanjaya? (1)

Sanjaya reports, *Upon the approach of the Pandava army, the Kaurava Prince Duryodhana addresses his mentor, Dronacharya. 'O*

*Guru! Observe the Pandava army is led by Drupada's son
Dhrishtadyumna. (2-3)*

*Observe the great heroes Bhima and Arjuna, and mighty warriors
Vinyudhana, Virata and Drupada, Dhrstaketu, Cekitana and the
great Kashi King. Also, the valorous Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Saibya,
Ynyudhana, Uttamaaja, the son of Subhadra and Dranpadi. (4 - 6)*

*Now allow me to acquaint your esteemed self with the heroes of our
army; the invincible Bhishma, Karna, Kripa. Also, Ashwatthama,
Vikarna, Somadatta's son and many other valiant heroes who are
ready to stake their lives for us. They are highly skilled and well
equipped with various weapons. (7-9)*

*Under the aegis of Bhishma, our army is well protected. Whereas,
under the aegis of Bhima their army is vulnerable. Thus, digging their
heels our army is invulnerable. (10-11)*

*To inspire Duryodhna, the mighty Bhishma roared like a lion and
blew his conch. (12)*

*Suddenly there is a tremendous surge in the beating of
drums and kettledrums, and the trumpeting of conchs in the
Kaurava ranks. (13)*

Thereafter, seated in their chariot drawn by white horses, Shri Krishna blew his Panchajanya conch and Arjuna, his Devadatta conch. Bhima blew his Paundra conch. Prince Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew his Anantavijaya, Nakula and Sahadeva blew their Sugbosa and Manipuspaka respectively. (14-16)

The Kashi King- the commander of the archers, Sikhandi - the brave, Dhrstadyumna, Virata, Satyaki, Drupada and Draupadi's sons, the mighty armed Subhadra blew their respective conchs. (17-18)

Their terrific echo tore across the sky, the earth trembled and the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons were terror stricken." (19)
Draw up my chariot, O Krishna, between the two armies so that I may inspect the men who are assembled in the enemy ranks, mongering for war. (20-23)

Shri Krishna parked his chariot between the two armies facing Bhisma, Drona and all the commanders. (24-25)

Observing before him his uncles, fathers, grandfathers, gurus, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends and fathers-in-laws, Arjuna was overcome with remorse and lamented, 'My body is trembling, my mouth is parched, my hair is standing on end. I see evil omens, O Krishna and

do not foresee any good in slaying my own people, "Of what use are kingdoms, enjoyments, or even life? Why does one fight? For what do we battle? We battle for our people; but, if those very people are going to be killed in war, then of what use is such a war?" (26-32)

I will not fight. Of what use is this victory? Those for whose sake we desire kingdoms, enjoyments and pleasures, they stand here in battle renouncing their lives and riches. These I would not kill, though they kill me; even for the kingdom of the three worlds, how much less for the sake of this earth! (33- 35)

The pilot is ready for the moment he has been waiting for. Precisely at that moment Lord Krishna signals takeoff. But then, at the eleventh hour something unexpected happens – the pilot refuses.

It betrays a startling naivety in a pilot as iconic as Prince Arjuna. Perhaps, it is not a case of a pilot who lacks self-confidence but rather of one who struggles with an existential crisis. Prince Arjuna is not emotionally independent – he is torn between his duty of a warrior and his attachment to his extended family in the opposite side of the battlefield. However, family is not always defined by blood – it could also be defined by love for one's motherland. Nonetheless, even if a pilot's personal love outplays the collective love, still, he can only delay the take-off, not avoid it.

Much like Prince Arjuna, we can delay facing our inner demons but we cannot run away from them. We seek refuge in Noah's Ark, thinking we are safe while the rest of the world is drowning. But nobody is safe from the tsunami raging next door.

Arjuna argues: *What happiness can be ours, O Krishna, if we slay our kinsmen? Only sin will arise from this bloodshed. Hence, it is not right to kill our kinsmen. (36-37)*

Those who are blinded by greed cannot foresee the outcome of the destruction of family and friends. But we who have the discretion to see it should avert this sin. In the destruction of the family, the ancient traditions are destroyed, consequently the whole society falls into lawlessness. When lawlessness arises, O Krishna, the women of the family are debased and when women are debased then there is confusion in the social order. (38- 41)

"When the foundation of the family is destroyed it brings hell to both the perished and those who destroy it, as the departed souls do not receive the offerings of the rice and water." (42)

As the outcome of destruction of family, the traditional laws and social order are destroyed. It is said that the outcome of such deed is hell. (43-44)

It may be useful to remind ourselves that the battle of Kurukshetra encapsulates the evolutionary struggle of Homo sapiens to outgrow their animal instincts and hone their primal qualities encoded in their DNA. The fact that the nurturing quality was encoded in women, also suffused them with the primal quality of forbearance and love. For instance, a mother puts her life on hold for the sake of her family. If it were not so, the world would not have existed.

Hence, it is unsurprising that Prince Arjuna is worried, that the primal code would be destroyed by a devastating continental war. Lord Krishna is even more worried than Arjuna or anyone else. What is different is that Lord Krishna knows that if dharma is saved, everything will be saved. But if it is destroyed, everything will be destroyed from inside, without an intervention of any outside energy. But for Arjuna to see it is no less weighty than the war itself.

It is indeed a pity that despite our discretion we are enticed by greed and power, and thus misled to commit the sin of slaying our kinsfolk. I would rather cast off my arms and die at the hands of Dhritarashtra's sons.

Thus, expressing his remorse Arjuna cast away his bow and arrow, and sorrowfully resumed his seat. (45-47)

The world is struggling to change. But when the winds of change come, they force change. All life must change or die.

But Arjuna is not interested in change. He is like a lone tree that wants to stand in peace, but the winds of change won't let him.

Chapter Two

The Riddle of Dharma

Sanjaya reports:

Shri Krishna addressed Prince Arjuna who was thus depressed and filled with remorse: In this hour of crisis whereof is this attachment born? It is disgraceful, and doesn't beboove a person of a noble mind, nor leads to heaven. Therefore, off load this feebleness and stand up and fight. (1-3)

The tenth guru of the Sikhs, Guru Govind Singh earnestly believed that if we do good to the wrong doer, it purifies our heart of malice. But when he faced aggression from the Mughals, he meditated long and deep on how to deal with them. It dawned on him when all other means fail, it is righteous to draw the sword, and that fighting for self-defense is preferable to dying, but there should be no malice or ego.

The other condition laid down by the Sikh Guru was that one has to fight the person perpetrating the evil but not his family and innocent people.

In parallel, Lord Krishna tried everything possible to reconcile the Kauravas. But when much was lost and

much more was at stake, as the last resort only the language of arms could decide the contest between dharma and adharma.

Admittedly, Lord Krishna's argument can be used by wolves to guise it as Jihad. The Jihadis believe that they are serving God, but in fact they are serving their own ego. Likewise, those who believe they are obliging Lord Krishna by serving him, are very much under the same illusion. Thus, Prince Arjuna is under a similar illusion that he is obliging Lord Krishna by taking up arms.

Arjuna responded, O Krishna! How can I take up arms against Bhishma and Drona who I hold in the highest esteem? I would rather live in this world by begging than killing them. Whereas, by slaying them how will I find pleasure in the spoils stained with their blood? (4-5)

I am not convinced which is the better of the two paths – to fight or not to fight? Or who will be victorious? If we kill the sons of Dhritarashtra's sons confronting us, we will not desire to survive them. (6)

As Prince Arjuna is confused about who he has to fight, he uses every argument to get around his obligation. He thinks the enemy is in the battlefield. What he doesn't know is that the real enemy is not in the battlefield but hiding inside him.

O Krishna, my being is stricken with pain. My mind is confused in regard to duty. You are my guru. I seek refuge in you, advise me, and guide me. (7)

Even if I gain all the riches and kingdoms on earth or suzerainty over the Gods, nothing removes the sorrow besieging me. I will not fight. (8-9)

Given that Prince Arjuna's could crush an enemy on the battlefield with force or strategy, but it is a fragile victory - it is not the true measure of a prized warrior's victory. The true measure is victory over the enemy within. Take the case of Alexander the great who conquered a quarter of the world, yet he failed to conquer the enemy within.

Paradoxically, though worldly success nurtures the leaves of a tree, it doesn't nurture its roots. Gradually, the tree becomes weak and helpless, as in Arjuna's case. Unless he steps back and catches the enemy as soon as it shows its face, he will never be able to takeoff, and his story would be over. But his story is far from over. Let us see how.

Lord Krishna beckons Arjuna,

You mourn for those who are not worthy of your grief. The wise grieve neither the dead nor the living. For when was the time when I was not or you were not, or these kings were not, or in the future they will not be? (10-12)

Just as the body passes through childhood, old age, likewise, the Atma leaves this body and passes on to another. The wise are not deluded by it. (13)

The enemy hiding within contrives to escape Arjuna's attention because he is invisible. Hence, Lord Krishna reminds him of an old friend who could make the invisible visible – Atma (Spirit).

In short, the Spirit is the only eternal thing within us, all else is transitory. Hence, it is not to be confused with mind, intelligence, ego, attention, prana, elements, organs or the senses.

The experience of cold and heat, pleasure and pain arise from sensory contact. But these are transitory and do not endure. Therefore, O Arjuna! face them. (14)

While trying to change lanes in freeway traffic a commuter was behind a slow-moving truck. Eager to make it home in time for his daughter's birthday, he tried to overtake it. But the truck was overloaded with conditionings and would not give way.

But why should we behave like robots void of love and joy? If we love others, we have to make way for them, and change. But the story doesn't change unless we change it. For sure, it

doesn't change with comfort or convenience; it changes when we deal with our conditioning from a place of strength.

The one who remains the same in happiness and sorrow, and is not deluded by the senses, such a wise person is worthy of salvation.
(15)

That which is illusory has no existence, and that which has existence never ceases to be. Both these aspects have been known to the wise seers. (16)

Human beings are afraid of death because they are in ignorance. For instance, if suddenly the light goes off, a child is frightened because he is in ignorance. Ignorance leads us into illusions. Einstein helps us understand that all the myriad forms that we see in the world are brought forth by our observation. Thus, time and space is meaningless unless there is a conscious observer.

Two monks watching a flag blowing in the wind wondered whether it was the flag or the wind that was moving.

The abbot revealed, "It is not the wind, not the flag, but your mind that is moving".

That by which this whole universe is pervaded is indestructible. No one can destroy this immutable Being. But the body of the indestructible, immutable being perishes. Hence, O Arjun, fight! (17-18)

The one who thinks that it slays or can be slain; both are mistaken because it neither slays nor is slain. (19)

It is said that as man draws closer to death, he realizes the meaning of life. A few months before his death Albert Einstein wrote to a friend:

“And yet, to one bent by age, death will come as a release. I feel this quite strongly now that I have grown old myself and have come to regard death like an old debt, at long last to be discharged. Still, instinctively one does everything possible to delay this last fulfillment. Thus, is the game which nature plays with us. We may ourselves smile that we are like that, but we cannot free ourselves of the instinct to which we are all subject.”

Indeed, it is hard to accept that life would be cut short before we are done. However, death is not the end game but a door we walk through. Thus, the Spirit merely transits from one body to another. For instance, when light flows in through an open window, the room gets lit. But the light itself is unchanging - even when the room

doesn't exist, it carries on giving light to others. It glides
from end to end like a swan says Pragya Pradhan:

Tell me the secrets of love
Tell me please
I wait like a thirsty swan
Upon a desert lake
I can't move without love's tale
I can't even blink

Pour upon me it's sweet water
And I'll be whole again
I'll be the finest swan
In your beautiful lake

I'll glide from end to end
Without taking a break

I'll bring a thousand more
To carry love's tale
To every corner of this earth
And every heart of stone
Just reveal your cup of love
Before it's too late

The Atma is neither born nor does it die, or being manifested it doesn't cease to manifest. It doesn't take birth; it is eternal, innate and primordial. The one who knows this, how can he kill anyone or be killed?" (20-21)

Albert Einstein wanted to be cremated, so people won't come to worship his bones. However, during his autopsy, the doctor thought that his brain must be wired differently than other people, and took out his brain to examine the lobe that triggered his genius. He discovered there was no such special lobe in his brain.

As day by day, we explore the working of the brain's telecommunication system, we come to understand that it operates like a GPS tower that only receives consciousness but doesn't store or transmit it. Thus, Lord Krishna absolves Arjuna of the guilt of killing his kith and kin by revealing that he is merely the instrument of collective consciousness and not the doer.

Like a person discards worn out clothes for new ones, similarly, the Atma gives up the worn-out body for a new one. (22)

Even if Cherry blossoms fall, they bloom the following year. Like migratory birds setting out in winter on a long

journey to find warmth, and then they return when it is Spring again, life migrates from one body to another.

The Atma cannot be cut by weapons, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, nor can the wind dry it. Because it is eternal, unchanging, perennial, all-pervading and immovable like a tree. It is un-manifest, unchanging and beyond the intellect. Thus perceive its true roots and do not grieve. (23-25)

According to the Zen master Rinzai, “A moment of doubt in your heart is your being obstructed by earth.

A moment of desire in your heart is your drowning in water.

A moment of anger in your heart is your burning in fire.

A moment of happiness in your heart is your being carried away by the wind.”

But the Spirit is not made of the elements, hence, it cannot be eroded. The elements are relative, whereas the Spirit is the Absolute being within us.

Furthermore, as it is self-contained and desireless, water cannot dissolve it.

Again, as it is egoless, the fire of anger cannot burn it.

As it has no dwelling place; it cannot be carried away by the wind.

And as it is the reflection of God, it cannot be enhanced or transformed.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi elucidates:

“Who can steal your powers

Who can steal Your vibrations

Who can steal your Self-realization

Who can steal Your love

Because it comes from your spirit.

You have to think through the Spirit

You have to understand through the Spirit”

Even if you believe that the spirit is born and dies, you should not grieve because what is born must die, and it is inevitable that what dies must be reborn. Hence you should not grieve for what is inevitable.

(26-27)

Rivers of time continue; we are just passersby. For instance, the ending of one life means the beginning of another one. It goes to show there is a continuous process of renewal. Take the journey of a wee seed – as the tree is in the seed, over time it becomes a big tree. In turn, the tree tells its own story of life before returning to a wee seed again.

But let us not forget to look under our own tree - our life span is measured by the number of breaths we take. Still, we save the most important issue of life for our last breath. Between the cross roads of our breaths, we have to explore who we truly are. As we find the answer, everything changes in a moment - we no more measure life by the number of

breaths we take, but rather, by the moments that take our breath away. We can make every moment count. To borrow Khalil Gibran's words, "Only those return to eternity who on earth seek eternity."

In the beginning, before birth all creatures were un-manifest. In the middle, after birth they manifest. In the end, after death they again become un-manifest. Hence, what is there to grieve? (28)

When a bird is about to die, her notes are mournful. But when a person who has prepared for mortality is about to die, his notes are cheerful because he dwells in eternity says

Pragya Pradhan:

"I wasn't born in spring or summer
only to depart by winter
I was not born in digits
created by the mind
Eternity is my birthplace
Where time is never born
Where love builds peace mansions
and lovers roam its halls"

Some perceive the spirit in wonderment. Some speak about it as a marvel. Others listen about it in amazement, and yet even after hearing about it none realize it. (29)

Each one of us carries an untold story in us. But the story that can be told cannot be the whole story. To get the whole story we have to know our Spirit better says Pragya Pradhan:

“When a thousand words
Pour into your heart
But you speak not one
And it transforms
That’s the Spirit.”

O Arjuna! The spirit residing in the body of every being is eternal and indestructible. Therefore, you should not grieve for any being. (30)

Despite all the difficulties we face in life the Spirit is within our reach. Piece by piece, Lord Krishna tutors Arjuna about the true nature of the Spirit. Its essential nature is indestructible. Though the vehicle of the body stops working, the Spirit remains in the attention of God. Hence, there is nothing to grieve.

Moreover, mindful of your dharma, you should not waiver. There is no higher duty for a Kshatriya (warrior cast) than to fight for his Dharma. (31)

Lord Krishna has much to say about life and death, and everything in between. But first – dharma.

However, the riddle of dharma is not easy to solve.

Interestingly, in Sanskrit language there are only two words, dharma and adharma - there is nothing in between. It is not linked to any organized religion. The religious can become irreligious and sin, but the one who holds the lamp of dharma cannot sin because he shines in the light of the Spirit.

According to Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, the founder of Sahaja Yoga, “Dharma is the sustenance of all things that are born or created. It is super nature that gives valences to atoms in an element. It is Dharma that is expressed as the quality of these elements. For instance, gold has a quality that it is untarnishable.

Human beings are like perfected computers. Of course, if their dharma is in balance, they are the best receptors. You can understand that the divine awareness is like the main electrical current which starts the computer. If the dharma in the instrument is lacking, Self-realization doesn't give full results. It becomes like a second-hand car. Dharma is the fulcrum and the one who is in dharma never gets into imbalance. So, the attention has to be on “dharma”, the point where the gravity of sin doesn't act.

As all the missing pieces of the riddle finally fall into place, it evinces that dharma is a law of nature as real as the law of gravity. That is, dharma is the gravity of the Spirit. As long as Arjuna stands in it, he has grip over life. But if he loses his grip, he loses everything. However, he is mystified by the riddle of dharma, and questions Lord Krishna's philosophy.

Lord Krishna's philosophy is based on logic - the one who tries to appease the adharmic is in the same boat as the adharmic. Put bluntly, even if Arjuna succeeds in appeasing his relations in the enemy ranks, he plays their game, not *his*. Till he sees that, all the logic in the world cannot solve the riddle of dharma.

Indeed, for a Kshatriya it is fortunate that such an opportunity unlocks the door of heaven. If now you do not defend your dharma, then you will fall from your dharma and incur sin. (32-33)

Lord Krishna is not someone who would intervene for territory, riches, power, revenge, ideology or religion, but explicitly for defending dharma. Dharma defines who we truly are, and if we don't defend who we are, we will no longer know who we are. That is, without dharma, we are nothing. On this is rooted the precept of dharma.

Nowhere is it more visible than on the stage of Mahabharata where the Kaurava prince publicly violated the

chastity of the Pandava princess Draupadi. As he violated her chastity, he violated dharma. Not just that, the elders who watched the shameless deed, and did nothing to protect her chastity, violated dharma as much as the Kaurava prince by being complicit.

It prompts the question, ‘why isn’t Arjuna fighting for dharma?’

It is hard for Arjuna to open himself for something he doesn’t understand. To understand dharma, he must understand his inner self. Ultimately, it is a question of attaining self-realization.

More recently, realized leaders like Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi understood that dharma is not incidental to human affairs, but instrumental to it. To borrow the Florentine poet Dante Alighieri words, “The darkest place in hell is reserved for those who maintain neutrality in times of moral crises.”

For sure, there is no such thing as mind your own business.

“Moreover, if you desist from fighting, posterity will recount your disgrace, and for an esteemed persona like you, disgrace is worse than death. They will recount that out of cowardice you fled the battlefield, and even those who hold you in high esteem will belittle you. Furthermore, your enemies will defame you. What can be worse than that?” (34-36)

We know there is a side of Arjuna that is tied to his kinfolk in the enemy rank even though they support adharmā. But he cannot have it both ways - he cannot defend dharma unless he fights the adharmic. Leonardo da Vinci points, "He who doesn't punish evil commands it to be done."

We should bear in mind that Lord Krishna doesn't suggest that Arjuna should kill everyone, but that he kills only the depraved and adharmic, and that too without any malice or ego.

It leaves us wondering how it is possible to fight without ego.

Perhaps, there is something to be learnt from the incredible Salmon fish who rely on the earth's magnetic field as a GPS to cross thousands of miles of ocean to get back to their spawning grounds. Likewise, we can rely the magnetic field of dharma as a GPS to fight without ego.

Either you will die in the battle and attain heaven or you will be victorious and rule the earth. Therefore, rise and fight, O Arjuna. (37)

Do not react to happiness or unhappiness, gain or loss, victory or defeat but prepare to fight. When you battle in the state of detachment you will incur no sin. (38)

O Arjuna! I have revealed to you the wisdom of Sankhya. Now bear the wisdom of yoga, and if it penetrates your intelligence then you will be redeemed from the bondage. (39)

In the past there were two types of movements seeking the Divine; one was devotion or bhakti and the other was knowledge. The Vedic generation tried to understand the Divine through knowledge – Sankhya. However, the wisdom of Sankhya pre-dated Mahabharata, and moreover, should not be confused with the Sankhya philosophy that was propounded post Mahabharata. Also, it should not be confused with a later movement of Hatha Yoga - a limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga yoga coined post Mahabharata.

According to Lord Krishna yoga means the union of the individual Spirit with the Cosmic Spirit. However, we are tempted to believe that we can accomplish it through some technique. But that's hardly the case – we can learn a technique for any kind of action but we cannot learn a technique for becoming the Spirit; for there is none. We have to take account of the experience of Self-realization.

It is a living process of evolution. For instance, when we put a seed in the soil, it spontaneously sprouts. We cannot force it to sprout. That is, the evolutionary living process that connects every living being is life itself. As we connect with

it, divine bliss comes without prior warning - it comes by itself, in its own time, and we know not from where...

In the path of yoga, no effort is ever lost - all obstacles are overcome. Even a little Dharma saves from fear. (40)

We have to be unafraid of the enemy within. And that calls for courage. This is what the enemy fears the most. But courage comes from dharma. No obstacle can stand in the way of the one abides by his dharma.

The understanding of one who is decisive is single, but the thoughts of the irresolute are multiple and endless. (41)

We created the watch, and before we knew it, the watch started controlling us. We locked ourselves in the invisible shackles of the time sheet. Uncontrolled thoughts led by artificial rules buried our sense of freedom and self-control. Thus, thinking is all that the ego does - it thinks it knows best, at another moment it makes a U-turn and stands on the opposite side, convincing itself again that it knows best. But how can we be at peace if we are at war with our own thoughts?

Those who expound the letter of the scriptures (Vedas) with heaven as the selfish goal create various rites and rituals for the selfish

attainment of pleasures and powers, the reward for which is rebirth. (42-43)

Around 5000-year B.C. Ancient Indian seers codified their wisdom in treatise called Vedas. Vedic wisdom gave early humanity its pristine taste of spirituality, culture and medicine. They stated that if by reading them the knowledge is not 'vid,' then it is of no use. 'Vid' is that which knows that the one and the same light shines in every heart.

However, the Vedas were transmitted by oral tradition from one generation to the next before being inked. Similarly, the holy Koran was inked post Prophet Mohammad, and so was the Bible inked post Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence, a tapestry that is woven and rewoven on the loom of time is bound to erode. For instance, as these texts were written in ancient scripts, their true essence could have been corrupted or lost in translations. We cannot be sure if they passed through the right hands, or how much of the original was distorted.

Worse, the wrong hands complicate rituals to perpetuate their tentacles. For instance, when a man dies his son must perform arduous ceremonies and feed the priest's pocket to ensure the peace of the departed soul. If peace cannot be bought for the living, how can it be bought for the dead?

Moreover, what is the guarantee that a person who is well versed in the scriptures doesn't commit crime. They may claim that they are the chosen ones, but they don't behave that way. Take the case of clergy men who abuse children.

All the incarnations were aware that God is not someone born of the scriptures. Hence, when Buddha saw people leverage God, he decided not to talk about him. But it did not stop his followers from leveraging brand Buddha. For sure, nothing can stop the devil from quoting scriptures. Nothing is safe when religion is weaponized. The perpetrators exploit every faultline that religion provides – money, sex, power and terrorism. As they ruined the dreams of the prophets into a nightmare of pecuniary adventurism, the Sufi mystic, Shams-e-Tabreez taught Rumi to love God with his heart:

“Leave everything.

Enough of verse and dogma!

Now let your heart be kindled with the fire of love.

Now illumine your heart with the glow of love's fire.”

It doesn't penetrate the intelligence of those whose attention is eclipsed by pleasure and power. The three- fold gunas propounded by the Vedas binds us to cause and effect. Break through this duality through detachment, innocence and Self-realization. (44-45)

Again, as a pilot attempts to takeoff, but the runway is blocked by another force. The force is fueled by three conflicting energies; sattwa, rajas and tamas. Tamas builds emotional blocks, rajas; mental ones, and sattwa reconciles these opposites.

Though the pilots' path is blocked by these energies, but the Spirit's path cannot be blocked, because it has a mirror-like quality that merely reflects them without being driven by them.

As is the use of a pond in a place overflowing with water, such is the use of all the Vedas (scriptures) to a realized being. (46)

As philosophers tried to outdo each other during a debate about religion, one claimed, "All religions are nothing but philosophies."

The second refuted, "Whatever you say about philosophy the opposite is also true. All mental projections create a polarity."

Said the third, "Philosophy without love has no meaning. Whatever is written in the scriptures doesn't purify the mind. Scriptures talk of the drop of water, whereas, the realized one knows the ocean. After all, what is the use of the scriptures to the one who has them within."

The philosopher of all the philosophers, Kabira says:
"Renounce the Vedas and the books

O pandit, all these are fictions of the mind.”

You have the right to action alone but not to its fruits. Hence do not be motivated by reward of the fruits nor be attached to non-action. (47)

Every labor looks for reward. But according to Lord Krishna lack of reward is a teacher. However, it is not possible to follow the teacher till we transcend the ego. For instance, in the absence of the ego there is no doer, and in the absence of the doer there is no expectation of reward. That is, without cause there can't be effect, says Pragya Pradhan:

“To be drunk without wine
To be ecstatic without cause
To love without return
Is to rise above all.”

Do your work in yoga, with a detached attitude, even minded in success and failure. Equanimity of mind is called yoga. (48)

When a world-class tennis champion lost the last round, he turned to his coach, “My dream is to become the best tennis player. If I am not able to live my dream, then I have failed in life.”

The coach clicked his tongue, “Your dream of becoming the best tennis player may have disappeared but you are not only a tennis player – - you have to find out the true player in you. The one who finds it doesn’t think that not living his dream means failure in life. Nor does living his dream mean he has succeeded either.

Those who seek fruit of actions are deluded. The one who has anchored his attention on the Divine transcends both good and evil. Therefore, aspire for yoga. Yoga is wisdom in action. The one who has anchored his attention thus, and is detached from the fruits of action is liberated from the bondage of birth and evolves to the highest state. (49-51)

In the evolutionary process our consciousness rise higher and higher. The higher it rises the clearer we perceive the principle behind creation. The principle is none other than the all- pervading power of divine love that transmutes the light of wisdom into work. Hence, anything that lives must choose life wisely in order to survive.

Bereft of wisdom, we oscillate between cause-and-effect, and that kicks in the cycle of birth and death. Conversely, in the absence of the ego there is no desire, and in the absence of desire, there is no catalyst for rebirth. The Sikh scripture, ‘Shri Guru Granth Sahib’ describes how a little boy is flying a kite and at the same time talking, and laughing with his friends, but his attention is anchored on the

kite. Likewise, though a wise person goes about his everyday life, his attention is anchored on his Spirit.

When your intellect crosses the sea of illusion, then you will be unconcerned by what has been said in the past, or what will be said in the future. (52)

We hear the echoes of people's thoughts from the past, but they may not necessarily be the truth. For instance, history is written by victors. As they write their own myths, they erase their toxic past to glorify their deeds. When Michelangelo finished painting the vault of the chapel, the pope found it too plain and instructed him to embellish the colors with gold. The artist protested, "Holy Father, in those days men did not wear gold, and those who are painted were not rich, for they were holy men who despised wealth."

Nonetheless, the one who experiences the truth within is not bothered about all the chatter about it, but what *is*.

Your intellect is confused by listening to various texts. When it blends with the Divine then you will attain Yoga. (53)

Much like Arjuna, every seeker deserves to know the truth. However, truth cannot be discovered on the strength

of the intellect alone because intellect without awareness is nothing.

Though the intellect is a useful tool, it has limitations. For instance, when the mind is driven by the intellect, it produces a byproduct - ego. But then again, if the ego tries to fight the ego, it builds another ego. However, wrestling with the ego is like wrestling with our own shadow. Whereas, when we stand in the light of the Spirit, the shadow disappears spontaneously. Lao Tse states:

“Knowing others is intelligence.

Knowing yourself is true wisdom.

Mastering others is strength.

Mastering yourself is true power.”

Arjuna: How is a realized being recognized? How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk? (54)

Too often realized beings are overlooked for a variety of reasons. At a closer look, Albert Einstein appeared rather comical with a great furrowed forehead, beneath a forest of unruly white hair; enormous bulging chocolate eyes and the brightness of a good artisan's countenance. He could easily be mistaken for a reliable

old-fashioned watchmaker in a small town who perhaps collected butterflies on a Sunday.

It begs the question, how to tell an Einstein from the ordinary?

As a connoisseur can tell a good wine from its taste, it is possible to tell a realized person by his vibrations. Though everything in life emits vibrations, a realized person emits cool vibrations. For long, Namdev, the tailor had been searching the Divine. One day, as he entered a temple, he encountered a potter named Gora Kumbhar, kneading clay. The cool vibrations of the potter led him to his inner silence. As he touched his inner silence, he touched the silence of the universe. He could not contain his joy, and burst into a song, "I came searching the Divine in the formless, but found him in the form!"

Lord Krishna replies:

When the mind becomes free of the residue of desires, and the spirit is content in itself then such a one is said to be stable in intellect.
(55)

As we don't know what the future holds, we worry that our desires may not be fulfilled. But the Spirit is

desireless, and hence has nothing to worry. It enjoys experiencing itself, and shines in its own glory.

Admittedly, no one has an easy ride in life, but compassion flows spontaneously in a person who is nurtured by his Spirit - while others try to get first in the queue, he stands in the back, because he stands tall with in his Spirit.

The one who remains the same in sorrow, and doesn't banker after pleasure, who has overcome resentment, fear and anger - such a saint is said to have an enlightened intellect. (56)

As the ego is unable to forgive, it pulsates anger. For instance, in what people expect from their life-partners, and what they turn out to be, triggers rage - they say things they don't mean, and that doesn't leave any room for understanding. At the end of the day, they come out of it without learning anything about themselves.

In concrete terms, unless we forgive the faults of others, we cannot forgive our own faults. For sure, we don't want to live like angry bees that go on stinging!

The one who is bereft of attachment to any side, who doesn't hate or delight in what is auspicious, such a one is a realized being. (57).

Often, we hear people say, ‘those who bother me, I put them on my hit list.’

Indeed, love and hate are the key game changers in our lives. Of course, those who hate must have a reason to hate, whereas, those who love don’t have a reason to love. Those who hate cannot liberate themselves, hence, hatred ends up as its own punishment. But why should we punish ourselves points Nelson Mandela, “As I walked out of the door towards the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.”

Our attention has to be free to process our liberation. But it can’t be free if a hate-virus comes in the way. Hence, if we want to liberate our attention, we have to give the person we hate another chance to light up his life with love.

For sure, people want to light up their lives, but possessiveness blocks that light - ‘I watered and cared for the tree; its fruits are all mine – how dare the neighbor pluck them!’

However, the fruits of the tree can be enjoyed without being possessive. In nature we learn that the sap travels to all parts of the tree irrespective of which is auspicious. If it were not so, one branch would die, and ultimately the whole tree. Nonetheless, though the sap goes to every leaf according to its need, the flower is the most auspicious. For sure, we are the most beautiful flowers of creation, but till the flowers

don't tell of the auspicious fragrance, the story of the sap remains unfinished.

When the attention withdraws from the object of the sense as a tortoise withdraws within its shell, then such a one is truly realized.
(58)

The play-it-safe tortoise is known to be man's oldest friend, and hence, there is a lot to learn from him. For instance, he teaches us the art of withdrawing our attention within.

The proverbial fairytale of the fox setting-up a trap to catch the tortoise. But the tortoise did not fall for the ruse - he simply retreated his feet and head inside his shell, the fox accepted defeat and left.

It goes to show that intelligence is not a guarantee of wisdom. Rather, by simply withdrawing our attention within we can witness the play of all the five senses without getting robbed by them.

The impressions of the previous indulgences of the senses remain, even when the Self is withdrawn from the object. However, even these imprints fall away on enlightenment. (59)

Our inbox is cluttered with the memory of previous impressions of the senses. Admittedly, we could ignore their

screams but that doesn't mean they do not exist. On the other hand, if we listen to them, we crave for the next thing. For instance, the para-modern robotic life has had it all – sex, money, travel, drugs, and yet they are restless for the next thing. It causes a mutation in their consciousness that triggers a new impetus. They want to zoom into a high that leaves them breathless. Nevertheless, when the light of the Spirit shines in their attention all the mutations get erased.

O Arjuna, despite man's earnest endeavor, the impulse of the senses sways his mind. Therefore, taming his senses, he should keep his attention fixed on me and meditate. He whose senses are thus under his control; his intelligence is illuminated by the light of wisdom. (60-61)

Even if know something is not good for our ascent, still we are drawn towards it, because we are driven by the senses. However, the light of the Spirit leads us into the path of wisdom. And a wise person doesn't side with the senses.

Indulgence in the object of senses produces attachment to them, from attachment arises desire, and from desire arises anger. (62)

From anger arises confusion, thereby loss of memory occurs; with the loss of memory the intelligence is destroyed; the destruction of intelligence leads man to destruction. (63)

Though the disciplined one moves in the world of senses but remaining established within, neither attached nor despising, he embraces the Spirit. (64)

It is said that desire is the mother of achievement.

If you ask successful entrepreneurs how they made their wealth, they'd most likely tell you that it all started with a desire to create wealth.

Yes, money is a motivating factor.

For many, it is the fuel to the path of success. Ask athletes, and they'll tell us that the desire to win keeps them thriving. For artists, the desire to create gives them a sense of satisfaction—whatever the reason, desire is the backbone, and happiness in some form is the goal.

However, what do we do after we've achieved the goal, and how long do we keep trying to achieve happiness dependent on external factors?

Most of our lives are spent in working hard to achieve success. Once we get what we want, we want to grow bigger and keep going.

As they say in economics, "*Wants are not satiable.*"

If that's the case, how long shall we feed the inexhaustible engine of wants? Isn't it better to cap it somewhere, and strengthen one's inner sense of satisfaction?

According to Lord Krishna it is possible through the practice of self-discipline. Of course, self-discipline should not turn us into robotic ascetics. Though an ascetic spends a lifetime battling his body, he doesn't subdue his ego. Come to think of it if everything is a play of the ego, why become an ascetic?

Though joy is natural to the Spirit, ascetics think suffering to be their natural fate. They inflict suffering upon themselves as a purifying agent. But suffering neither purifies the mind nor spawns' evolution.

All his sorrows dissolve in the joy of the spirit, and the attention of such a person recedes from the external objects, and gets absorbed in the self. (65)

Just like our financial investments take charge of our attention, likewise, when we put our attention on objects and people, they take charge of our energy. As our energy goes to them, it diminishes. Conversely, as we react to others, they grab our attention, and consequently we download their negative energy. For sure, we cannot let their poison inside - we need to safeguard our attention.

What's more, we also need to safeguard our attention against the faceless sharks behind the internet who spend millions to grab it, and use it as a commodity to earn billions.

It tails off a question, how to safeguard our attention?

It is not what happens in life but how we react to it that matters. Hence, the real turning point is to disinvest our attention from physical things and people and blend it with our Spirit. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi reveals, "As you watch your money, as you watch the road when you drive, as you watch your child when it is growing; all put together watch your attention, where it is going, where it is lagging behind."

As our attention converges with the Spirit, the faceless sharks can no longer grab it, because the Spirit doesn't react – it despises none and bears no malice. Nor does it judge because it only knows how to love.

For the undisciplined there is no wisdom or the power of concentration. Without concentration there cannot be peace. How can there be joy if there is no peace? (66)

Trees don't grow during earthquakes; they grow when there is peace and wisdom. For sure, we want to grow like wise and peaceful trees, but listening to our wisdom requires silence. Self-discipline is the key to silence says the Buddha:

“Irrigators channel water,
Fletchers straighten arrows,
Carpenters bend wood,
And the wise master themselves.”

When the mind gets enslaved by the wandering senses then their passion carries away a person's wisdom as a wind carries away a boat on the waters. (67)

Social media, has changed everything. It has not only shrunk the world but also changed the way we look at it. However, internet users don't think too much – they just need one thing to captivate their mind. But the passion of the senses is impetuous, and hence, web designers are after that one thing to captivate their senses at the first glance. The product doesn't seem to matter says the writer, Pragya Pradhan:

“Is it so easy
To lose your sense
Just because you can't have
What you want
All those toys
All those brands
All that glitters
All for what?

To lose your money
And self-command
Is it so easy to let yourself fall?

Therefore, O Arjuna! The one who has tamed his senses, his intelligence gets enlightened. (68)

If we're talking about our inborn senses, yes, most people want good food. The question is at what point on the threshold of fulfillment is satisfaction met? It is different for each person. For most people, satisfaction comes when the stomach is full, but if we can't help ourselves, we'll overeat. Hence, if we learn to discipline the constant desire of our inborn senses, we will have time to reap the benefits of what we sow.

What appears as night for all beings, is the time for waking up for a realized being and vice versa (69)

We seem to live in two different worlds – one, where conscience is awake, and the other, where it is asleep. Take the case of Arjuna's relatives in the enemy ranks who support evil. Had their conscience been awake, they would not have sided with evil. But in reality, conscience never sleeps. On the contrary, it is awake when the adharmic sleep. And if betrayed, it robs them of sleep.

Like rivers dissolve into the ocean without causing any upheaval, similarly, all desires dissolve in a realized being without causing any ripples. (70)

Even the smallest pebble causes concentric ripples in the mind's deep lake. Says Kahlil Gibran, "When God threw me, a pebble, into this wondrous lake, I disturbed its surface with countless circles. But when I reached the depths, I became very still."

That is, when our attention deepens it becomes like a lake without ripples that reflects the joy of creation.

The one who overcomes all his desires, and acts without banking, identification or ego, he attains inner peace. (71)

"Do I really need a bigger TV? Probably not, but everyone else seemed to be getting one, so shouldn't I be following the trend? Ah, I forgot about the console- would need to be changed to accommodate a larger TV?"

As one want leads to the next one, we cross the line, and get sucked into a bottomless black hole.

However, it is possible to come out of the black hole if we realize that true satisfaction doesn't depend on the latest gadgets we acquire, but from desires we forfeit suggests Pragya Pradhan:

“Don’t you see those gadgets
And luxurious hooks
That don’t work
But cripple instead.

You know
I saw another you
Somewhere in a moment
of friendship and bonding
Somewhere along the river walk
Sparkling and bubbling
Like the very ripples in the water
Because you saw
Because we saw
God’s hand in it all.”

O Arjuna! This is the highest divine state. Having attained it, one doesn’t fall into illusion. Remaining steady in it till the end, he attains God realization. (72)

Both science and philosophy undeniably point to evidence of an underlying intelligent design in the universe. Based on interactive enquiry and rationality, Hellenic philosophers also had much to say about it. But the task of an incarnation is not

the same as a philosopher or a scientist. An incarnation not only reveals the purpose of human existence but also maps its transformation. Transformation implies evolution. As our awareness evolves, we come to understand that atrocities and injustices will always be there but we refuse to be brought down by them. Instead, we fight them, but without malice, anger or expectation for reward. That said, we cannot take the next step in evolution by preaching, or by cutting-edge advanced technology or by another Mahabharata - it happens when we change the building blocks of our existence. And for that to happen Self-realization is the takeoff point.

Chapter Three

Which Gear Should the Pilot Apply

Arjuna: *O Krishna! If the path of knowledge is more advisable than the path of action, O Krishna,*

then why do you urge me to commit this heinous sin? These contradictions confuse me. Tell me clearly which is the higher path? (1-2)

Krishna: *A two-fold way has been taught by me. Both approach the same goal - the path of knowledge for the contemplating man whereas the path of action for the man of action. (3)*

What if a pilot is stuck on the runway unsure which gear to apply – knowledge or action. Lord Krishna indicates that interdependence is the key – knowledge is useless without action, and action is useless without knowledge.

Neither by renunciation is perfection attained, nor by the mere avoidance of work does he attain freedom from action. (4)

Renunciation is a mental idea. It is truer to say that all the ideas of renunciation come from ignorance. For instance, when we say we are giving up something, it means we are using the ego. The ego thinks that by giving up possessions, it can attain God. Come to think of it, God doesn't want our wealth, nor does he want us to give up our intelligence.

On the other side of the spectrum, a person who is stressed thinks by giving up work he will attain peace. But even those who give up work get stressed, because their thinking does not let them live in peace. If we want peace, we have to understand war. That is, we have to banish the darkness of ignorance. Then, we don't have to give up anything, because we are not attached to anything.

It is impossible for one to exist even for a moment without action. The impulse of nature compels man to act. Do your duty, for action is superior to non-action. (5)

The senses can be restrained. But if desires still linger in the mind, then it gives way to self-deception. (6)

We are tempted to believe that we are free, but in reality, we are tied to a long leash of the senses. Upon renouncing the world, a celibate sought refuge in wilderness. After years

of penance, he returned, thirsty to change the rules of the world. But instead, he got changed by its rules - he fell in love with the first woman he saw.

In a rage he tore off his eyes.

It is truer to say that desire lingers in the mind, and not in the senses – the desire for approval, the desire for being someone special, the desire for an exclusive experience. That is, the one who desires worldly pleasures and the one who renounces them, both deceive themselves because both harbor desire.

Lord Krishna elucidates:

He is superior whose senses are restrained, and who engages them without attachment. (7)

On the human scale we live in a relative world, and hence are bound to have problems. But the one who dwells in it without attachments sees the world more as a solution than a problem. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi elucidates, “When you are a master of everything and nothing has a hold over you, then the senses are not dead but under control, and can be used at your will, whenever the need be.”

Action is higher than non-action, therefore, perform your allotted task. Even the life force in the body cannot be sustained without action. (8)

Action is the mantra that makes every living thing tick. Whatever is living undergoes motion and change. We see this in growing plants, running beasts, and breathing human bodies- the heart cannot help but pump, the eyes cannot help but see, the ears cannot help but listen.

However, the difference between a collective personality and an individual one is that the former doesn't contrive anything – he does everything in a state of thoughtless awareness. Thus, he performs action without the ego, whilst the latter fuels the building block of the ego by thinking, “I am the doer.”

The world is in the bondage of work, except work done as an offering. Therefore, O Arjuna, do your work as an offering, free from attachment. (9)

When sun rays return to their source, they take nothing of what they illuminated. Likewise, human nature is akin to flowing water that goes on sacrificing without asking for thanks. Water that doesn't flow becomes stale, says Pragy Pradhan:

“Live again with living beings
Be free, laugh
And let it go-
Your attachments

Stretch your limbs
in that open space
Where cravings and clutter no longer exist
In the expanse of your genuine heart
In the silence of your peaceful mind
In the present of this very moment.”

When Prajapati created beings through sacrifice, he ordained, “Through sacrifice you will fulfill your desires. By sacrifice you should please the Gods and they in turn will bless you’. Thus, you will attain the highest good. (10-11)

Just as every computer comes with a chip that programs it, every cell comes with a chip that programs it with the body. Thus, all the cells collectively rhyme in remarkable precision to increase the general health of the body. No cell goes out of rhythm unless attacked. If attacked, the dharma of all the cells impels them to rescue it. A cell that doesn’t respond to its dharma becomes cancerous. And when cancer spreads in the body, a life-saving surgery is the only remedy.

Clearly, in our times people will be destroyed from within – no nuclear weapons are needed. Thus, the greatest compassion is to eradicate the malignant cells, even if it entails surgery. That is, the destruction of his malignant children was the ultimate compassion of Lord Krishna. But

unless Arjuna detaches himself from the malignant children, he can't dissolve in his ultimate compassion.

Pleased with your offerings, the Gods will bestow upon you the fruit of your desires. He who eats after offering is auspicious. He, who only makes food for himself, eats in sin. He who enjoys these gifts without giving them in return is a thief. (12-13)

In order to build our dream homes, we exploit nature, and in turn diminish ourselves. But nature can still save us, if we save her, because the web of life on which we all depend is sustained by how much we give rather than how much we receive.

Einstein points, "Yet nothing truly can be achieved except by the unselfish co-operation of many individuals."

That is, I may be an individual, I may have my own brand, still, I am a part of a team. But when it's all about me, a polarity builds up that hurts the team. And that is what Lord Krishna tries to drum into Arjuna's head - the greatest sacrifice is the sacrifice of the ego.

From food are beings formed. From rain is food formed. From sacrifice rain comes and sacrifice comes out of work. The sacrificial works originate from the Vedas, and the Vedas originate from the indestructible Supreme Being. Therefore, it is evident that the Supreme Being is always present in the sacrifice. (14-15)

A crow only listens to himself. But if he pauses a little, and listens to nature instead, he might even start to hear the rain drops falling softly on Mother Earth. What she receives in her womb, she keeps in trust for a sacred sacrifice. As winter yields to spring, she performs the sacred sacrifice of offering food to all beings.

As we listen to Mother Earth, she tells us something about ourselves reveals Rumi, "All her particles are in love, and looking for lovers."

Love means sacrifice. The one who enjoys giving love doesn't feel he is sacrificing anything. As love begets love, sacrifice is no more a sacrifice but a privilege says the Sufi poet Rahim:

"The giver is someone else,

He showers his gifts through day and night.

People mistake and extol me.

My eyes abashed, are lowered."

The one, who doesn't help to turn the wheel thus set in motion, gets lost in sensual indulgences, and sins; his life is wasted. (16)

For honey bees and the flowers, giving is joy. The honey bee doesn't think how far it has to travel to give just one drop of honey! Nor does it know the receiver. But the one who only wants to enjoy the honey without tending the flowers eats in sin.

Thus, as we celebrate nature, we can pay back her debt by giving her time to recover bit by bit. We have come to understand that as we exploit her, we have become victims of our own actions. William Blake said it all:
“Everything that lives,
Lives not alone;
Not for itself.”

Whereas, the one who abides in his spirit, he is content within, and is not bound by any duty; he has nothing to gain from the actions he engages, nor anything to gain from actions he doesn't engage. He has no self-interest left in any being. (17-18)

Therefore, engage in all work that has to be done without attachment, for he blends with the Divine who engages in action without attachment. (19)

The one who divorces from the world to seek God cannot find him – he has to override his attachments. But unless he engages with the world, how will he know that he is detached from it. For instance, till we go to the Gobi Desert, how will

we know that we are detached from thirst? Says Pragya

Pradhan:

“You can divorce the world

and become a recluse

But how can you divorce

What’s within you

Better seek the spirit

And connect what’s loose

if you want to feel whole

Thoughts you must reduce.”

King Janaka and other noble kings attained perfection by the path of action. Do your work with the good of the world in mind. Whatever a great man does, others follow his foot-steps. Whatever ideals he sets, others emulate. (20- 21)

It is often forgotten that Kurukshetra is not just a battlefield but an evolutionary playground for one fish has to come out of the ocean to open an opportunity for others to follow. Likewise, Raja Janaka set an example for others to accommodate their differences for larger good- it may not be good for me, but if it is good for the collective, it is good.

More pointedly, Lord Krishna cites Raja Janaka’s example not because Arjuna takes off, but because he doesn’t takeoff. It is said that evil thrives when good men remain indifferent.

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There is no work in the three worlds for me to accomplish, nor is there anything more for me to attain which has not been attained, and yet I continue to work. If I did not work it would be detrimental, for all beings. therefore, attune to my path. (22-23)

If I did not perform action then these worlds would fall into ruin, and I would be responsible for not checking it. (24)

If war begins in the mind of man, it begs the question, if there is no war in Arjuna's mind, why should he fight?

Lord Krishna cites his own example – if he overlooks the threat of evil, it would create a window for it to destroy the world.

And that is the crucial lesson we have learnt from the World Wars. Nobody said it louder and clearer than Albert Einstein, "The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate evil or encourage it than from those who actually commit it."

Thus, it is not only important to set our house in order but also muster courage to fight the negativity that crawls within.

As the ignorant perform action with attachment to work, so should the wise perform actions, but without attachment, for the good of the world. (25)

The ignorant get stuck at the point that whatever karma they do, they will earn the merits (punyas). But Lord Krishna doesn't say that. He says whatever karmas you have to do, perform without attachment for the good of the world, but leave the outcome to the Divine.

The wise who performs detached action for the good of the world should not mislead the ignorant who perform action with attachment to work, but should inspire them to emulate them. (26)

Our attention reacts like jelly - it gets attached to things, without accomplishing anything. However, the attention of the Spirit accomplishes everything without getting attached to anything.

The world is ever struggling for change, but change can only come with the power of compassion of the Spirit. Take the case of Mahatma Gandhi who built the future of a new nation not by the sharpness of his intellect, but by the power of his compassion.

All actions take place by the energies emanating from Prakriti (Mother Power of creation) but the one deluded by the ego mistakes himself to be the doer. (27)

We say that a person has a good character, but his temperament might be inconsistent with it – he could be hot-

tempered. We say that a person is honest, but his temperament could be depressive. We say that a person has a devious character, but his temperament could be humorous. Our temperament is developed by the threefold energies emanating from the Primordial Power of creation – sattwa, rajas and tamas. As we get carried away by them, we are tempted to believe that we are the doer. That's what blocks our awareness from enjoying the All-pervading power of Divine love.

He, who knows the true relation between the threefold energies and action, understanding that the energies act upon each other - he doesn't get attached. (28)

As a bee goes from one flower to the other, it carries pollen in its little body. When it visits the next plant, its pollen causes a mutation inside the flower, but the bee doesn't get attached to it. Likewise, as we witness the play of the threefold energies, we enjoy the comedies and tragedies of life like a drama but without any attachment.

The one who is deluded by the threefold energies gets identified with the works caused by them. The wise should not be confused by them. (29)

We have little control over the threefold energies - no sooner do we get robbed by them, than the drama of life kicks in! But not the wise! A wise person watches their play and laughs it off. He stands on the sea-shore watching a piece of himself dancing with the waves, lingering with the breeze and clapping with the dolphins.

With your attention fixed on me, offer all works to me. Free from desire, despondency and ego, fight. (30)

Lord Krishna wants Arjuna to realize the urgency of the situation. But unless Arjuna opens his window, he cannot foresee it. To empower him, Lord Krishna advises him to transform his karmas into offerings to the Divine, so that they become inaction. But it can't work out that way unless Arjuna connects to the Divine first.

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Those who in faith and without any mental deliberations heed my teachings are liberated from the bondage of work. But those who doubt my teachings, and mentally deliberate on them, know these deluded beings to be foolish and lost. (31-32)

We are always looking for the logic of things. According to Rene Descartes, a 17th century French philosopher, thinking is what makes us humans - 'I think, therefore I am'. But our ideas are rarely our own; they are largely borrowed from

outside – tradition, education, books or social media. Thus, as we become more and more cyber-oriented, it becomes easier for faceless people behind artificial intelligence to selectively use logic to design the way we think. No matter how rational we are, these people ingeniously change the way our neurons fire without our knowing.

By the same token, vested interests are not far behind in weaponizing logic. Their software is programed like a one-way street - those who do not follow their brand of religion are converted, else eliminated. Their software doesn't include feelings. For sure, the intellect can dictate the way we think but it cannot dictate the way we feel. However, it is not so difficult to strip away all the received ideas when the Spirit comes in our attention.

Bound by the threefold energies of Prakriti, all beings work according to them. Likewise, a collective being acts in accordance with his nature. Hence how can repression work? (33)

Both attachment and aversion are embedded in the sensory response to the object of the senses. No one should come under their spell because both are impediments to self-evolution. (34)

As we explore how life is sustained on earth, we discover that an apple falls on earth according to the identical law of nature, and that the same law causes the earth to strike its own path around the sun. We cannot repress these laws

because our mental and emotional projections are meaningless without their equation.

However, Lord Krishna doesn't talk of repressing the threefold energies but of balancing them through dharma. Without balance we cannot ascend.

It is better to pursue one's own dharma even though it is imperfectly practiced, than to pursue another's dharma with perfection. It is better to die in pursuit of one's dharma because the dharma of others leads to descent. (35)

A person grows with the greatness of his task. But he cannot grow if he carries out somebody's else' task. For instance, if our machinery is out of gear what's the point of improving somebody's else's machinery. By the same token, it is better to pursue one's own dharma imperfectly than to imitate someone else's dharma perfectly. After all, the pursuit of another's dharma doesn't give us our own experience.

Hence, instead of walking down someone else's road, it is better to walk down the road of our own dharma. Take the case of a mother who is devoted to charitable work but neglects her children. The children take to drugs and ruin their life. Thus, it is said that charity begins at home, as does dharma.

However, the harvest of dharma doesn't ripen instantly. It ripens when we gain inner perfection. Those who eye for

quick returns are merely merchants of dharma. According to Socrates a perfect human being is all human beings put together.

Arjuna questions;

O Krishna! Though against his wishes, as if by some pull, by what is man consumed to commit sin? (36)

Lord Krishna replies;

It is the desire arising from the mode of nature -rajo guna. This desire vents in anger. It is all consuming, insatiable and sinful. Know it to be the enemy. (37)

Like smoke veils fire, dust veils a mirror, and the womb veils the embryo, similarly, it is veiled by desire. (38)

When moon light falls on a stone, it doesn't reflect, but when it falls on a mirror it reflects. Hence, let us not dismiss the poet who says, look yourself in the mirror within. For when we look into the mirror we try to understand ourself. Of course, we do not break the mirror because we want to avoid the reality. No, we clean the dust from it. But only love can clean it says Rumi;

“An empty mirror and your worst destruction habits,
When they are held up to each other,

That's when the real making begins.
That's what arts and crafts are.
There is nothing worse than thinking you are well enough.
More than anything self-complacency blocks the
workmanship.”

*O Arjuna! This insatiable fire of desire that veils wisdom is ever the
enemy of the wise. (39)*

*The senses, the mind and intellect are its seat. Prevailing upon
these, it veils wisdom and deludes the self. (40)*

The passion of the senses, the desires of the mind, and
overthinking of the brain eclipse the Spirit. However, if we
shut our eyelids, it doesn't mean it is night. Thus, the wise
are not deceived by the batting of eyelids – they know that
though clouds hide the sun, the sun carries everything in its
solar system.

*O Arjuna! At the outset, bring your senses under control, and kill
this enemy, which destroys wisdom and discretion. (41)*

There is a lot to be said about the Spirit and God, but if our
attention is not connected to the Spirit, then everything is just
a story. For instance, if we are stuck at the bottleneck, we
have to find an opening before we can write our own story.

However, we cannot find an opening with the intellect, we need a super ingredient -wisdom. Wisdom comes from love. But like a diamond it has many facets. And one of its facets is that it understands the limitations of the intellect. The Sufi saint Rumi reflects:

“The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I.
God opens this flower so sweetly
When in my hands they fade and die.

If I cannot unfold a rosebud,
This flower of God’s design,
Then how can I have wisdom
To unfold this life of mine?”

The senses are considered superior and subtler than the gross body, subtler than the senses is the mind, and subtler than the mind is the intelligence, but even beyond it is the Spirit. (42)

A dispute arose between the various organs of the body as to who was the master. The limbs claimed that without them the body could not obtain food, the mouth claimed that even if food was obtained, it could not consume it without it. The stomach boasted without its digestive power, the body would not be nurtured. Not to

mention the heart that boasted its power to circulate blood.

Saint Kabira accords the Spirit the honored place of a bride. All the beautiful decorations in the body are made to celebrate her wedding. But if the decorations become more important than the bride then she doesn't appear. How can there be a wedding without the bride? By the same token, how can there be the wedding with the Divine without the Spirit?

O Arjuna! Thus, realizing it to be beyond the intellect, knowing the Spirit by the Spirit, and controlling the mind, destroy this enemy that is in the form of desire. (43)

'I am a person who is sinking because of myself, and if I am to be saved, I have to watch out for what the enemy will throw at me.'

The enemy is none other than the desires that deceive the mind. But the Spirit cannot be deceived, because it knows itself in its own light

Chapter Four

Inaction Becomes Action

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

I revealed this eternal yoga to the Sun. He revealed it to Manu, and Manu revealed it to his son Ikṣvāku.

It was passed on in this tradition from one to the other royal sages till it got obscured in the sands of time. (1-2)

As you are my devotee and friend, I have disclosed the same eternal yoga to you, because this is the subject of utmost secrecy. (3)

Arjuna questions, the birth of Sun was from the beginning of time, but you were born later, how am I to believe that you revealed it to him? (4)

Shri Krishna responds, O Arjuna! You and I had several births. I remember them all, but you don't remember them. (5)

I am unborn, indestructible, the lord of all beings, and yet established myself in my nature. I incarnate through my maya whenever adharma rises and dharma is in peril. (6-7)

*For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked
and for the re-establishment of Dharma, I incarnate from age to age.*
(8)

It is hard for the post-modern mind to accept such a proposition, much less, surrender to a Divine incarnation. On the other hand, one is easily mesmerized by charismatic gurus. Obviously, Lord Krishna was aware of human gullibility, so he devised a roundabout approach, and only revealed his incarnation to one individual - Arjuna.

The world has no respect for great conquerors - men who massacred millions of their fellow men in their insane mania for conquest. Nor does the world respect men of mere wealth. But the world respects incarnations who struggled to tell the world what it needed to hear. However, they addressed different audiences at different eras. They had to rhyme their chimes with the ignorant and foolish, poor and rich, strong and weak.

Though they spoke in their language, but not everyone heard their message the way it was meant. They heard what they wanted to hear, and then weaponized it for their self-interest. Sadly, the message of dharma was turned into a weapon by the adharmic. Thus, the custodian of dharma has

no choice but to protect the dharmic, even if it means killing the adharmic.

O Arjuna! The one, who unravels the mystery of my divine play, is liberated from the cycle of rebirth. (9)

Some disciples prayed to the master to unravel the mystery of the Divine play.

The master reflected, “As fire is hidden in wood, God is hidden in his play. He has neither form nor shape, neither root nor trunk, and if you seek him, his play alludes you. That is why it is said that if you understand God, then he is not God anymore. Nonetheless, you can love God without trying to understand him.”

The disciples prayed, “O great master, please uncode the secret of how to love him.”

The master smiled, “It is a question of understanding our conditionings. Because of our reservations, we hide our secrets from God, but he doesn’t hide his secrets from us. Nor does he play games with us: we play games with ourselves.

It is easy to develop a rapport with God, if there are no reservations. Otherwise, we are selective, and read only what we want to read. For instance, those who were overread failed to read Lord Krishna’s message. Thus, he remained a

mystery to them. Whereas, the illiterate people of Vrindavan who herded cattle read his message from their hearts, and hence, he was not a mystery but a reality to them.”

Those who rise above hate, fear and anger, with their attention absorbed in me, meditating upon me, and purified by penance, they abide in my Being. (10)

O Arjuna! According to the devotee's faith in me, I accept them. For all beings approach me. (11)

Those who desire the fruits of their deeds propitiate the deities by offerings. The fruition of their deeds is expedited in this world. (12)

I have divided people in four categories according to their temperament. Though I have created them, I am beyond all categories. (13)

Lord Krishna categorizes people according to their temperament (gunas) – sattwic, rajasic, tamasic and fourthly the saints who transcend the three gunas. However, this verse has been misinterpreted by vested interests to invent the caste system in India. The curse of the caste system stems from the sadistic act of determining the caste according to birth and not temperament. For instance, it is not necessary that a musician's son should be a musician. In fact, the author of the epic Mahabharata was Sage Vyasa.

Though he was an illegitimate child of a fisherwoman, his aptitude was that of a scholar. The caste of an illegitimate child has to be that of the mother, because the father is unknown. Considering that Sage Vyasa himself was illegitimate and of low caste, it is hard to imagine that he would have written that caste is determined by birth!

Besides, according to Lord Krishna the same Spirit resides in everyone. The Spirit is the reflection of God who has no caste; hence, how can the Spirit have one? Lord Krishna doesn't contradict himself; on the contrary he wanted to blast the theory propounded by the upper castes that caste is determined by birth.

In fact, realized beings were revered irrespective of caste, color or creed. Most realized beings were not high caste born. For example, Kabira was a weaver, Namdev a tailor, Sadan Kasai a butcher, Sakhu Bai a maid servant, Chokhamala a low caste. What's more, Muslim saints- Nizamudin Auliya, Shri Sai Nath of Shirdi, Shri Chisti Sahib of Ajmer and Christian saints such as St. Thomas and St. Xavier are all revered by the Hindus.

I am unaffected by works or their fruits, the one who understands this true nature of mine is not bound by works. Understanding this, all the seekers performed work. Likewise, you too do your work. (14-15)

Even the wise are confused about what is karma (action) and what is akarma (inaction). I will reveal to you the truth knowing which you will be liberated from what is inauspicious, and the bondage of karma.
(16)

It is essential to understand what is action, and what is inaction. Likewise, what is negative action. Because these are matters of a subtle nature. (17)

He, who can see inaction in action and action in inaction, is realized. (18)

Talking to his disciple about inaction in action and action in inaction, a Tao master explained, “Without doing anything, everything gets done.”

The next day the disciple followed his advice and spent the day doing nothing.

When the master reprimanded him for idleness, he claimed, “I have renounced all action in order to practice non-action.”

The master was not amused, “My son, inaction is not abstaining from action. The one who knows that the Supreme Self is the doer, does everything without thinking that he is doing anything.”

Tao has a name for it - ‘wu wei’:

“He who pursues learning will increase every day;

He who pursues Tao will decrease every day,

He will decrease and continue to decrease,
Till he comes to non-action;

By non-action everything can be done.”
- Tao Te Ching – 48

*The one who engages in work without desire or attachment, and
is purified in the fire of wisdom, such a person is said to be realized.
(19)*

The power of our Spirit purifies us in the fire of wisdom.
It doesn't purify us with water because though water
dissolves impurities, a segment of the impurity remains
behind. For instance, when color dissolves in water, the
water takes on its hue. But the fire of wisdom doesn't absorb
the negativity; it throws it out.

More to the point, wisdom acts by itself - it gets around
all attachments.

*Detached from the outcome of action, not dependent, content
within, though performing action through the vehicle of the body, he
commits no wrong. (20-21)*

As Lord Krishna talks of action and inaction in the same vein, we are put in a dilemma. However, it is not so difficult to solve the dilemma if we understand that life is just a drama, and Lord Krishna is the master script writer, who enacts and also witnesses it. Though we cannot script the drama of our life, we can be a detached witness to our role in it. As we know we are only acting; we understand that in reality we are not the doer.

More pointedly, the one who sees in the light of the Spirit doesn't think he does anything. Though he plays out multiple roles, his attention remains anchored in his Spirit. Thus, his inaction becomes action spontaneously. For instance, sun rays emit light. Light is simply the byproduct of the sun's self-illuminated nature - we do not switch it on. In the real sense there is no 'doer'. That is, the one driven by the Spirit never sins, because he is not the doer.

For instance, a dharmic person like Buddha could never sin. How can one argue with that?

Lao Tse is more lucid:

“Without going out of the door one can
know the whole world.

Without peeping out of the window one
can see the Tao of heaven.

Therefore, the sage knows everything without

traveling.

He accomplishes everything without doing it.”

(Tao Te Ching 47)

He who accepts everything as it comes, transcending all dualities, even minded in success and failure, free from jealousy, doing work as an offering, though engaged in action he is not bound by karma. (22)

A Sikh Guru ordered his cooks to prepare an enormous amount of food for all the stray dogs. The food was more than enough for all of them. But instead of eating it, they began fighting among themselves lest the other one should get it. The outcome was that the food remained untouched!

As our attention goes to others, we become competitive and that arouses jealousy. But when our actions are engaged in offering everything to the Divine, there is no competition, and hence no ground for jealousy.

He who overcomes his attachment, who is free from ego and misidentification, whose attention is logged on to the divine, doing work as an offering, his karma dissolve completely. (23)

It only takes one flame to light another. When a candle slowly dips over, and as its wick touches another, the light

spreads. Likewise, when an enlightened flame touches another, the flame catches on. Thus, free from ego the light keeps spreading from candle to candle, from person to person, without accumulating any karma.

When he performs the sacrificial offering, both the offering and the act of offering is God. In fact, through the deed of God, God is offered into the sacrificial fire of God. God is known by him who realizes him in his deeds. (24)

Though human beings live for each other, we do not have an insight into how we are knit together with each other. Unknown to us, we are a close-knit organism where cooperation is central to all relationships. If we want to understand our relationship with others, we have to look at those amazing social beings like bees and industrious ants that cooperate and coordinate. They are like cells in a complex organism with a collective intelligence that is far superior than that of the individual one. And that is what we do as a species - we do not thrive alone but in relationships nesting within other relationships in the larger mosaic of collective love. The great Indian mathematician Srinivas Ramanujan discovered that all the equations of science resolve behind a collective phenomenon. In a collective sense, what could be that phenomenon if not collective love. The world is now gaining momentum with

its own driving force of collective love, for there is no wound that cannot be healed by it.

Thus, in our cellular memory, we are meant to be knit together. As we understand the ancient language of cells, we gain insight and realize that cells are inexorably intertwined in collective love. Conversely, a cell that loses this insight becomes cancerous. Nonetheless, the compassion of our collective counterpart is such that he incarnates to rescue the cancerous cells. Even if the incarnation stands to be crucified, he accepts it - not because he is helpless but because he is mindful of his strength. He can destroy his prosecutor with strength, but that is not his game. His game is to make the blind see, even if he has to sacrifice his life for it.

As the eyes of the blind open, it becomes increasingly clear that just achieving peace for our individual self is not sufficient; we have to strive for collective peace. Then we are sure to have a future in a changing world.

Some yogis make offering to the deities, while others who are seeking the All-Pervading God, offer unto Him. (25)

Some yogis make offering of bearing into the fire of penance, while others offer speech, and other objects of the senses. (26)

Some yogis offer the functions of the senses and the prana (life force), enlightened by self-knowledge into the sacrificial fire. (27)

Some offer their earthly possessions, penance, yogic prowess, while those of sublime nature make offerings through their knowledge and learning. (28)

Some make offering by the practice of controlling the exhaling and inhaling of prana. (29)

Every breath can be a route to God provided our attention is anchored in the vacant space between inhaling and exhaling. Thus, the vacant space widens into a state of mental silence where the Spirit manifests in our attention.

Some make offering by restraining food and breath. All these devotees well-versed in sacred offerings are thus liberated from their sins (30)

O Arjuna! Those who partake the food left over from the sacred offerings attain God realization. Whereas, those who do not offer any sacrificial offerings cannot find happiness in this world, how can they find it in the next? (31)

Every living being weaves its own tiny thread into a vast web of life – a living network that spans our entire world. Thus, every living being is connected and interdependencies. It goes to show that a person who thinks in terms of only his own interest cannot survive in isolation.

Likewise, there are various offerings prescribed. All these arise from karma, and knowing this you will be liberated from the bondage of Karma. (32)

O Arjuna! Compared to the offering of material things, knowledge as an offering is superior. All karmas dissolve in it. (33)

Without spiritual knowledge, physical life is incomplete. Physical things diminish whereas spiritual knowledge deepens our awareness. The Prophet Hazrat Ali affirms: “Knowledge is more valuable than wealth, for it grows when it is shared, while wealth diminishes when it is spent. Knowledge preserves you while wealth entails that it be preserved. Those who hoard wealth are dead even as they breathe, while those who hoard knowledge exist for eternity.”

Approach the realized beings with the spirit of humility, respect, enquiry and service, and they will guide you. (34)

Zen compares the mind to a cup - useless when full. A cup can only be useful when it is empty. While pouring tea into his disciple's cup, the master allowed it to overflow, "Like the cup, you are full of your own opinions and self-assertions. How can I show you Zen unless you empty your cup first?"

He instructed the disciple to feed the cows till his cup emptied. The disciple woke up at the crack of dawn to milk, feed, wash the cows. Then he led them to graze in the meadows.

Years passed. The disciple became disillusioned, 'I've left my home, my family in search of truth, but I haven't been able to find it, maybe I should return home.'

Over time, in feeding the cows, he developed a cow-like humility, and his cup emptied.

The master was pleased, and invited him for a tea ceremony, "Much like cows, humans too start with a very humble heart at birth, but as the ego covers it, it hardens like a stone. Whereas, a cow's heart is filled with a mother's love; she wants to give all her gifts and powers to her children, and yet remains ever so humble."

O Arjuna! After experiencing God realization, you will not fall into any delusion. Thereon, you will see everything within me and me in everything. (35)

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Rain falls on everyone, it's just that some get wetter than others. But then Divine love provides us with an umbrella, then we are not bothered by the rain.

Even if you are the vilest of sinners you will cross the sea of evil by the boat of wisdom. (36)

When the heart closes, love dries up. In the dry desert evil crawls in. However, even in a dry desert there is a hope of an oasis when the ray of Self-realization penetrates.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, elucidates, "Whatever be the sin, the greatest virtue is the seeking in modern times. For instance, Self-realization is like an egg becoming a bird. Thereafter, the bird doesn't show the blemishes of the egg."

In a delinquent home, a trouble-shooter was to be expelled. He wallowed in self-pity, "Nobody ever helped me, nobody ever loved me."

The matron stepped in, "Taking away his future would be unforgiveable. Fear and insecurity have closed his heart. My job is to unlock his heart. If there is a string that can unlock it - it is love."

He invited the trouble-shooter to a meal, "We all make mistakes that we shouldn't, and then we have to suffer the repercussions. But that shouldn't define you or stop you – it

should make you work harder, and when you get there, the sun of self-knowledge will rise in you.”

The trouble-shooter reflected, “I did not believe in myself, but the matron believes in me. I can’t disappoint him. Though I am messed up, I will pick myself up again.”

A month later the trouble-shooter cooked a thanksgiving meal for the matron.

The matron mused, “The best horses are the hardest to crack.”

Like fire burns wood to ashes, similarly, the fire of wisdom burns all karmas to ashes. (37)

Our karmas are attached to our ego. But when the fire of wisdom reduces the ego to ash, the karmas are also reduced to ash.

In this earth there is nothing greater that purifies than wisdom. The one, who has perfected in yoga, finds in due course, this within his Self. (38)

Life stirs in every seed eagerly waiting for Mother Earth to germinate it. There is an innate intelligence in both the seed and Mother Earth that triggers germination. Likewise, there is divinity within us that germinates the seed of wisdom in us.

The one who is totally absorbed in its pursuits, in complete faith, with the mastery over his senses, having attained wisdom, he achieves the ultimate peace. (39)

Our senses are akin to driving a car. But in a hurry to see what's next, we push the accelerator hard, and find life taking a more frantic pace than our control. So, we hit the brake to slow down, and that gives us a little time to breathe and take in the beauty of what's around us. Thus, the cycle continues; we speed up the pace – fast then slow, slow then fast. No wonder life comes across as a pain. Admittedly, the answer is not to give up driving, but to master the accelerator and the brake before driving.

As we become better drivers, we gain strength over the weak senses, courage over fear, satisfaction over greed and peace overthinking.

The one who is ignorant, who has no faith and who is of doubting mind, he perishes. For such a doubting one there is neither happiness in this world nor in the next. (40)

During a public lecture Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi lauded the knowledge of the incarnations.

An atheist in the audience protested, “I have doubts whether they had true knowledge.”

Shri Mataji asked, “My child, what is true knowledge according to you?”

He retorted, “According to me, true knowledge is whatever I know with my rational mind.”

Shri Mataji smiled, “Whatever you know from your rational mind is relative knowledge, and hence is subject to doubt. Whereas, the incarnations voiced the Spirit, and hence were beyond doubt.”

It is uncanny that when all the negativity comes to us all at once, we pray for Divine intervention. For instance, when thirteen children were trapped in a cave for nine days, both the faithful and the atheists bowed their heads in prayers. It goes to show that doubt is just a mind game that makes it disbelieve God. But the end game is to know what to believe and what not to believe.

Says the 12th century Sufi mystic, Mawlana Yusuff Hamdani:

“The one who tastes knows,
The one, who tastes not, knows not.
Don’t speak of heavenly beverage.
Offer it at your banquets and say nothing.
Those who like it will ask for more;
Those who don’t aren’t fit to drink it.
Close the shop of debate and mystery,

Open the teahouse of experience.”

O Arjuna! The one who renounces all the works through yoga, who has dissolved all doubts through wisdom, and who remains attuned in the self - he is not bound by karma. (41)

It is the ego that does karma. For instance, animals do not think they do anything, and hence, they accrue no karma. Whereas, we think we are the doer, and hence we accrue karma. But the one who blends with his Spirit doesn't think he does anything. Hence, he neither sows nor reaps - he becomes karma- free.

Therefore, O Arjuna, attuned to the Spirit, with the sword of wisdom cut all the doubts born in your mind out of ignorance. Arise and battle! (42)

Though Lord Krishna's attention is on transforming the world, he cannot do it alone - he has to prepare the instruments first. But if an instrument is doubting, it cannot work as in Arjuna's case.

Curiously, he is not a case of an instrument who doubts Lord Krishna, but rather of one who doubts himself.

Chapter Five

The One Who Can See Can See,
But the One Who Cannot See Cannot See

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna:

You praise both the renunciation of work and the performance of auspicious work. Of these two, tell me for certain, which is the higher path. (1)

Arjuna's intellect doesn't allow him to reconcile the various approaches suggested by Lord Krishna. For instance, a person who renounces work climbs the mountain from the one side, and the one who performs auspicious works climbs from the other side, but on scaling the peak they both join hands. "And who has ever taught love to find bliss in renunciation?" questions Kabira.

"When all love of the I and the Mine is dead, then the work of the Lord is done.

For work has no other aim than the getting of knowledge;

When that comes, then work is out away.

The flower blooms for the fruit; when the fruit comes, the flower withers."

Lord Krishna responds:

Both renunciation of work and the performance of auspicious work are paths to the Supreme. But of the two the performance of auspicious work is better than their renunciation. (2)

O Arjuna! He who neither abhors work nor has expectations, such a one is understood to have renounced, because free from the dualities he is easily liberated from bondage. (3)

The ignorant not the wise speak of renunciation (Samkhyā) and performance of auspicious work as different. He, who practices one, enjoys the fruit of both. (4)

This double statement of Lord Krishna seems to baffle us. Thus, we tend to discard it as a puzzle or view it with an eye of suspicion. However, we have to laser sharpen our attention, and wrestle through a thick blanket of fog before we can see how Lord Krishna mobilizes an obstinate ego.

The idea of renunciation appeals to the one who is obsessed with something. But if one is not obsessed with anything, there is nothing to renounce.

How we would love the world to change, but before that we must learn to engage with people sincerely deep down in our hearts. That is only possible when we become the change we want to be. The Sufi saint Rumi could not have said it better, “Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today, I am wise, so I am changing myself.”

Lord Krishna praises the performance of auspicious works. Works of charity and benevolence ought not be renounced but performed without attachment or desire to the fruit. However, it is argued that unselfish work implies the giving up of work tainted with desire for fruit. We can't hide the fact that people who work under the assumption that it is unselfish deceive themselves because unselfishness is merely a mental concept. As long as there is ego, no act can be unselfish, because the ego claims the credit for every action.

People often give in charity with strings attached to it. A Chinese emperor devoted his life to charitable works in order to earn merit. He enquired of Bodhi Dharma, “How much merit have I gathered?”

Bodhi Dharma answered, “None.”

The emperor was not amused, “I have devoted my life for charitable works - opened schools, hospitals, monasteries, sent missionaries, and you say I have gathered no merit?”

Bodhi Dharma explained, “There is no merit because merit exists only in the mind. You had made great effort to do charitable work, but it was tainted by the desire to earn merit.”

Zen talks of the deed, not of merit. For sure, the thought of feeding hungry people is a feel-good factor. However, it is man’s nature to give, and he gives for himself. After all, when we are part and parcel of a larger love, then whom are we obliging?

The state which is attained by those who renounces is also attained by those who perform work (karma yoga). The one, who can see can see, but the one who cannot see cannot see. (5)

Lord Krishna tests Arjuna with another riddle, “The one who can see can see, and the one who cannot see, cannot see.”

Perhaps, we don’t see hard enough, to see the hidden truth. The truth hidden within us has been described in the ancient text Nadi Granth as the Kundalini. When she enlightens our attention, we become aware of that which cannot be perceived by the eyes but by which the eye is perceived. To borrow Rumi’s words, “The sign on the road is for travelers who easily get lost. Those who have attained union with God have no need for roads or signs- they are armed with an inward eye and a divine lamp.”

But it is difficult to renounce without yoga, O Arjuna! Not long after the one who pursues yoga blends with the Supreme Being.
(6)

He who is established in yoga, whose intellect and attention are illuminated by the light of the Spirit, whose senses are under his control, such a collective personality, who has experienced that the Spirit is in all beings; such a person though engaged in work, is not bound by it. (7)

A realized being is conscious that he is not the doer; in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, emitting, grasping, opening and shutting eyes, is aware that only the senses are engaged with the outside objects. (8-9)

Sometimes, it is just enough to plant a seed, for we cannot tell which seed will sprout and which will not. Though the seed we plant might not sprout the next day, we work hard believing it will sprout in the future, which is fine. However, when we get anxious that the seed must sprout the next day, we go over the top with our efforts. We try to direct its course and ultimately suffer burnout. In the famous principle of Uncertainty, the physicist Erwin Schrodinger argues that in trying to predict an event we change its narrative. And, that plays

out pangs of anxiety. It is truer to say that anxiety doesn't stem from the future but rather from reimagining it.

Nonetheless, the world continues to function miraculously despite our anxiety. However, the one who walks with his Spirit carries the world on his shoulders. He has no yearnings, anger, regrets, sorrows or anxiety about the future.

Moreover, as the Spirit doesn't react to any stimulus, it is never stressed. In fact, the Spirit de-stresses us - it leaves us completely satisfied, secure and emancipated. As we enjoy our Spirit, we enjoy everyone and everything - savor gourmet food but without hankering for it.

He, who works, offering all works to God, without attachment, is not stained by sin, like a lotus leaf is untouched by water. (10)

At a deeply fundamental level, the separate parts of the universe are wired in infinite ways to collective love. As we strengthen our bond with it, we feel the joy of the Lotus opening in our apex chakra. Though the Lotus comes out of mud, it throws away all the mud that sticks to it, and spreads its sweet fragrance. That is, an action that is not stained by desires is unbound by all the ills of the world.

A yogi engages in work without attachment, with his body, mind, intellect and senses attuned to the purification of the self. (11)

A collective personality renounces the fruits of action, and thus attains inner peace, whereas the one who is not connected to the Divine performs work with the expectation of fruits, and therefore gets into bondage. (12)

Though business schools teach us to be successful, they do not teach us how to be peaceful. How can we be peaceful, if we are stressed from all the pent-up desires in our mind. However, there is no exercise better for the mind than renouncing the desire for the fruits of action.

A collective personality, who has attuned his senses, and renounced all works from his mind, he dwells in the city of nine gates. He neither does anything nor causes anything to be done. (13)

The city of nine gates refers to the city in which the Spirit resides as the king. The nine gates are the senses - two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, and the two organs of excretion. However, the sense organs merely do the job of gate keepers. Though the Spirit doesn't do anything, the organs perform their functions only as long as the Spirit reigns over them.

Kabira refers to the Spirit as the beloved:
“My beloved fled from the body
But I did not resist.
This body has nine doors.
I don’t know which window was open.
But Kabira’s daughter Kamali laments:
I was much better off unwed than being wed to this
body.”

The Supreme Being doesn’t act or mediate for beings, nor does he connect work to their fruit - it is prakriti that works it out. (14)

When the astronauts looked at planet earth from space, she appeared like a tiny blue dot in an epic playground. Likewise, if we look at the way we function inside, we can see a cosmos of chakras spinning in precise synchronicity. Much as the chakras of planet earth pulsate in complete synchronicity, the love of the Primordial Mother pulsates in our heart chakra in complete synchronicity. Similarly, by the same power, the sea yields water to the clouds, not for himself but for quenching the earth. And the earth absorbs water not for herself but for germinating the seeds. Thanks to spring, the plants become charitable.

It pans out that it is the love of the Primordial Mother that germinates life; the Primordial Father doesn’t connect with their fruit, nor does he mediate for his children. The

Marathi saint Tukaram helps us understand that God doesn't contain a salvation fix, so that He can bestow it to his devotees. Salvation comes when we outgrow our desires.

The Supreme Being neither takes on the sins nor merits of any one. Because wisdom is eclipsed by ignorance, beings are deluded. (15)

Lord Krishna explicitly states that he neither takes on our sins nor merits. It begs the question if God doesn't bring us to our knees, who does?

According to the Holy Koran our deeds are recorded by our Spirit in a tablet;

“Here is your book- read it.

Enough for you this day that your own souls should call you to account” (17:12)

Even if we believe that God forgives our sins, still we are unable to forgive ourselves. Every moment we judge ourselves. If we violate something inside ourselves, it doesn't count if the world doesn't know it, what counts is that we know. Our Spirit is an eternal witness to everything we do, so who are we deceiving?

Yes, we are the judge and the jury and punish ourselves.

Though we may get away with murder, we cannot get away from our guilt trip. Thus, without going into jail we are in jail.

But when their ignorance is dispelled by the light of truth, then their wisdom reveals the Supreme Being like the sun. (16)

In the darkness of ignorance, God remains a mystery. Thus, people tend to discard the concept of God. Another way of looking at it is to seek God before discarding him. For instance, even though the clouds hide the sun, we know that the sun shines behind the clouds.

With his mind attuned to the Supreme Being, his attention absorbed in Him, with Him as the sole object of devotion - his wisdom dissolves all sins, and he attains the supreme state from where there is no return. (17)

Though the path of devotion might be unacceptable to a rational mind, but devotion is nothing but the search for the one reality. Upon its experience, the all-pervading power of Divine love starts flowing through us, and washes away all the karmas we are bleached in.

A collective personality looks upon a learned and wise Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcast with an even eye. (18)

Every living being is invaluable in the vast web of life. As our awareness shifts from me- and- mine, life becomes

life with other beings. For instance, when a person is drowning and someone spontaneously jumps to save him, the one who jumps is not separate from the person who is drowning - he feels a part of himself drowning and is bound by it to rescue him. After all, we don't save ourselves, we save each other.

It strikes a chord with the concept of 'Ubuntu' common to African culture. It alludes to the oneness of humanity – 'I am because we are'. That is together we are our strength.

The Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung, said something similar - as we feel others on our central nervous system, we not only become collective beings but also get empowered with a new awareness called collective consciousness.

The one, who has attained equanimity of mind, though abiding in the body, transcends the world. The Supreme Being is unblemished and is alike in all, thus a collective person abides in Him. (19)

He who doesn't delight upon gaining what is dear, nor is crestfallen upon receiving what is unpleasant, who has the light of wisdom, and who has attained the state of doubtless awareness - such a person abides in the Supreme Being. (20)

Though we cannot always be happy, but at least in our dreams we try to achieve happiness. Thus, the subconscious mind conjures dreams to fulfill our desires and make us happy. The dreams come alive with the same intensity as in the real world. For instance, in a dream we feel high driving a Rolls Royce. For sure, we don't want to wake up to find the Rolls Royce gone!

In parallel, the ego is akin to a dream - if pampered, it feels happy, and if punctured, it feels unhappy. However, both these emotions are transitory. Zen calls this phenomenon MU or emptiness because it believes it doesn't exist. Thus, when wisdom awakens in a person, he stops chasing the desires of a bird-like mind.

He, whose attention is not drawn by external objects, basks in the joy of his Spirit. Meditating on the Supreme Being, he enjoys the eternal bliss. (21)

We get anxiety, if we are not perfect. But in fact, we are fortunate if we have faults – people are sure to watch them. No, they even accuse us of much that we are not. But by counting our faults, theirs' don't go away! It is like trying to control the brakes of our car while driving their own.

It was said a long time ago, “The one who knows others is knowledgeable, whereas, the one who knows himself is realized.”

O Arjuna! The pleasures that arise from the sensory contact are a source of sorrow. They are transitory. A wise person doesn't indulge in them. (22)

There are days we wake up in the morning with notes that once danced in Mozart's brain. We drive to the airport with cheerful thoughts of sharing our hard-earned Christmas vacation with our family. However, upon arriving at the airport, the flight is cancelled due to a snow storm, and then Mozart's notes fly out of the window.

Nonetheless, even if the storm does not blow over, there is way to reset Mozart's notes, if we use our vacation to hear the notes within us that celebrate Christmas without a break!

He who while living on this earth, before giving up his body, overrides the pangs of desire and anger, he is a yogi - a man of joy. (23)

Every planet in the universe spins at its own pace. Likewise, there is a biological clock inside our brain that spins with the pace of our Spirit. But the roadblock of desire and anger slow down its pace. However, as we turn our anger into forgiveness, we can spin with the pace of our Spirit.

The one who tastes the bliss of his spirit, who basks in the spirit, and reflects its light; his divinity shines, and abides in the Supreme Being. (24)

The one whose sins are dissolved, who is free of doubts, whose senses are under control, who is benevolent to all beings, he abides in the joy of the Supreme Being. (25)

In a world that is less than kind, benevolence is often mistaken for pity. No, one is filled with empathy for others. Empathy comes out of forgiveness and hence is without attachment, feeling of superiority, motive or expectation. But really what makes it an active word is the fact that it needs to be practiced. Through practice we come to understand that the life we call our own is precious only in so far as we accord the same value to the life in others - even those who oppose our ideas or faith.

The one who has overcome anger and desire, whose mind is free from the afflictions, who has attained Self-realization, he is close to the Supreme Being. (26)

Who withdraws his attention from external objects, keeping the attention between the eyebrows, balancing the inhaling and exhaling of

breath, who has mastered his senses, mind and intellect, devoid of desire, fear and anger, aspiring for salvation, he attains liberation. (27-28)

Lord Krishna reveals how to be a lamp unto oneself. For one, the attention should be withdrawn from thoughts. That is, we should witness our thoughts without identifying with them. Thoughts reside on the cusp of the breath. But between the rising and falling of a thought there is a small gap. As the attention ascends to the sixth chakra between the eyebrows, the attention widens the gap and enables the kundalini to purify the ego. Thereby, the attention rises to the Sahasrara chakra atop the head and we are drenched in the joy of the Spirit. Thus, it is unnecessary to focus attention on any point.

The one who recognizes me to be the enjoyer of all offerings and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all worlds, the friend to all creatures, he attains the state of eternal peace. (29)

Chapter Six

Lamps are Many But the Light is the Same

He, who without seeking reward does the work which ought to be done, he truly renounces, he is a yogi;

not he who merely makes auspicious offerings to the fire or only performs other rituals as offerings. (VI:1)

Lord Krishna recommends work that ought to be done without hesitation and expectations. That is, one should not become lethargic or an escapist. Take the case of Arjuna's uncle, the Kaurava king Dhritrashtra, who shied away from truth by seeking shelter behind his misfortune of blindness. But Arjuna cannot allow the demons inside his head to devour him, else he would be no different than his blind uncle.

O Arjuna! The state of renunciation is the same as yoga. The one who doesn't renounce his self-interest cannot be a yogi. (VI:2)

Engaged in work, but renouncing self-interest is the only route to yoga. After attaining that higher state, one becomes devoid of any self-interest and spontaneously becomes benevolent. (VI:3)

An oyster carries so many of nature's marvels in its tiny shell that it has no desire to break through his comfort zone. But growth takes place outside our comfort zone. As we come out of it, our ideas about comfort change. For instance, the Spirit never thinks of its comfort, but is like a large leafy tree which stands in the scorching sun to provides shade to the weary traveler, and it bears fruit not for itself but for others

The one who gets detached from the sensory attractions, and does work without attachment, he attains the state of yoga. (VI:4)

Through his own effort, man has to ascend. He should not allow himself to descend because man is his own friend and enemy. The mind, senses and the body exist through the spirit, and hence it is their friend, but that which doesn't support them is an enemy. (VI:5- 6)

People who do things compulsively think they have no choice. But that is not true. The freedom to choose right or wrong rests in every person on the planet. If the freedom of choice rests in God, then why be angry with a thief who

steals. Thus, no person can be a thief, if he makes the right choice.

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However, the thief is not far away but right in front of us. "A man's success is gauged by his self-mastery," says Leonardo Da Vinci, "The depth of his failure by his abandonment."

Our Lord Jesus Christ was more explicit, "He that is not with me is against me. And he that gathers not with me scatters." (Luke 11:23)

The one who has harnessed his lower self, and remains at peace in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor, he remains ensconced in the Supreme Being. (VI:7)

A Zen Kaon points a finger towards the moon, but the finger is not the moon. Buddhas point the way, but the way is not the destination. The journey we call life is like walking on a tight rope - if we lose our balance, and we fall down. But we do not walk the rope alone, we are accompanied by two more companions - a virtual one and a real one. The virtual one is tied to the ego, and the real one to the Spirit. These two are constantly pitted against each other - each time the ego plays up, the Spirit slides, as if from light to darkness. Till we dispel the darkness, we cannot receive the light from the Spirit. Plato said something similar, "We can forgive a child who's

afraid of the dark: the real tragedy of life is when adults are afraid of the light.”

For sure, we cannot let life escape us without giving ourselves another chance. We may be unaware of our real companion, but even if at our journey’s end he comes to light, we still have one chance to get it right

The yogi who is content in knowledge, who is established in the self, who has disciplined his senses, to whom mud, stone and gold are alike, such a yogi is said to be established in yoga. (VI:8)

He who remains even- minded with friends and foes, saints and sinners, dear and unpleasant ones, he ascends to the ultimate heights. (VI: 9)

A hawk is always on the lookout for who is a friend and who is a foe. Upon scouting a foe, he sounds an alarm. But who is a friend or a foe depends on ourselves. For instance, sometimes meeting a disagreeable person is just the test that’ll polish our innate qualities.

People project their faults on us, and then judge us. But rather than reacting to their criticism, we should thank them for perfecting us. A person who has attained equanimity of mind might even consider keeping his critics’ house near his,

for too much praise from friends could be more detrimental to one's mental health.

Thus, a person who can stand up to his critics and face his own faults without a fuss is much better off than one who craves a constant ego massage. After all, it is the lion who walks alone, whereas the sheep flock together.

Free from desire and acquisition, confining to solitude, with his body, mind and senses under control a yogi should meditate on the Supreme Being. (VI: 10)

He should meditate in a pure environment, firmly saddled in a seat not too high or too low, covered with the holy Kush grass, protected with cloth, bringing his attention and senses in control, keeping his mind in focus, he should practice yoga for self-purification. (VI: 11-12)

Steadying his body, holding his head and neck in an erect posture, focusing on the tip of the nose, without his attention wandering, fearless and tranquil, steadfast in celibacy, mind under control, he should meditate with his attention absorbed in Me. (VI:13-14)

Thus, keeping his mind under control, the yogi with his attention on me, enjoys the bliss of nirvana pouring from me. (VI: 15)

O Arjuna! Yoga cannot be practiced by one who eats excessively or too little, or who sleeps excessively or keeps awake in excess. It is for

him who is balanced in action, diet, recreation, sleep and waking. This is the yoga that removes sorrow. (VT:16-17)

We already know that a balanced diet, sleep and action holds the key to good health. But what is good health if not for nurturing a healthy attention. A healthy attention is the key to self-evolution. Conversely, a scattered attention dims our consciousness. Take the case of ascetics who deny themselves a balanced diet in the hope of attaining God. The same goes for the obsession with fasting, especially on birthday celebration of incarnations.

However, Lord Krishna doesn't suggest a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian diet. After all, the Spirit doesn't eat anything. Hence, neither vegetarian nor non-vegetarian diet is the key to God.

Examining the nature of sleep, entails the question 'Who sleeps?' We wake up in the morning and say, 'I had a deep sleep' or 'I had a nightmare'. That goes to show that the inner self never sleeps.

When his attention is under control, fixed on his spirit, and liberated from all desires, then he is considered to have internalized the yoga. (VT:18)

Like a lamp in a windless place, which doesn't flicker, similarly a yogi whose attention is firmly absorbed in the Divine remains ensconced therein. (VT:19)

Though lamps are many, the light is the same. If our attention is on the lamp, then our focus is on the wrong thing. But if our focus is on the light then one lamp can ignite another says Kabira:

“O friend, light your lamp
With the master's spark.
The world is a blind well,
Dismal and dark.”

In that thoughtless state, with his attention absorbed in the Divine, his intellect gets enlightened by the Divine through which he gets attuned to the Divine and rejoices therein. (VT: 20)

It is said that God patterned us in his own design. As we see the sun in the light of the sun, likewise, it is possible to dissolve our consciousness in God through self - realization.

Rooted in the experience of divine bliss, which is beyond the senses, and perceived only by wisdom, he doesn't get derailed from it. Upon attaining God realization, he knows there is nothing further to gain,

and attuned to that state he is unperturbed amidst the greatest calamity. (VI: 21-22)

Everything in nature has a cause. However, as with wisdom we perceive the cause, we will have no need of the experiment. For instance, as our attention gets enlightened by the Spirit, we are no more tempted, swayed or coerced. Nor does a wise person take the wrong side.

What detaches from sorrow is the route to yoga. It should be assiduously practiced from the heart with dedication, total concentration and determination. Renouncing without exception all desires, and controlling all the facets of the senses with the mind. (VI: 23-24)

He should steady his intellect step by step with patience; focus his mind on the spirit, not allowing his mind to distract except on his spirit. The mind is agitated and wavering. He should withdraw his mind from whatever distracts it, and focus it back on his Spirit. (VI:25-26)

Everything in nature has its own symphony- we just need a little patience to listen. If Arjuna listens to the symphony of the ocean, he can enjoy its tide. But the tide of his questions won't let him.

However, when we talk of Self-realization, we must have patience with ourselves. In that patience we will learn to overcome our conditionings. For instance, when a person who is drowning is saved, but if he continues to bemoan his agony, he will be drowning again. Hence, he has to change his outlook, 'It's over. I am not drowning - that was somebody else – I have got a second life.'

Thus, the one who has seen the light of the Spirit doesn't condemn himself, instead he shuns the darkness of conditioning.

He who is in bliss, who is peaceful within, whose passions are calmed, who is free of sin, and who is attuned to the divine; such a sinless yogi, who has attained Self-realization, with his self-absorbed in the divine, basks in divine bliss. (VI:27-28)

He is absorbed in the Divine; he sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self. (VI: 29)

Without eyes we cannot see, likewise, without knowing the Spirit, we cannot know God. When a seeker resonates with his Spirit, he resonates with his divine counterpart. Or rather, he resonates with everything that resonates with the Divine.

A disciple approached the Zen master for permission to take the name of Buddha. The master questioned, “Who asks?”

It dawned upon him that the Buddha is both outside and inside. He experienced Satori.

He sees me in everything and everything in me. He is

never apart from me, nor am I ever apart from him. (VI: 30)

How can we describe something which our eyes cannot behold. Hence, as we attempt to perceive God through our imperfections, we are bound to assume imperfect concepts about him. It is like the anecdote of the blindfolded men who tried to describe an elephant through the sense of touch. Their words were against each other, because the light was absent. But they were not apart from the light – they just had to remove the blinkers. Likewise, we are not apart from divine light, we just have to remove our blinkers.

The devotee who is thus connected to me, and sees me in all beings, in whatever he engages, he remains engaged in me. (VI: 31)

O Arjuna! He is a true yogi who sees with equanimity the pleasure and pain of others, and sees the same within himself with equanimity. (VI; 32)

In world tournaments the players do not play for themselves but their country. That in turn kicks in ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Take the case of U.S. Open Tennis Tournament - when the American team won against the British team, the American fans let success define them, whereas, the British fans allowed failure to define them.

Clearly, the fans personally felt pleasure and pain because they identified with their country. But what if they belonged to a country called the universe?

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna;

O Krishna, you have revealed to me this yoga of even-mindedness, but on account of the agitation in my mind I do not comprehend. The mind is restless, powerful, stubborn, and hard to control. (VI: 33- 34)

Lord Krishna responds:

O Arjuna! True, the mind is restless and hard to control, but it can be tamed through constant practice and non-attachment. (VI; 35)

I know it is hard to achieve yoga by one whose senses are not under his control, but by harnessing the senses through discipline it can easily be achieved. (VI: 36)

The senses are like a horse that will take us for a ride, if we don't know how to control it. The question is not whether to ride that horse or not, but how.

The horse needs to know who is the master.

If we give in to every desire of our senses throw at us, we're letting the horse take control. However, if we learn to say no, we're exercising the "muscle," called discipline. In essence, this means learning to say no to overindulgent thoughts. If we don't rule our senses they will rule us.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi points, "One should be like a king sitting on a throne instead of behaving like a beggar. You are a king and your organs are your servants. You should tell your organs that you have been tolerating them, and now they had better behave themselves. When you command your organs, you bring yourself under your control, then only you become a real yogi. Else, your mind goes somewhere and you say, 'I control my mind so much still it goes there'. Take the reins in your hands and train the mind to go only to the place where you will."

Arjuna questions;

O Krishna! One may have faith but due to the wanderings of the mind one fails to control the senses and attain yoga. Where does such a one go? (VI; 37)

O Mighty Armed Krishna! Losing his moorings, rootless, and deluded, does not one perish like drifting clouds? Please remove this doubt of mine, for there is none other who can dispel it. (VI: 38-39)

Lord Krishna; O Arjuna! He doesn't perish in this world or in the next. Misfortune doesn't befall upon the one who performed benevolent deeds. Having dwelt in the realm of the righteous and dwelling there for many years, he gets reborn in the house of the pure and the auspicious. (VI; 40-41)

The one who practices yoga may take birth in the house of collective personality. But to obtain such a birth is very difficult in this world. (42)

O Arjuna! In that birth he regains the impressions of the Divine's awareness of his former life, with this he once again endeavors to achieve perfection. (VI; 43)

By virtue of his previous practice, he is spontaneously drawn towards the spiritual quest. Even the seeker of knowledge transcends the letter of the scriptures. (VI; 44)

It is necessary that every seed should germinate. But with human will, the seeds cannot germinate. Nonetheless, even if we are unable to germinate in one lifetime, we can achieve it in the next because the seeds sown in one lifetime germinate in the next.

The yogi who practices thoroughly, and cleanses his sins, little by little, the practice of several lives certainly facilitates the ultimate state. (45)

A yogi is considered superior to an ascetic, a scholar proficient in scriptures, and the one who performs rituals. Therefore, O Arjuna, you should aspire to become a yogi. (46)

We are born with a child-like curiosity. Though curiosity stimulates the intellect, its narrow shafts intoxicate the brain - the more we drink, the more we thirst. Hence, it is not hard to guess why Lord Krishna holds a yogi superior than an ascetic or a ritualistic person or a knowledgeable person. The knowledgeable one uses the torch to show the way, but a yogi becomes the torch himself.

Furthermore, a knowledgeable person develops an analytical mind. He overthinks and questions the existence of God. The other extreme is a person who believes that God is in rituals, and thus ends up faking him. He says yes to God but doesn't love him.

Amongst all the yogis, the one who worships me with complete dedication, and with his self absorbed in me, I regard him to be the highest. (47)

Each one of us worships God according to the form we envisage him. However, our concept is not reality because it is not possible for our finite mind to know the infinite. To know the infinite, Lord Krishna reveals, the key is buried in the inner most recess of our being. But to get to the key is an inside job.

Chapter Seven

The Manifest and the Unmanifest

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna;

O Arjuna, the one who is under the protection of my umbrella, absorbed in me, and practices yoga; he undoubtedly realizes me. (VII;1)

I will reveal to you the absolute knowledge, knowing which there will be nothing further to know. (VII;2)

In the multitudes of being there is hardly one who aspires to know me, and from those who succeed, barely one realizes me truly. (VII;3)

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego are the eight aspects of my Prakriti (Mother power of creation). This is my gross nature. Apart from it, know my subtle nature which is the soul that sustains this universe. (VII;4-5)

O Arjuna! Know that all beings are born from these natures. I am the cause of the entire universe and also its dissolution. Apart from me there is no other cause. This entire universe is strung in me like gems are strung on a thread. (VII; 6-7)

O Arjuna! I am the flavor in water, the effulgence of the sun and the moon, the word Aum in the Vedas, the sound in ether, and the essence of manhood in males. I am the pure fragrance in earth, the radiance in fire, the life force in all beings, and penance in ascetics. (VII;8-9)

O Arjuna! Know I am the primordial seed of all creation. I am the intelligence of the intellect, and the brilliance of the brilliant. I am the strength that is devoid of attachment and desire in the strong. I am the pure desire. (VII;10-11)

The threefold energies of the Primordial Mother; sattva guna, rajo guna and tamo guna emanate from me. I am in them but they are not in me. Not understanding this, the whole world is deluded by these threefold energies. (VII; 12-13)

Though Divine love pervades the world, it is not stained by the threefold energies.

It is difficult to break through the illusion caused by these threefold energies. However, the devotee who is absorbed in me crosses this sea of illusion. Those whose discretion is eclipsed by their illusion, such evil, low, and demonic people do not abide in me. (VII; 14-15)

O Arjuna! There are the four kinds of people who worship me: the distressed, the seekers of knowledge, the seekers of material gain, and the man of wisdom. (VII; 16)

Lord Krishna said this thousands of years ago, much water has flown since. We cannot blame our times if people in distress do not turn to God, but take other routes like drugs, alcohol etc.

Amongst these, the man of wisdom whose devotion is unflinching is the best. He loves me above everything, and I too love him dearly. Undoubtedly, they are all good, but a collective personality attuned to me reflects me the best. (VII; 17-18)

Although God reflects in our hearts, His reflection hinges on what kind of a heart we have. Of course, a heart that is clear like a mirror reflects Him the best. For instance, when one mirror faces another mirror, they reflect each other endlessly. Likewise, when one heart mirrors another, it encounters infinity.

After many lives, a collective personality recognizes that everything is within the Supreme Being. Such a person is indeed rare. (VII; 19)

A techie began and ended his day searching for things on the web, but he felt like a strategic piece was missing in his life. Finally, he turned to his mentor, “I never got to live my own life.”

The mentor responded, “My friend, I cannot give you something that is already inside of you. You have to look for a place where no one has looked. If you don’t find it, come back again.”

The next day while roaming in the forest, the techie spotted a musk deer running around chasing the fragrance of musk - not knowing it was contained in his navel. He knew he had found the answer.

Those whose discretion is eclipsed due to desires, worship other deities, and propitiate them with various rites and rituals. (VII; 20)

Whichever deity a devotee worships with faith, I nurture his faith. Endowed with such faith, he worships that deity and obtains his desires. In fact, they are granted by none but myself. (VII; 21-22)

When we feel gratitude for all the people who smile at us, it is healing. The healing begins from the place of the Spirit. After all, what is the Spirit if not the spark of the Divine within us. Thus, Lord Krishna is not bothered about what deities we worship as they are merely the different aspects of the same reality. Says the Rig Veda:

“The truth is one,
The wise know it by many names.”

Lord Krishna: *Temporary is the comfort gained by men of petty minds. The worshippers of the deities attain the deities, but my devotees attain me. (VII; 23)*

We are born with a faith that there is something greater than ourselves. We worship that greater being by different names in different places. But if we search the right thing in the wrong place, we cannot find it. Too much falsehood, myth and blind faith has taken place in the name of God. For instance, when we offer money to God, it only goes to pocket of the self-appointed representatives of God. However, you cannot talk people out of blind faith, unless they experience their own divinity.

Not knowing my true nature as being Absolute and indestructible, the ignorant mistake the unmanifest as having manifested. (VII; 24)

We never stop striving for God even though we don't see him. Nonetheless, our conscious mind strives to recognize him through symbols, talismans and idols. Much like child-therapists who curate anxiety-dolls to comfort children, we connect with reference points that we have grown up with, till we don't need them anymore.

However, if we don't outgrow them, we can't ever gain an insight of the unmanifest behind the manifest. Take the case of ancient Greeks who used their Gods not only to draw comfort but also weaponized them to kill. In extension, devotees of opposing faiths believe that God is on their side. But it doesn't matter on whose side God is – what matters is whether we are on his side. But how can we figure out if we are on his side unless we experience Self-realization.

Veiled by my yogamaya I am not revealed to all. Through this illusion of my maya the ignorant do not know me as the unborn, indestructible and the Absolute. (VII; 25)

A disciple questioned the master, “How does the illusion of Yogamaya succeed in separating us from truth.”

The master answered, “Yogamaya succeeds in separating us from truth because we live in someone else's dream.

For instance, tech- sharks succeed in hacking our dreams because we do not look at things the way they ought to be looked at.”

Despite the sheer size of the internet, they know how to hunt us for almost nothing. They can change everything; the way we think, the way we act- its magic. Lord Krishna has a word for it - ‘maya’.”

The same rule applies with the hunter and the hunted. Just as a smaller fish gets hooked by a bigger one, the smaller maya gets hooked by the bigger one. However, bigger than all the mayas is the trick is to stay ahead of the competition. And that is possible by locking the attention in the self.

I know the beings that have been in the past, present and will be in the future, but I remain unknown to them. (VII; 26)

O Arjuna! All beings are deluded by duality arising from likes and dislike. (VII; 27)

It takes a wide range of people to make the whole, whether we like them or not. Take the case of Abraham Lincoln - when he was President, he appointed many rivals to his cabinet, because he knew the country needed them. There were people like Chase, who despised him and spread rumors about him in the press. Yet, Lincoln did not use his power to dismiss him, instead he nominated him for the post of Chief Justice, with the followings words:

“My friends all over the country are trying to put up the bars between me and Governor Chase. I have a vast number of messages and letters, from men who think they are my friends, imploring and warning me not to appoint him...

Now, I know meaner things about Governor Chase than any of those men can tell me; but I am going to nominate him.”

Little did anyone know that this fiercest rival would one day become his closest ally.

But those who perform good deeds without self-interest, whose sins are purified, break through desire and hate. Attuned to the self, they worship me. (VII; 28)

Those who surrender to me, and seek liberation from old age and death; they envisage the All-Pervading Power of the Divine and its nature. Thus, they fathom the nature of action. (VII; 29)

Those who know me as the one who presides over all physical and divine dimensions, and as the essence of all offerings, they, with their minds attuned, sustain that knowledge of me even at the time of death, and thus attain me. (VII; 30)

Chapter Eight

Beauty of Matter Should be Seen
Not Possessiveness

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna;

O Krishna! What is the Absolute? What is the Spirit? What is action? What is the realm of the elements? What is the realm of the Gods? (VIII; 1)

What is the realm of sacrifice in this body? How does the one adept in self-control know you at the time of departure from the body? (VIII;2)

Arjuna is troubled by many questions. But they are not just the questions troubling his mind; they are the questions that have consumed mortals since the first man raised his fist to the skies and cried, “Why”?

“What are these life questions
Pounding on my door.
These unwelcome guests
the answers I must find

The only space I've left
is the room inside
when I close my eyes
and silence multiplies
questions settle
answers emerge
the water is calm
I find myself.”
- Pragya Pradhan

Lord Krishna responds:

Brahma is the Absolute indestructible. Its essential nature is called the Spirit. In humans the catalyst that triggers birth is karma.
(VIII; 3)

The abbot in a Zen monastery was weary of a pupil who was constantly questioning him about the creator. As he got a lot of these questions, he was in a bind what to answer. His disciples wouldn't understand even if he answered the questions. What is the use of telling a blind man the color of cloth – better to open his eyes, then he can see for himself.”

The next time the pupil questioned about the creator, the head Abbot replied, “It is said that flowers don't forget the person who watered them. Likewise, though we haven't

forgotten our creator, we have forgotten his address. If he has an address, it is the Spirit. If you wrestle with anything less than that, you waste your life accumulating karma!”

O Arjuna! The bedrock of all created beings is the transient nature, the bedrock of the elements is the Cosmic Spirit, the bedrock of all offerings in this body is myself.

(VIII; 4)

Just as the blueprint of our creator is encoded in the Spirit, the blueprint of our Spirit is encoded in every cell of our body. That is, every cell, atom and molecule reflects Divine love. In fact, there is nothing in the world that is not of Divine origin. Hence, whatever material thing we offer originates from the Divine. That is, no offering of wealth can satisfy him. But when we love our brethren, it brings a smile on his face.

At the time of death, the one who leaves his body with his attention absorbed in me, abides in me, of this there is no doubt.

(VIII; 5)

To the one who ventured to ask about death, Confucius answered, “Death and life are indeed important, yet you cannot get a sage to change. Even if heaven and earth

overturn and fall, that cannot deal him any loss. He is clear about where there is nothing temporal and doesn't shift along with things. He directs the evolution of things and is keeper of their source."

O Arjuna! On whatever his attention rests at the time of departure from his body, the same being he attains. (VIII; 6)

The black-box of our karmas never loses its data. No matter how many hits it takes, the data remains and dictates the course that the Spirit follows upon departing from the body.

Some equate death with salvation, some think it unlocks the door of happiness, and some look upon it as an escape route from an apocalypse. But those who commit suicide in the hope of escaping an apocalypse forget that they would have to survive the same apocalypse in their next life.

After all, pouring spoilt wine in new bottles doesn't change its flavor. Thus, the answer is not escaping the apocalypse but learning to survive it.

Thus, it doesn't matter how many years we get out of our body, what matters is what makes the years we get good.

Says Rumi:

"Why think separately of this life and the next
When one is born from the last."

Therefore, at all times keep your attention absorbed in me, and fight. When your mind and intellect are absorbed in me, then undoubtedly to me alone will you attain. (VIII; 7)

In the battlefield the warrior knows that he might die any moment. The crisis serves as a pacemaker for transformation. What might take a monk a lifetime to accomplish, a warrior can accomplish instantly. By the same token, the battlefield of Kurukshetra could do the job of pacemaker for Arjuna's transformation. Moreover, he would be absolved of the repercussions of his actions, because the conductor is someone else.

O Arjuna! The one who meditates on the Supreme Being with total concentration through regular practice of yoga, without the mind wavering, he enters the Supreme Being. (VIII; 8)

Meditation is nothing if not the joy of our inner self. Hence, we don't have to wrestle with any technique because the self is ensconced in our heart - we just have to unlock it.

As light radiates from an illumined lamp, likewise, waves of love radiate from an ignited heart. Thus, all it takes to meditate is for one heart to ignite another. But, a heart cannot be ignited by psych-out techniques.

He who meditates on the Supreme Being, who is eternal, subtler than the subtlest, sustainer of all beings, whose form is beyond conception, radiant like the Sun, dispel the darkness of ignorance.
(VIII; 9)

When departing from the body, with equanimity of mind, through devotion and yogic practice, focusing his life force between the eyebrows, he attains the Supreme Being. (VIII, 10)

Here it is necessary to mention that there seems to be an alteration in the text that the focus should be between the eye brows (Aghnya chakra). Having tried the same method the author started seeing a white light which led him to believe that it was a Divine light. Later he discovered that the white light was caused by the firing of neurons that produced weak photons.

Because of concentration at this chakra, he suffered intense pain and confusion. He sought Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi's advice. She revealed, "Don't try to get out of the window (Aghnya chakra), you have to go out of the door (sahasrara chakra). Your Aghnya chakra has been damaged by concentration on it. You don't have to fix your attention on any chakra but make your attention subtler and subtler so you start understanding deeper things."

After she healed his Agnya chakra, the pain and confusion vanished. Often people have suffered from mental disorders by focusing on this chakra. This has led such people to disbelieve the Gita. Obviously, this suggestion in the original text has been misinterpreted. However, if in such an authentic scripture there are a few errors of interpretation, then its whole body cannot be discarded. The common-sense barometer of meditation is inner peace and joy.

I shall reveal to you the state which those versed in Vedas call the indestructible, where the ascetics free from passions enter, and seeking which they lead a life of self-discipline. (VIII; 11)

Controlling the gates of the body, subduing the mind, centering the life force in the head, with yogic meditation. (VIII; 12)

The body is described as the city of nine gates – two eyes, two ears, two nasal passages, mouth and two organs of excretion. Ancient scriptures also refer to a tenth gate atop the head called the Sahasrara chakra or the Thousand Petal Lotus. Validation of all meanings begins here. It is truer to say that when the door of the Sahasrara unlocks, we no more learn anything, rather we become aware of everything. Says Kabira:

“Do not enter the garden of flowers, O friend!

Go not there, in your body is the garden of flowers.
Take your seat on the thousand petals of the lotus,
and thus, gaze on the infinite beauty.”

*He who recites the mono-syllable AUM, meditating upon me,
when he departs from the body, he attains the highest state. (VIII; 13)*

AUM is the primordial sound beyond the hearing of our ears. ‘A’ represents the aspect of Tamo guna which is the quality of desire and existence. ‘U’ represents the aspect of Rajo guna which is the quality of action and creation. ‘M’ represents the aspect of Sattwa guna that escalates human evolution.

*O Arjuna! He who exclusively and continuously meditates on me,
thinking of none other, steadfast in yoga, spontaneously attains to my
being. (VIII; 14)*

In our age of transformation, it is hard to satisfy this condition, because most people meditate for reasons other than seeking their Spirit. Unless our consciousness has the light of the Spirit, we cannot meditate, let alone attain union with the Divine.

Upon abiding in me, these noble souls are not bound by rebirth, which is transient and an abode of suffering, because they have attained the highest state. (VIII; 15)

O Arjuna! all worlds are bound by rebirth, but upon attaining me, there is no rebirth. (VIII; 16)

The one who knows that a day of Almighty God is of a thousand eons and his night ends after a thousand eons, such a yogi understands the wheel of time. (VIII; 17)

At the dawn of day all sentient and insentient beings spring forth from his unmanifest state, and at the fall of the night, they recede back into his unmanifest state. (VIII; 18)

In the pre-creation stage, the imperishable seed is sown. In the next stage it sprouts. Over time, it grows into a big tree that bears flowers and fruits. As the tree ages, it comes full circle, and becomes a seed again. Much like the story of the tree that is reborn as a wee seed, the world is reborn every minute. It constantly transits from one stage to the next, from the non-mind state to the mind state, from non-being to being, and from a zero to a zero that ultimately encompasses the whole.

O Arjuna! The same myriad of existence consciousness after repeatedly springing forth, is bound by nature and recedes back at the fall of night, and again springs forth at the dawn of day. (VIII; 19).

But beyond this unmanifest lies another eternal unmanifest Being who doesn't perish when all creation dissolves. (VIII; 20)

That which is unborn is causeless. That which is causeless doesn't have a source, because it is the source itself. Hence, how can it perish?

When an electric bulb fuses, the light is extinguished, but the current remains. The light shines when the bulb is replaced. But no one can see the current, because it has no form. That is, the all-pervading power of Divine love can be felt but not seen. It is rooted in itself, and not dependent on any other variable.

The un-manifest is described as the immutable and which is said to be the highest state. Those who accomplish such a state do not return. This is my Absolute state. (VIII; 21)

O Arjuna! The absolute Being is to be attained by ardent devotion. All creatures abide in him and he pervades all creation. (VIII; 22)

O Arjuna! Now I shall reveal to you the time when a yogi departs from the body doesn't return, and also the time when he departs and returns again. (VIII; 23)

The yogi who departs in the fortnight of fire, light, day, the luminous, (fortnight of waxing moon), the six months of the northern movement of the sun, he attains the Supreme Being. (VIII; 24)

The yogi who departs in the fortnight of smoke, night, the dark (fortnight of waning moon), the six months of the southern movement of the sun, he receives the lunar light and returns." (VIII; 25)

The story of our relationship with the moon is as old as our planet itself. Perhaps we are not aware that the macro-chakras of the moon play out in the micro-chakras inside of us. Thus, there is something of the moon inside of us – the Spirit. For instance, just as the moon's waning phase ebb's sea tides, it also darkens the reflection of the Spirit on our chakras.

Hence, it is not considered an auspicious time for the Spirit to exit the body. Conversely, the waxing phase of the moon escalates sea tides, and also brightens the Spirit's reflection on our chakras, and hence, it is considered as an auspicious time for the Spirit's exit.

By the pathway of light, the Spirit departs not to return, by the pathway of darkness it returns.

(VIII; 26)

Our emotional channel, the Ida Nadi is influenced by the rhythms of the moon. Thus, when the Spirit exits through this dark channel, it wanders into uncharted realms of afterlife till it is reborn again. Whereas, when the Spirit exits through the pathway of light (central channel) it doesn't wander anymore because it transcends the cycle of rebirth.

Kabira reflects:

"O friend! Who knows from where you come,
Who knows whither you go,
But if you meet the Spirit
Do not forget to let me know."

*O Arjuna! Knowing these paths, the yogi is never deluded.
Therefore, at all times remain attuned in yoga. (VIII; 27)*

*Upon enlightenment, a yogi transcends all offerings and fruits of
meritorious deeds anointed by the Vedas. Thus, he ascends to the
Supreme Being. (VIII; 28)*

Giving gifts in charity or bathing in sacred waters doesn't wash away our dirt. But if we do our laundry right,

we transcend the fruits of meritorious deeds anointed by the scriptures.

Says Tulsi Das;

“From the practice of virtue springs dispassion;
From the practice of yoga, spiritual wisdom

bestows liberation- So declare
the Vedas.

But, brother! That which melts my heart quickly is
devotion,

Which is the delight of my stay.

On it depends all knowledge, spiritual or profane.
Devotion, dear brother is incomparable and the

very source of bliss,

But it can only be acquired by the
favor of virtues.”

Chapter Nine

The Creator is Apart From His Creation

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

To you who are such a worthy recipient, I shall reveal the secret of absolute knowledge, knowing which you will be liberated from illusion. (IX; 1)

It is the absolute knowledge, secret of all secrets, supreme sanctity, known by self-experience, as expounded by the scriptures, pure, spontaneous and infallible. (IX;2)

O Arjuna! Those who have no faith in this path of dharma, and unable to attain me keep revolving in this world bound by death. (IX; 3)

Like the earth keeps to its axis, we have to keep to our axis of dharma. - without it we remain trapped in the cycle of birth and death.

The universe is pervaded by my un-manifested form. All beings are contained in me but I am not contained in them. (IX; 4)

To play an electrical instrument we have to plug it to the mains. But the electric power is separate from the instrument. Likewise, God is like the electric power, and we are wired to him. That is, he is not in our hand – we are in *His* hands. We are dependent on him - he is not dependent on us.

Know my divine secret - all beings do not abide in me. My Shakti which is the source of all beings sustains them but is not contained in them. (IX; 5)

The last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was also a poet, and in a couplet, he laments, “God tell me why did you make a man riddled with all the flaws?”

Lord Krishna dispels all such riddles by revealing that God doesn’t create anything – his Shakti creates everything. She is the artist who creates each being like an innocent babe in his image, with all his qualities. Yet he is not the arbiter of their will. She bestows them with free will to achieve their higher freedom. But freedom without wisdom divorces them from him. Nonetheless, every babe is the apple of his eye, and hence, divorce can’t be an option for the one who resides within us.

*Like air that moves swiftly everywhere but is contained in ether,
similarly all creation is contained within me. (IX; 6)*

The sacred and the miraculous is not contained in any place, it is contained in a heart that loves God. Questions the Sufi poet Yunus Emre;

“Where can I put you if you are already inside me?
I don’t say I am inside myself;
Wherever I am, you are there.”

O Arjuna! All beings are absorbed in my divine nature at the end of a cycle (yuga). At the advent of the next cycle, I send them again. (IX; 7)

Manifesting my divine nature, according to their karmas I send forth repeatedly all the collective beings who are helplessly bound by nature. (IX; 8)

Charles Darwin discovered that the difference between human intelligence and higher animals, great as it is, certainly is one of degree and not of kind. Our close evolutionary cousins, the Apes, not only have a shared lineage but also share 97 percent of the same DNA. However, one aspect that makes them distinct is that their temperament is encoded by nature - they do not have the awareness their inner self.

*O Arjuna! These actions do not bind me, for I am detached
and distant from them. (IX: 9)*

*O Arjuna! With my blessings, Prakriti creates all animate and
inanimate beings, and moreover because of this the cosmos rotates.
(IX; 10)*

The personification of Prakriti as the Mother Power of creation or the Feminine Principle is etched in our unknown consciousness. It draws a parallel in Taoism where the ultimate reality is said to be the mother of the universe.

“There is a thing inherent and natural, which
existed before heaven and earth, motionless
and fathomless.

It stands alone and never changes.

It pervades everywhere
and never becomes exhausted.

It may be regarded as the Mother of the universe.

It doesn't know its name.

If I am forced to give it a name, I
would call it 'Tao.

And I name it as the Supreme.”

- Lao Tse

Ignorant of my divine nature as the Lord of all Beings, the deluded condemn my human incarnation. (IX; 11)

Those assuming the nature of fiends (Rakschasas) and demons (asuras) are deluded. Their aspirations, deeds and knowledge are futile, and they are devoid of wisdom and discretion. (IX; 12)

In the battlefield of Kurukshetra the real struggle appears to be between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, but in essence it is between good and evil. In the evolutionary past those who became over-ambitious to gain power over others or became anti-divine, created negativity. As we ignored it, it started becoming malignant. For instance, when we neglect a wound, the cyst becomes malignant. That is, if we are complicit, it gives evil a window open.

The story goes, the night Siddhartha sat under the Bodhi tree, determined not to rise till he gained enlightenment. But Mara, the demon, who is a personification of anger, lust, greed, and all the negative forces, didn't want Siddhartha to find a way out. The whole night Mara kept tempting him in different forms.

The last thing Mara wanted was to be identified. But that's just what Siddhartha did, 'I see You Mara.' Thus, he won the battle against the demon without a fight.

It goes to show that ignorance is the greatest negative force. If we remain in ignorance demons can deceive us. Or perhaps, demons succeed in deceiving us if we deceive ourselves.

O Arjuna! The collective being contained in my divine nature, realizing me as the eternal and immutable source of all beings, worship me with single-minded devotion. (IX; 13)

Bebolding my glory, fervent and constant in discipline, paying homage to me, they worship me with unflinching devotion. (IX; 14)

Others worshipping me the non-manifest, pure and absolute with the offering of knowledge and as the all-pervading 'One' that has manifold manifestations. (IX; 15)

As we become self-aware, we also become aware of our multiple dimensional cosmic counterpart. When light falls on a diamond the sparkle of only that facet is seen that receives the light, but we enjoy all his facets.

Thus, God can be worshipped in any of his facets. We say facet and not part, because we do not want to give the impression of something which can be divided in separate

pieces. Though we only see his single facet, his multiple facets are seen behind the eyelids of the Spirit.

Unfortunately, fundamentalists have taken charge of God, and become spokesmen of his will. But, no one can pretend to know God's will - he walks with those who walk with him in their deeds.

After all, why would God not reveal his will to us directly. Hence, Buddha did not waste time trying to convince people about God's will – he gave a que, 'better know yourself first'.

But the ego is not content to leave God alone - it wants to show that its God is greater than the neighbor's. Inversely, its God is the real one, and the rest are fakes. It's a trick within a trick to use God as a weapon in order to assert supremacy over others.

I am the ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the ancestral offerings, I am the herb, I am the holy incantation, I am the ghee, I am the havan (fire offering) and I am the offering. (IX; 16).

I am the father of the world, the mother, the sustainer and the grandparent. I am the syllable 'AUM', I am the purpose of knowledge, I am the Rig, Sama and Yajur Veda. (IX; 17)

These are the names of the various Vedas written 5000 years ago.

I am the destination, the supporter, the witness, the abode, the comforter, the counselor, and the redeemer. I am the source and the dissolution, the basis, the refuge and the imperishable seed. (IX; 18)

O Arjuna! I give heat, I cause and withhold rain, I am the mortal and the immortal. I am being as well as non-being, O Arjuna. (IX; 19)

The knowers of the three Vedas, who are drenched with the Soma (Ambrosia) nectar are purified of sin, worshipping me with sacrificing, and praying for heaven they enter the abode of Indra (heaven), and are blessed with the heavenly delights of the Gods. (IX; 20)

Having enjoyed the delights of heaven, they return to their mortal realm when their merit expires; as propounded by the Vedas, the pursuit of desires attains only the transient, and they continue the cycle of going to heaven and returning to the mortal realm. (IX; 21)

It is said that the mileage of our good deeds earns us a ticket to heaven. Nonetheless, the happy landing in heaven comes with an expiry date. When the brownie points finish,

we bounce back. But the one who experiences divine love in his heart needs no ticket reminds Pragya Pradhan:

“Believe in your Spirit
Not your broken thoughts
It cradles strength
Enough to transform
Nurture it by deeds
And one day you’ll find
Heaven even in a seed.”

I take upon myself the concern for the welfare of those who worship me with undistracted devotion, whoever persevere. I increase what they have and I give them what they do not have (Yogakshema). (IX; 22)

Significantly, Lord Krishna places the love of the divine before welfare (kshema). When we love the Divine from our heart, our love gives energy to others. In turn, divine love moves ahead of us, and blesses us with greater energy. Or rather, as we take care of others, the Divine takes care of us. For instance, when a drop dissolves in the ocean, the ocean takes care of it. Else, why dissolve in it!

After all, what father brings his children into the world and then abandons them. For sure, each child is an apple of

God's eyes, and he is ever anxious to bestow his treasures upon him. It couldn't be otherwise. But children are children, and they quarrel – 'why didn't you catch the ball?'

'Because you didn't know how to throw it!'

Though God sent the ball to our court, perhaps we have forgotten how to receive it.

However, all that it takes is a little perseverance to receive it. For instance, dripping water hollows out a stone not because of its power but because of the length of time it perseveres.

As the sufi saint Bulleh Shah was departing from a city, the disciples enquired, "When you get there, where will you stay?"

With a twinkle in his eyes, he smiled, "When I get there, means will present themselves."

O Arjuna! The devotees who worship other deities with devotion, they also worship me, though not according to protocol. (IX; 23)

Just as the birds sing their morning prayers in more than one way, we pray in different ways. But when our prayers are unanswered, we wonder if anyone out there even listens to them. To assure that our prayers are heard, we chant atop our voices or say a lot of words or pray for a long time. But the wise pray silently in their deeds, knowing that deeds speak

louder than words. After all, unless our heart hears them first, how will God hear them! Shakespeare says it all:

“My words fly up,
My thoughts remain low
Words without thoughts do not to heaven go.”

I am the recipient and the lord of all offerings, but they do not know me as the Supreme Being and therefore get derailed. (IX; 24)

Worshippers of the deities attain the deities, worshippers of the ancestors attain the ancestors, and worshippers of the dead spirits attain the dead spirits (bhoots). Those who worship me come to me. (IX; 25)

We know that divine blessings are always flowing, but we cannot see them if our attention is in the wrong place. For instance, a devotee could be worshipping his ancestors who are by no means Divine - they could be evil. Furthermore, if the ancestors are reborn, how can they answer the prayers of their progenies?

We should bear in mind that everything unknown doesn't come from the Divine- it could also come from evil spirits called bhoots. According to Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi there are only two things which do not want to bend before God; one is the bhoot and the other is the ego.

*Whoever offers me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water,
that offering from a pure heart, I accept. (IX; 26)*

Even the blind, deaf and the mute can make a heartfelt offering, because it doesn't require any speech, rituals or mantras. But what can be offered to the one who is the source of everything wonders Pragya Pradhan.

“Shall I pluck a flower
And whisper in it my prayer?
Shall I ask a sacred river
to carry my light and deliver
Shall I pour fragrant oils
Just to spread Your essence
Shall I do all this
Just to feel Your presence.”

Unaware of God's presence within us, we go on pilgrimages, make offerings, and build monuments to seek favors- not knowing that he forever bestows favors. Perhaps, we don't know how to ask. “But why do you seek water when you are the stream,” asks Rumi.

*O Arjuna! Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you give
in charity or make offerings, whatever disciplines you exercise, perform
everything as an offering to me. (IX; 27)*

A sattwik person is not on the receiving end but on the giving end. However, it is not in miserly people to give, because they love money more. But the one who is a giver, what can he ask? Says Khalil Gibran: “You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give”

Thus, will you be free from the karma arising from good and evil deeds. With your attention fixed on renunciation (of fruits of action), you will be liberated and attain me. (IX; 28)

Renouncing something is a myth, because giving up implies an ego that gives up something. The one who is detached from the ego doesn't give up anything. Instead, he finds ways to help others heal. Or he plays around to reveal an insight. After all, the savor of playing is in laughter, not weeping. Says Lao Tse:

“Thus, sages contrive nothing,

And so spoil nothing,

They cling to nothing,

And so lose nothing.”

I am alike in all beings, averse or attached to none. Nevertheless, the devotee who worships me with love, he abides in me, and I also in him. (IX; 29)

Every leaf tries to move towards the sun. However, the sun shines on all the leaves equally. It doesn't favor one leaf over another. Likewise, divine love shines on all creatures equally - it has no favorites and is averse to none.

Even if the most sinful worships me earnestly, then having rightly resolved, he is deemed righteous. (IX; 30)

Though we try to do our best, still we are prone to make mistakes. After all we are only human! But it is also human to understand that we commit mistakes because our attention gets clouded by attachments. And it is also human to learn from our mistakes, and make the right call to resolve our attachments. For sure, as we make a plus from a minus, we emerge stronger and wiser. Thomas Edison said something similar, "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that don't work."

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O Arjuna! Soon he becomes a righteous soul and attains eternal peace. Know for sure that my devotee is never doomed. (IX; 31)

If all the accumulated sins of our past lives were to be weighed, there would be no hope for us. But there is a glimmer of hope because there is Grace. And there came one as our Lord Jesus Christ who said that whosoever leaves sin, his faults shall be forgiven.

A bandit approached a saint to atone his sins. The saint instructed, “Cut off the branch of the tree.”

He did likewise.

Then he instructed, “Put it back again.”

The bandit said, “That’s not possible.”

The saint responded, “You think you are mighty, because you can wound and destroy. That is the task of kids - the mighty know how to create and heal.”

O Arjuna! Those who surrender to me though they be women, Vaisyas, Sudras, or outcasts, or whatever; devoted to me they attain the Supreme state. (IX; 32)

Though some read this verse to imply that women are lowly born, Lord Krishna has clearly stated that we are the Atma (Spirit). Atma has no gender. Hence, it is hard to imagine that he would have said that women are lowly born.

On the contrary, Lord Krishna held women in the highest esteem. He had utmost respect for his mother, sister and his wives.

How much easier for the pious Brahmins and royal sages who are devoted to me to enter the Supreme state. Therefore, having entered this transient body of woe remains constantly absorbed in me. (IX: 33)

Some find this verse suggestive that it is easier for Brahmins to attain the Supreme Being than for other castes. From what has been said in the previous chapters we gain a clear picture that this is an alteration. It goes against the earlier verses where Lord Krishna has repeatedly emphasized that he dwells in the heart of all his devotees.

“Whoever offers to me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit... that I accept.”

It is clear that the love of the Lord is the central message of Gita – ‘whoever loves the Lord is dear to him.’ Hence, to infer that it is easier for higher castes like the Brahmins to attain the Lord is totally incongruous with the spirit of the Gita.

In any event the word Brahmin is a misnomer. Brahmin means the one who knows Almighty God, but how many Brahmins know him? How can the blind light the path? Only an enlightened lamp can enlighten another lamp.

As a matter of fact, those who don the holy mantle of a Brahmin, a priest or a royal sage, tend to become arrogant. For instance, a person who gets a new insight assumes it would be helpful to others. But in the process, he becomes

arrogant because he feels he holds the master key that might unlock the door for others. Thus, he plays God.

Absorb your mind on me, have devotion to me, adore me; with me as your goal, you shall attain me. (IX; 34)

Even if a seeker doesn't fit in any of the formulas revealed so far, he can attain the Lord by adoring him. Says Saint Tulsidas,

“For aught I know
The Lord is all pervading,
Present everywhere alike,
And is revealed only by love.
Tell me any place, time or quarter of the world where
He is not.”

Chapter Ten

Divine Aspects

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

O Arjuna! Again, listen to my discourse. I will reveal to you for your benefit now that you are ignited by my rendering. (X; 1)

Neither the deities of heaven nor the great saints know my origin for I am the source of the deities and the saints. (X; 2)

He who knows me as the causeless without beginning, and also as the Supreme Being, he is freed from delusion, and delivered from all sins. (X; 3)

There is an eternal beauty that can't be seen, or perhaps, it doesn't hide from us, but we hide from it. Still, unable to see it, we keep prostrating on the ground.

Says Kabira:

“It is not human or Divine,
It is not the holy one demanding service,
It is neither a yogi nor an angel,

It is neither a householder nor an ascetic,
It is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim,
None saw it being born or die.”

Wisdom, knowledge, forgiveness, dynamic perception, patience, truth, balance, self-discipline; pleasure and pain, being and non-being, fear and fearlessness, even-mindedness, contentment, penance, charity, fame and disrepute are the diverse aspects of beings that arise from me alone. (X; 4- 5)

The seven great sages of yore, and the four Manus were born from my mind, and from them are born all these beings in the world. (X; 6)

According to Hindu scriptures, the four primeval Beings who were the ancestors of the human race are called Manus. They are said to be the presiding deities of the universe they govern. An era presided by Manu is described as Manvantara. Stories of Manus, their lineage and deeds are found in ancient Indian scriptures.

He who perceives the inherent nature of this supreme power of mine doubtlessly becomes united with me through yoga. (X; 7)

*I am the source of everything, from me everything emanates,
realizing this; the realized beings worship me with complete faith.
(X; 8)*

*With their mind absorbed in me, their Prana (life force)
surrendered to me, elevating each other in my praise and contemplating
on me; they are fulfilled and abide in me. (X; 9)*

Prana is the life force that activates the body. Our two eyes are not enough to witness the life force, but if a seeker dedicates every breath to him, the seeker and the sought blend.

*Those who worship me with love and fervent devotion, I bless them
with the enlightenment whereby they attain me. (X; 10)*

Every religion has its own unique form of worship. Says Rumi, “The lovers of God have no religion but God alone.”

*Out of compassion for such persons, I abide in their inner being to
dispel the veil of ignorance with the shining light of Truth. (X; 11)*

As the ego thinks it knows best; it is hard for it to accept that anybody can be better, let alone take lessons from anyone. It is afraid of losing control of the future, and

contrives a defense mechanism. In the bargain it gets caged in its own mechanism. However, we cannot break through its mechanism through our intellect, because the intellect itself is ego-driven.

The one who we seek, also seeks us. Each moment he strives to disentangle us from our ego. If we take one step towards him, he brings us ten steps closer. But due to our attachment, we cling to the shores. Nonetheless, his compassion is such that it tries to pull us out. Still, if we resist, his compassion doesn't transgress our free will.

Says Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi:

“When the ego goes away, the self rises.

What is there to feel hurt.

What is there to feel bad.

What is there to hurt others.”

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna:

You are the Supreme Being, the supreme abode, the greatest purifier, the eternal, the primordial Divinity, the unborn, all-permeating. All sages proclaim your Divinity, as the divine sages Narada, Devala, Asita, Vyasa, and also as you yourself have revealed it to me. (X; 12-13)

*O Lord! All that you have revealed to me I uphold as the Truth.
Neither the deities nor the demons know your manifestation. (X; 14)*

*O Supreme Being! You are the source of all beings, the God of
the Gods, and the Lord of the universe. You are known to yourself
by your own self. (X: 15)*

A person had been seeking the light for ages. He was told about someone special who might be able to show him the light.

Following the directions, he arrived at Mowlana Jalal ad-Din Rumi's doorstep.

"Where can I find the light?"

Rumi answered, "Nowhere."

He repeated, "How can I obtain the light?"

Rumi replied, "You cannot obtain the light. You have to become the light."

Unknown to him, the light was approaching him, even as he was approaching it.

Rumi smiled "Water also thirsts for the thirsty one. The one you are seeking is also seeking you at your very doorstep."

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna;

You alone are capable of revealing your divine attributes. Pray reveal to me your divine form, through which you pervade this world and beyond. (X; 16)

O blessed Lord! How might I be absorbed in constant meditation to know you? In what form are you to be contemplated upon by me? (X; 17)

O Lord! Please narrate to me again your wondrous powers and manifestations for my thirst is not quenched with hearing your ambrosial speech. (X; 18)

The Blessed Lord said:

O Arjuna! I will narrate to you my divine forms, those which are most important, for they are limitless. (X; 19)

O Arjuna! I am the Spirit seated in the heart of all beings. I am the origin, the middle and the end of all beings. (X; 20)

Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, among the Luminous, I am the effulgent sun, I am the force of the Maruts, among the constellation of stars I am Moon. (X; 21)

Adityas were the twelve sons of Aditi, the Mother of the Gods.

Among the Vedas, I am the Sama veda; among the deities I am Indra, among the senses I am the mind, and among the beings I am consciousness. (X; 22)

Indra is the King of heaven. Sama Veda is considered to be the most important of the four Vedas.

Of the Rudras I am Shankara; of the Yakshas and rakshasas I am Kubera, of the eight Vasus I am Agni (fire), and of the mountain peaks I am Meru. (X; 23)

Yakshas are demigods.

Rudras are the eleven powers of destruction of Lord Shiva. Rakshasas are anti-divine entities. Kubera is the God of wealth. Mount Meru is the highest of the seven peaks.

O Arjuna! Among the priests I am the highest, Brihaspati, among the army commanders I am Skanda. Among the water bodies I am the ocean. (X; 24)

Brihaspati is the chief priest of heaven. Skanda is the other name of Kartikeya, the son of Lord Shiva, the invincible master of warfare.

Among the great sages I am Bhrigu, among the incantations I am the syllable AUM, among the offerings I am meditation, among the immovables I am the Himalaya. (X; 25)

Sage Bhrigu had performed great austerities and was held in the highest esteem.

‘AUM’ is the sacred single syllable. Lord Krishna had explained its power in the earlier chapters.

Among the trees I am Asvattha, among the divine sages I am Narada, among the Gandharvas (heavenly musicians) I am Chitraratha, and among the Siddhas (perfected ones) I am sage Kapila. (X; 26)

The Asvattha is the tree of paradise, sought for its sweet fragrance.

Sage Narada, the wisest of the sages, and is said to wander freely in the three worlds, playing on a single-string instrument, singing the glory of Lord Vishnu. He is a fount of wisdom.

Chitraratha was the greatest among the heavenly musicians known as Gandharvas.

The Siddhas were the perfect beings who had earned powers or siddhis by merit of their penance. The sage Kapila

was the foremost among them known for his teachings of Sankhya philosophy.

Among the horses I am Ucchaishravas, born of Ambrosia, among the majestic elephants, I am Airavata, and among men I am the Sovereign. (X; 27)

Ucchaishravas was the swiftest of horses.

Lord Krishna refers to the ambrosia secured from the churning of the cosmic ocean that took place during the game of creation. The churning continues in our consciousness to attain this ambrosia.

Airavata was the wisest and the mightiest elephant.

Among the weapons I am Vajra (thunderbolt), among the cows I am Kamadhenu, among the progenitors I am Kamadeva, among the serpents I am Vasuki. (X; 28)

The thunderbolt of Lord Indra, the King of heaven, is the most dreaded weapon called Vajra. Kamadhenu is the wish-fulfilling cow. She was an incarnation of the Primordial Mother, and hence, Hindus revere cows.

Vasuki, chief of the serpents, offered his services as the rope during the churning of the cosmic ocean, and adorns the neck of Lord Shiva.

Kamadeva is the God of Love.

Among the Nagas (serpents) I am Ananta, among the dwellers of water I am Varuna, among the (pitra) ancestors I am Aryaman, among the keepers of law and vigil, I am Yama. (X: 29)

Ananta or Shesha is the thousand-headed serpent God who incarnated for removing the woes of the world.

Varuna is the Sea God.

Aryama is the chief of the departed ancestors.

Yama is the God of death who keeps vigil over all beings, and punishes them for their misdeeds. The Lord of death also fulfills a guru's role of salvation. For instance, sometimes timely death can save man from himself, and bring him back to Dharma in his next birth. As dharma is intrinsic to evolution, Yama is also known as Dharma Raja.

Lord Krishna also performs this function - as a Guru, he not only guides but also empowers us to erase our blind spots.

Among the demon born I am Prahlada, among calculations I am time, among the beasts I am Mrigendra (lion), among the winged ones I am Garuda. (X: 30)

Prahlada was the son of Hiranyakashyapa, the demon king. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu.

Hiranyakashyapa tried to dissuade his son from worshipping the Lord but failed.

The lion Mrigendra is the king of the animal world.

The son of Vinata is the eagle Garuda who is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu.

Among the purifiers I am wind, among the warriors I am Rama, among the fish I am the crocodile Makara, and among the rivers I am Ganges. (X; 31)

The epic of Ramayana tells us that Shri Rama was born as the eldest son of king Dasharatha of Ayodhya. In order to rescue his wife, Sita, he slew Ravana, the king of Shri Lanka.

In the evolutionary process, he incarnated to awaken compassion in the heart chakra. He was the embodiment of compassion, but paradoxically, constantly fighting. Though he slew many demons, there was no malice in his heart. Again, though he was deprived of kingship and exiled for fourteen years at the behest of his stepmother, he bore no malice against her, and in fact, tried to reconcile with her. Hence, he came to be venerated as 'Maryada Purushottam' – the personification of forgiveness and compassion.

O Arjuna! Of creation I am the beginning, the middle and also the end, of sciences I am the science of self, of those who debate I am the synthesis. (X; 32).

Of the letters I am the letter 'A', of the compounds I am dual, I am the eternal time and the Creator whose face is everywhere. (X; 33)

I am the devouring death, I am the origin and the potential of everything, of women I am fame, grace, eloquence, poise, memory, endurance and forgiveness. (X; 34)

Of hymns I am Brihatsaman, of mantra I am Gayatri, of months I am Margasirsa, and of seasons, I am the blossom time (spring). (X; 35)

Of deceit I am gambling, of the magnificent I am the radiance, in the winners I am victory, I am effort and the virtue of the virtuous. (X; 36)

Of the Vrisnis I am Vasudeva; of the Pandavas I am Dhananjaya, of the sages I am Vyasa and of the seers I am seer Ushana. (X; 37)

Vasudeva is the other name of Lord Krishna as the scion of the Vrisnis clan.

Dhanajaya is the other name of Arjuna meaning the winner of wealth.

The sage Vyasa is the author of Mahabharata.

The seer Ushanacharya is the wisest of seers.

I am the scepter of those who chastise, of those who seek success I am expediency, of secrets I am silence, and of the wise I am wisdom.
(X; 38)

O Arjuna! Whatever is the seed of all existence that I am. No being in motion or inert can exist without being sustained by me.
(X; 39)

The word Krishna originates from the word 'Krishi' meaning agriculture or the sowing of seed. Though, Lord Krishna ploughed the seeds of wisdom, we can reap them through Self-realization.

O Arjuna! My divine manifestations are endless, whatever I have narrated is only a fraction of it. (X: 40)

Whatever being there is that surpasses in excellence, élan and valor, know that to be born from a wee fraction of my magnificence.
(X; 41)

When the rays of the Sun fall on the desert sands, they sparkle. Likewise, men are not born great; they gain luster when the rays of Divine Grace fall upon them. Lord Krishna refers to it as a wee fraction of himself. But in reality, even a fleeting glance of the Divine is sufficient to turn one's fortune.

God is what he is, we cannot analyze his magnificence says Kabira,

“How can I say He is like this or that,
If I say He is within me, the outer world blushes;
If I say He is outside, it is falsehood.
For him the inner and outer worlds,
The conscious and the unconscious are
indivisible.
He is neither revealed nor hidden.”

Chapter Eleven

Instead of Facing Himself

Arjuna is More Curious to See Lord Krishna's Divine Form

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna;

By your grace, you have blessed me with the timeless secret of the Spirit. This has removed my delusion. (XI; 1)

O Lord! I comprehend the birth and passing away of beings, and also your eternal greatness. (XI; 2)

O Supreme Lord! As you have declared yourself to me, so it verily is, but I yearn to see your divine form. (XI; 3)

O Lord of yogis! If you deem it possible to be seen by me, then pray reveal to me your divine form. (XI; 4)

Lord Krishna lays a feast before Arjuna, but instead of enjoying it, his mind is preoccupied with its recipes. Even though Lord Krishna revealed all the recipes, still it doesn't pacify his curiosity. Just as knowing the recipe doesn't appease the taste buds, likewise, intellectual

curiosity doesn't appease the mind, because the mind always seeks excitement - 'what's next'. The same is the case with Arjuna.

Lord Krishna responds;

O Arjuna! Behold my forms of hundreds and thousands of splendors, divine and of various descriptions and hues. (XI; 5)

Despite Arjuna's desire to takeoff, his hyper thinking comes in the way. Lord Krishna revealed the various gears to takeoff, but Arjuna accepted them only mentally – it doesn't sink in, so he cannot takeoff. He craves for something more – perhaps a miracle or a vision. But we don't need miracles or visions to turn our life around- we just need a heart with love placed right.

O Arjuna! Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ashwins twins, the Maruts and many splendors unseen before. (XI; 6)

Adityas are the twelve sons of Aditi the wife of Sage Kashyapa.

There is a group of eight Vasus.

Rudras are the eleven mighty powers of Lord Shiva.

The Ashwini Kumar twins are the Divine physicians.

Maruts are the wind deities.

O Arjuna! Behold the entire universe moving and unmoving, and whatever else you desire to see, all contained in my body. (XI; 7)

But you cannot behold me with your mortal eyes. I will grant you divine vision. Behold my divine being. (XI; 8)

Sanjaya narrates to the King Dhritarashtra. *Having spoken thus Hari, the great Lord of Yoga, revealed to Arjuna his divine form. (XI; 9)*

Having multiple faces and eyes, having countless miraculous visions, adorning numerous divine ornaments, holding multiple divine weapons. (XI; 10)

Adorning heavenly flowers and arrangements, anointed with divine perfumes, resplendent, infinite and facing everywhere. (XI; 11)

Were a thousand suns to blaze simultaneously, their radiance might resemble the radiance of the Supreme Being. (XI; 12)

Arjuna beheld the whole universe in its multiple dimensions, ensconced in the body of the God of Gods. (XI; 13)

Bedazzled, with his hair standing on end, Arjuna, bowed down his head, and with folded hands said; O Lord! In your body I see all the deities and the various celestial collectives. Almighty God enthroned upon a lotus seat, all the sages and celestial serpents. (XI; 14-15)

O Lord of the universe! With innumerable arms, bellies, faces and eyes, possessing infinite forms I behold you in all directions, but I do not see your end, middle or beginning. (XI; 16)

Adorning a crown, wielding mace and discus, emanating radiance everywhere, dazzling on all sides, and difficult to discern. With the effulgence of all blazing fire and sun, and beyond comprehension. (XI; 17)

You are the imperishable, the Supreme to be known, you are the refuge of the universe, you are the protector of the eternal Dharma, I believe you are the indestructible Spirit. (XI; 18)

I behold you as without any beginning, middle or end, of infinite power, of innumerable arms, the moon and sun as your eyes, your mouth flaming with fire, whose radiance scorches the universe. (XI; 19)

O Supreme Being! You pervade the spheres between heaven and earth, and also the four directions. Beholding your divine and awesome form, the three worlds tremble. (XI; 20)

The hosts of deities are ensconced in you, overwhelmed with awe, they bow to you and with folded hands sing your praise. The collectivity of sages and siddhas bails your glory. (XI; 21)

The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Siddhas (seekers of perfection), the deities, the Asvins Twins, the Maruts and the Manes, the collectivity of Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Yakshas (spirits) and Asuras (demons), all behold you wonderstruck. (XI; 22)

The denizens of heaven and celestial beings are dazzled by the Lord's awesome form and meditate on him.

O Lord! Beholding your stupendous form of numerable mouths and eyes, arms, thighs and feet with many bellies, terrible with many jaws, the world and I tremble. (XI; 23)

O Lord! As I behold you towering towards the sky, effulgent with many hues, with the mouth wide open, and large shining eyes, my soul trembles with fear, and I cannot contain my composure and peace! (XI; 24)

As I behold your mouth terrible with their tusks, like doom's devouring flames, I lose my orientation and peace. Be gracious, O Lord of deities, Primordial Being of the universe. (XI; 25)

All the sons of Dhritrashtra, along with the congregation of Kings, Bhisma, Drona and Karna along with our mighty warriors are darting into your mouth of terrible jaws. Some stuck between the teeth are seen with their heads dashed to pieces. (XI; 26-27)

As the gushing currents of the rivers rush towards the ocean, so do these mighty heroes rush into your flaming mouth. (XI; 28)

As moths dart into a flame to die, so do these men dart into your mouth for their annihilation. (XI; 29)

O Lord! Devouring the universe everywhere, with your fiery mouth, you lick them up. Your flames fill the entire universe and scorch it. (XI; 30)

Pray reveal to me who you are, of so awesome form. Obeisance to you, O mighty God! As I do not comprehend your nature, pray be gracious O Supreme Being, and please enlighten me. (XI; 31)

The Lord responded;

I am the wheel of time that causes the annihilation of the universe, and that has come to destroy these assembled warriors. Even without you all the warriors assembled in the opposing army would cease to be. (XI; 32)

For better or worse, the wheel of time turns over again and again and again, without stopping for anyone.

It prompts an obvious question: if the wheel of time won't stop for anyone, why ask Arjuna to fight?

It is truer to say the real battle that Arjuna faces is not outside but inside him. If he really wants to end the fight, he has to fight his ego. It is a fight that will end all fights.

Therefore, O Arjuna! Rise and attain glory. Defeat your enemies and enjoy a great kingdom. By me they have already been killed, be you merrily the namesake. (XI; 33)

How can we call it an atom in whom radioactivity is extinct? How can we call someone alive, if he is without love? We are trees that are fueled by the sap of love. If the sap runs out, the tree dries up. Nor does it ever bear fruit again.

The sufi poet Yunus Emre affirms that God is nothing if not love:

“I am not alive because I have a soul,
I am alive because I have love within.”

Though we cannot see God, we can feel the sap of His love flowing in our veins. Its flow multiplies when we love others,

else why would it flow? Conversely, hate dries up the sap of life before its time as in the case of the Kauravas.

Says Guru Nanak, “Only he is alive, in whose mind God abides. None else is living.”

Though, Arjuna cannot look inside the mind of God, he can look inside his own mind. But he is blinded by his obsession with his relations in the opposite side of the battlefield.

Nonetheless, Lord Krishna’s cannot be deceived by them. In his eyes, a person doesn’t die when his heart stops beating - he dies when he betrays his Spirit.

Hence, if those who betray their Spirit are already trashed in the recycle bin, then who is left for Arjuna to kill?

Perhaps, Arjuna has to kill his obsession with his relations in the enemy ranks.

Kill Drona, Jayadratha, Karna and other mighty warriors as they are already doomed by me. Have no fear and fight, you shall vanquish your opponents in battle. (XI; 34)

Sanjaya narrates to King Dhritrashtra:

Having heard Lord Krishna’s discourse, Arjuna is shaking. With folded hands he pays obeisance and prostrates before Lord Krishna. With great fear and in a quivering voice he addresses him; O Lord!

Indeed, the world finds joy and bliss in your glory. The demons flee in panic belter-skelter, and the collectivity of Siddhas pays homage to you. (XI; 35-36)

O Supreme Being! Why should they not pay homage to you? You who are greater than all. O eternal Being, Lord of the Primordial deities, comforter of the universe, you are the imperishable, the truth and untruth, and what is beyond. (X; 37)

O Infinite One! You are the foremost of Gods, the Primordial Being, and the cradle of the universe. You are the knower, what is to be known and the highest state. The universe is pervaded by you and fulfilled by you. (XI; 38)

You are Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Sasanka, Prajapati, and the grandsire of all. Obeisance to you a thousand times! Obeisance to you again and again! (XI; 39)

Vayu: the god of wind.

Yama: the god of death.

Agni: fire god.

Varuna: sea god,

Sasanka: moon god.

Prajapati: the creator.

Obeisance to you from front and back! Obeisance to you from all sides! You are everything, stupendous power and enormous might. As you dwell in everything hence everything is in your image. (XI; 40)

O Lord! Ignorant of your greatness however outspoken I have been, assuming you as friend and companion, was an outcome of affection. Whatever disrespectful behavior was towards you in play, lying down, seated or at banquets, either alone or in company, I beg your forgiveness. (XI; 41-42)

O Lord! You are the father of the universe, of the moving and the motionless. You are the intent of its worship, and the great Guru. No one is equal to you, then how can there be any one greater than you in the three spheres. (XI; 43)

O Beloved Lord! I bow down and prostrating before you. I humbly supplicate your benedictions. As a father bears the faults of his son, as a friend bears the faults of his friend, and as a lover bears the faults of his beloved, similarly kindly bear my mistakes. (XI; 44)

The concept of God as the benevolent Father - the one who punishes and also forgives, is etched in our unknown consciousness. But come to think of it, God could also be a friend- as is Lord Krishna to Arjuna. Though they are not at the same pace, Lord Krishna doesn't let Arjuna feel less than himself. Their friendship is like the confluence of two rivers –

one that is slow and the other that is fast. Thus, the confluence allows Arjuna not only to take liberties, but also share his darkest secrets unashamedly. How else could Lord Krishna help him untie his knots.

In short, Lord Krishna doesn't judge him but believes in him. After all, that's what friends do.

Even if that is not the case, the Sufi poet Amir Khusrau helps us to understand that the love of God works better than the fear of God. His love not only begets love, but also begets joy:

“If Thou takest me to task for my sins,

Where is Thy Grace then?

And, tell me what is the difference between me and Thee?”

O Supreme Lord! I am exalted by witnessing your wondrous form that has never been witnessed before but my mind is confounded with fear. Reveal to me your other form as before. (XI; 45)

I desire to behold you as before adorning your crown, holding mace and discus in your hand. I pray, please assume your four-armed form, O Thou thousand armed universal One!” (XI; 46)

The Lord responded;

O Arjuna! By my grace and the power of maya I revealed to you my Supreme form, effulgent, cosmic, infinite and primordial which no one but you have witnessed before. (XI; 47)

The highest dharma is to pursue Self-realization. In order to mobilize Arjuna's attention towards it, Lord Krishna revealed his Divine form. No doubt this visual experience entranced him, but what did he take away from it, is the point.

A relevant takeaway would be to enjoy the ocean of Lord Krishna's love. But to enjoy it one has to dissolve in it. Whereas, Arjuna stands apart like a devotee who saw God as the mighty ocean, and plunged into it, but the waves threw him back. He plunged again and again, but the waves kept throwing him back. Then he saw a man made of salt plunge into the ocean and dissolve. He understood that salt is the quality of the ocean, and unless he becomes like it, he cannot dissolve. But to become like salt Arjuna has to transform.

However, transformation is an inside job, and unless his personal love transforms into collective love, he would be left behind like a pilgrim who is bedazzled by God's glimpse but never dissolved in his ocean.

Nonetheless, when a pilgrim's heart becomes as large as the ocean, he goes a step ahead of the one who has seen

God, because God's love is seen by the heart, not by the eyes. How else could a blind saint like Sur Das see!

O Arjuna! Neither by the Vedas, nor by offerings, nor by scriptures, nor by charities, nor by rituals, nor by penance can I be beheld in this form in this world by anyone other than you, O Arjuna. Be not frightened or confounded upon beholding my stupendous form. Fearless and joyous of heart, behold again my other form. (XI, 48-49)

Sanjaya narrates,
Having addressed Arjuna, Lord Krishna again revealed his previous form, and reassured the frightened Arjuna. (XI: 50)

Arjuna said,
O Lord! Beholding again your gracious earthly form, my mind is calmed and I have regained my balance. (XI; 51)

The Lord responded;
This divine form of mine which you have seen is extremely hard to see. Even the deities constantly yearn to see it. (XI; 52)

My form which you have seen cannot be seen by reciting the Vedas or by penance or by charities or by offerings. (XI; 53)

O Arjuna! By 'anaya bhakti' (single-minded devotion) to me I can be thus known, truly perceived and attained. (XI; 54)

Faith is often associated with religion. But that's not the kind of faith Lord Krishna talks about. Being absorbed in God is different from having blind faith in him. For instance, a devotee can have blind faith in God even though his hands are unclean. Such devotion is nothing but mental fixation that fuels fanaticism.

The word 'ananya' means when there is not the other. In contrast to blind faith, it is the absolute state of doubtless awareness. Think of a baby bird who knows no one in the world except her mother. She never seeks any help from anyone else because she has learnt from experience that nothing stands between her and her mother. Hence, when she calls out for her mother, she is confident that her mother will respond.

In parallel, the one who experiences Divine love has complete confidence in the Divine. Even if the whole world is offered at his feet, he spurns it, because he has tasted the elixir of Divine love, and desires nothing more.

O Arjuna! He, who dedicates all works to me, conceives me as the ultimate goal, who worships me, detached, who bears no enmity towards any being, he attains me. (XI: 55)

To know the absolute truth requires detachment. For instance, Lord Krishna's task could be made much easier if Arjuna gets around his emotional attachments. A person who is detached doesn't waste his attention reflecting on old wounds, bitter resentments or guilt - he saves it for experiencing the absolute truth, says Pragya Pradhan:

“Heart of mine,
You led me astray this time
going down the wrong alley
and then getting stuck
It's what they call attachment
Yeah, the sticky stuff
that doesn't let go
And when it does
it leaves a residue
that's tough to scrub.”

Chapter Twelve

Worship of the Tangible and Intangible

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna;

The devotee who earnestly worships you, and the one who worships the immutable and the un-manifested; which of these is greater? (XII; 1)

Though vision is just another feature of the senses, yet 80 percent of our reality comes from it. It leads devotees to believe that gaining the vision (darshan) of a deity ignites instant enlightenment. But gaining the vision of a deity and gaining enlightenment are two different things. And that brings us back to Arjuna who was entranced by a momentary vision of Lord Krishna's Divine form, but still, he doesn't takeoff - his questions stand in the way.

The Lord responded;

The one who with whole hearted devotion is absorbed in my worship with undaunted faith, him I deem to be greater among yogis. (XII; 2)

*But those who worship the eternal, unmanifest beyond definition,
beyond concept, the immutable and the steadfast, by attuning the senses,
maintaining balance in all circumstances, delighting in the good of all
beings, they also attain me. (XII; 3-4)*

It makes no difference whether we talk of God as the form or the formless. After all, by just talking about flowers, we can't draw their honey - we have to transform to draw the honey. Says Kabira:

“Fearlessly, I will sing that attribute of the formless one,

Using the Lotus as a steady base,

I will reverse the flow of the wind,

And reverse the attachments of the mind,

I will cement the five elements,

Ida, Pingala and Sushmana are the channels.

I will bathe at the confluence of the three rivers.

The five and twenty-five I will master by my wish,

And string them together in one thread.

In the lonely summit reverberates the un-struck sound
'anahad'.

I will play the thirty-six different symphonies.

Says Kabira, listen O seeker,

I will wave the flag of victory.”

It is harder to worship the un-manifested form, for it is difficult to fathom the un-manifest by human beings. (XII; 5)

It is not possible for the finite mirror of the mind to reflect the image of the infinite. Moreover, what it reflects is only an incomplete or a wee aspect of the infinite. However, there is nothing to stop the mind from imagining Divine attributes, and then worshipping them as the infinite.

But those who surrender all actions to me, absorbed in me, meditate on me, with rapt devotion, whose mind is intent on me; I right away liberate them from the ocean of death-trapped existence, O Arjuna! (XII 6- 7)

On me exclusively absorb your mind, and direct your intellect on me. Thereafter, in me alone will you doubtlessly abide. (XII; 8)

O Arjuna! If you are unable to steadily absorb your mind on me, then seek to attain me by the practice of yoga. (XII; 9)

If you are unable to practice yoga, then let your sole purpose be the dedication of service to me, dedicating all actions to me; you shall attain me through perfection. (XII; 10)

Lord Krishna assures us that the one thing that all can reach out to is the all-pervading power of Divine love. After all,

God the Father is ever anxious for the return of his lost children, so why would he place barriers in their homeward path? In fact, he is bound to save all his children: none should be left behind - even those with a poorly developed consciousness.

Everyone is capable of reaching Him - all that it takes is dedicating all actions to Him. One cannot dedicate unless one has compassion. If our actions are done with compassion, then they reach God, for compassion has the magic to dissolve in Him.

If you are unable to accomplish this, then with your attention absorbed in me, renounce the fruits of all action with a subdued mind. (XII; 11)

Though we are great, still we need to be connected to the living process, Lord Krishna isn't bothered if the connection is loose or strong – what matters is to empower it with dedication. However, there are two conditions. Firstly, the action should not be performed with an eye on the fruit. Secondly, the action should be performed with humble dedication.

Better than the exercise of discipline is knowledge. Better than knowledge meditation is preferable. Better than meditation, renunciation of the fruits of action is preferable - from it comes peace. (XII; 12)

The one, who is not averse to any being, who is loving and compassionate, and without ego or self-importance has equanimity in sorrow and happiness and is ever forgiving and patient. Ever content, who has control over the senses, of strong resolute, with mind and intellect absorbed in me, he is dear to me. (XII; 13-14)

He from whom beings do not react and who doesn't react to them, who is free from elation, wrath, fear and aversion is dear to me. (XII, 15)

In a letter Einstein wrote to the Queen Mother of Belgium, one of the few people he shared his deeper feelings with, he said, "Much as I should like to, it will not be given to me to see Belgium again. Because of a peculiar popularity, which I have acquired, anything I do is likely to develop into a ridiculous comedy. This means I have to stay close to my home and rarely leave Princeton."

Much like mercury that doesn't react to other metals, Einstein understood that if we hold our attention within, we do not react to others. Thereby, we do not have a disposition that causes others to react to us.

He who is without expectations, pure, proficient, impartial, even minded, unperturbed, who has renounced all deliberations, thus devoted to me, he is dear to Me. (XII; 16)

He who is not elated nor abhors, neither grieves nor yearns and who has renounced the auspicious and inauspicious, thus devoted to me, he is dear to me. (XII; 17)

An ascetic sat under a tree in deep meditation. Not long after, his meditation was disturbed by the cawing of a crow. The ascetic opened his eyes and angrily glared at the crow. The crow got burnt by the fire of his anger. Later in the evening, as he ventured on his usual begging rounds, a housewife asked him to wait till she finished feeding her husband. He took offence and threatened to curse her. She coolly retorted that she was no crow who would perish by his anger - she was fulfilling her duty as a wife, and thus abiding by her dharma. Impressed by the power of her dharma, the ascetic enquired after her Guru. She pointed to a butcher's shop across the street.

The ascetic was surprised to discover that the butcher who slices meat could be her guru. The butcher revealed that he had no choice in the matter because he was born in a caste whose profession was thus. Hence, he was merely doing his duty, but his attention was forever anchored on the Lord, and all his actions were an offering to Him.

Having heard the butcher, it clicked in his mind that when all actions are dedicated to God, nothing is auspicious or inauspicious.

He who is the same to foe and friend, honor and dishonor, cold and heat, happiness and sorrow and is free from attachment.
(XII; 18)

The polarity of friendship and enmity, honor and dishonor, cold and heat, happiness and unhappiness, kick in the phenomenal world of cause-and-effect. Though we may understand why something happens, and its effect, it doesn't tell us how to deal with it. But detachment helps us to think differently and go beyond it.

He who is the same in criticism and praise, who maintains silence, content with any adverse circumstances, not attached to any abode, resolute, devoted to me, he is dear to me. (XII; 19)

A yogi earned his living by selling flowers. People thought he had no judgment, because he would accept bad coins unhesitatingly. When the time came for him to die, he prayed, "O God, I have accepted many a bad coin from people without judging them. I too am a bad coin, so please do not judge me."

A customer who had come to buy flowers heard his prayers, reflected, “How is it possible to judge someone who doesn’t judge others!”

For sure, in the journey within we are not there to be praised or judged by others, but rather to judge ourselves.

Those who with faith, drinks this nectar of my discourse on Dharma, regarding me as the highest goal, such devotees are extremely dear to Me. (XII; 20)

Chapter Thirteen

The Self in All Beings

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

O Arjuna! This body is the field (kṣetra) and the one who knows it is called the knower of the field (kṣetrajña). (XIII; 1)

O Arjuna! Know me as the knower of the field within all the fields. The knowledge of the field and the knower of the field I deem as true knowledge. (XIII; 2)

There is something to be known, but we have not known it. When we commit mistakes, we know we are committing mistakes. When we steal, we know we are stealing. We know there is somebody within us who is watching us all the time. He knows all about us – our mistakes and turbulences. But He is beyond what our eyes can see, because his true nature is masked by the threefold energies. Thus, we are led to believe that the knower and the knowledge of the field are apart.

Hear the explanation of what the field is, its nature, modifications, whence each one comes; who is the knower and what is his power. (XIII; 3)

We are unaware of our inner ecosystem because the clouds of the threefold energies superimpose our attention. However, when the light of the Spirit enlightens our attention, we discover the hidden treasure of knowledge buried within.

This has been recited by the sages in several ways and in various verses and also verified logically and conclusively in texts as the Almighty God. (XIII; 4)

The five elements, the ego, intellect, nature, the ten senses, the mind and the five objects of the sense of perception. (XIII; 5)

Perception is the key engine that takes us across the game called life. Though we may learn to drive the engine with our senses, but we cannot do so unless we master the senses.

Desire and hate, pleasure, pain and sustenance; is briefly the field and its modifications. (XIII; 6)

Our mindscape features hate, pleasure, pain and expectations. However, our mindscape is not organic but man-made. Hence, it is possible to transform it - weed out the wilting plants and sow healthy ones that would nurture our Spirit.

Humility, absence of deviousness, forgiveness, perseverance, honesty, service to the guru, purity, balance and self-control. (XIII; 7)

Work keeps going on and business carries on, but according to Socrates, life without seeking is not worth living. It implies seeking beyond materialism, power or the mind. Furthermore, as mental seeking comes from curiosity, it fails to hone the evolutionary living process. Humility gives us a special edge to evolve. After all, it takes a Newton-like humility to acknowledge, "I am like a little child collecting pebbles on the shore of knowledge."

For sure, humility comes from child-like innocence. Though child-like innocence is a gift of nature, but somehow, we seem to lose it in the way of becoming adults. Perhaps, as our ego develops, it generates an idea that we are the doer, and we can change the world with our ideas. Hence, it is a long way from accepting the Divine as the doer.

On the other hand, psychologists teach us that arrogance comes from lack of self-confidence – ‘If you don’t come out strongly, others will take advantage of you.’

But there is no evidence to support such a proposition. A humble person should not be seen as a weak or a servile personality; on the contrary he is a secure person who doesn’t accept aggression. No one can overpower a person who shines in the compassion of his Spirit. In fact, when it comes to standing for his Spirit, he fights like a lion.

It is argued that circumstances make a person humble or arrogant - a humble person becomes arrogant when circumstances change and vice versa. For instance, out of compulsion an employee is humble to his master, but he could be arrogant to his subordinates. That said, we should bear in mind that just as tree laden with fruits naturally bends, when a person matures, he too bends.

Perhaps, we could draw a lesson of humility from the life of Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi. She washed the feet of her disciples. They protested that they could not bear their Holy Mother to wash their feet. She smiled, “I wash your feet so that you may remember to approach all humankind with humility- be they high or low.”

Till we imbibe the qualities mentioned by Lord Krishna, believing in God is as good as not believing in

him. However, at a closer look, each quality entails the other. For instance, humility entails forgiveness. It not only entails forgiving others but also forgiving ourselves. But paradoxically, we can't forgive ourselves, unless we forgive others. Our ego is burdened with molecules of guilt, and if we don't let them go, we carry on with something that doesn't exist in the universe.

However, with perseverance the toxic molecules can be replaced by healthy ones. It is said that equipping people to catch fish is far better than giving them fish every day. For sure, a life coach or a guru could be a GPS to help us replace the toxic molecules that otherwise contrive to escape us.

However, those who think they can buy a guru, fail to find the inner GPS. Much like Duckweed, they go on moving to the next new thing, but without a steady attention how can they find it.

Detachment from the objects of senses, egoless, introspection on suffering of birth, death, old age and disease. (XIII; 8)

Dispassionate towards son, wife, home, wealth and alike, and a constant equanimity in all desirable and undesirable occurrences. (XIII; 9)

Pleased with his victory, a king addressed his commander, “I would like to reward you with as much land as you can cover on your horse.”

The commander rushed to cover as much area as he possibly could. He kept riding without rest or food. After covering a massive land, he suddenly collapsed. He bemoaned, “Of what use is this land when I am dying. At the end of my life, I only need a small patch to bury myself.”

Our life might not be our own, but our Spirit is our own. Zen depicts life as the flow of a river. A river cannot reach the ocean if it clings to its banks. Likewise, though, relations, home, wealth and conditionings cling to us, our Spirit doesn’t cling to them. Conversely, if a river gets attached to the banks, it floods.

Of course, it doesn’t imply that one becomes devoid of feelings. On the contrary, the Spirit drenches us with Divine love, where mundane pleasures and woes, praise and criticism pale into insignificance.

Single-minded devotion to me, absorbed in yoga, staying in quiet places, avoiding crowds. (XIII; 10)

A disciple sought permission from his guru, “I want to retreat in the forest to find myself.”

Upon returning from the forest he reflected, “I always thought if I am alone with my thoughts, I would find myself, but I came back with all the problems still there within me - it made no difference in my life!”

The guru smiled, “The forest can’t give you an answer, if it is not there in the first place. If you detoxify your attention, you can find the answer right here. “

Absorbed in spiritual quest, perceiving the culmination of knowledge as God realization; this is proclaimed to be true knowledge, all else is non-knowledge. (XIII; 11)

Given that Arjuna ignores the truth because he can’t get over his relations in the enemy ranks, it begs the question; How to tell so called knowledge from ignorance? After all, even what we call knowledge can be used for good and bad. For instance, fake gurus show off super-natural powers to overpower others. It is not Divine knowledge. The father of western philosophy, Socrates, never wrote a single line, because he considered true knowledge to be the knowledge of the self. He confessed, “Yes, I am the most knowledgeable, because I know that I know nothing, whereas you do not know that.”

It was said of him, ‘If you want to understand him, listen not to what he says, but rather to what he doesn’t say.’

That is, received knowledge isn't self-knowledge.

I will reveal to you the object of knowledge and by knowing it you will attain the eternal. It is Almighty God who is without a beginning and who is said to be neither the existent nor the non-existent. (XIII, 12)

It is indeed a big riddle how the multiplicity of forms in the universe could be created by a force that is neither existent nor non-existent.

We have to look for the clue where it is least expected. The scriptures speak of an invisible source that emitted a quantum of vibrations that took myriads of forms. As we connect the dots, the missing pieces of the riddle fall into place.

He has hands and feet on every side, eyes, beads and faces on every side and ears everywhere. He abides in the world, pervading everything. (XIII; 13)

He is the consciousness of all the senses, and yet beyond them. Detached from them, and yet sustaining them. Devoid of gunas (threefold energies) and yet their enjoyer. (XIII; 14)

He is both outward and inward of all beings. He is in motion and motionless. He is too subtle to comprehend. He is distant, and yet close. (XIII; 15)

Paradoxically, the most distant is the closest. The one standing so close to our heart is the furthest from our sight. However, the Prophet Mohammad revealed that God is closer to us than our veins.

He is indivisible yet appears divisible among the beings. He is comprehended as the sustainer of all beings, destroying them and yet again creating them. (XIII;16)

Though the white light of the sun contains all the colors of the rainbow, yet we do not see them. However, when its shafts reflect on a crystal, it refracts in myriads of colors. Likewise, though the Divine is indivisible, he refracts in humans.

Says Kabira,

“The conscious and the unconscious are indivisible.

He is neither revealed nor hidden.

There are no words that can describe Him,

O friend, Kabira is lost in His search.

When the drop is lost in the ocean

How can it be found?”

He is the light of the lights, declared to be beyond ignorance. He is knowledge, the intent of knowledge and the goal of knowledge. He dwells in every heart. (XIII; 17)

Much like a wild boar, the engine of the intellect runs full speed in a straight line. That is, not towards God but parallel to him. But two parallel lines cannot meet. On the other hand, the magnetic line of true knowledge runs full speed towards God. After all, true knowledge cannot be acquired, it is born within.

Says the Sufi saint Baba Farid:

“Why wanderest thou in wild places,
Trampling thorn under thy feet?
God abides in the heart;
Seek Him not in lonely wastes.”

Thus knowledge, the field of knowledge and the intent of knowledge have been shortly revealed. Knowing this, my devotee attains me. (XIII; 18)

Know that Prakriti and Purusha are both without a beginning. That all temporal forms and the threefold energies emanate from the Prakriti. (XIII; 19)

Both science and philosophy argue that universal awareness is the core of all consciousness -we and everything else in the universe are intertwined with it. Some perceive it as un-manifest state as the Purusha or the Primordial Father, and some perceive it as Prakriti or the Primordial Mother. Thus, they are our Divine parents.

Prakriti is said to be the cause, and the instrument. The Purusha is said to be the source of the consciousness of pleasure and pain. (XIII; 20)

While crossing an oasis a seeker spotted a saint deep in meditation. The seeker dismounted from his camel and waited for the ascetic to open his eyes. Thereupon, he enquired, “O great one, can you please tell me if God is form or formless?”

The saint nodded, “O friend listen – the Primordial Father became shy of moving in his formless self, so he cloaked himself with a robe woven by the Primordial Mother. In turn, the Primordial Mother reflected his image in nature. Look, he is everywhere in nature –smiling in the flowers, leaves, trees and cows!”

When the Purusha embraces Prakriti, he experiences her threefold energies. Attachment to the threefold energies becomes the cause of his birth in good and evil beings. (XIII; 21)

It is said that in the beginning there was nothing other than Divine love. It was neither mental nor emotional; it was existence itself. But it could not see itself so his germinating power, the Primordial Mother created the spectacle for him to enjoy his reflection. But the most beautiful spectacle was human beings.

The Spirit dwelling within the body is the witness and the catalyst. It is the sustainer, the experiences, the Lord and the Supreme self. (XIII; 22)

The Mother Power of creation is the catalyst that sustains all things living and non-living, active and inactive, static and dynamic, gross and subtle. Purusha, the Primordial Father witnesses her game of creation without attachment. His love is akin to the sap of a tree, which goes to the various parts, without attachment to any. Were it to get attached to any one part, the tree would die – creation would end.

That is, the Spirit within us witnesses the game of the threefold energies with attachment to none.

He who knows in truth about this Purusha and Prakriti and her threefold energies; in whatsoever way he may act, he is not bound by rebirth. (XIII; 23)

Like the clouds hide the sun, the threefold energies emanating from the Mother Power of creation hide the Spirit. But the Spirit is the reflection of Purusha, the Primordial Father, and hence shines in its own glory.

The threefold energies are what Zen calls the phenomenon of change. Nothing is static in the course of nature - one cycle has to end for the next to begin. However, the one who perceives that the threefold energies are just like transiting clouds, is not deceived by them, nor bound by rebirth.

Some there are who by meditation realize the self within their own self, some by the path of sankhya (self-knowledge) and others by the path of Karma yoga (selfless action). (XIII; 24)

Others unable to pursue these paths learn by hearing from other realized beings. They too get liberated from rebirth by devotedly pursuing the hearings. (XIII; 25)

The blind can find the path by holding the hand of the one who can see. Likewise, a seeker can hold the hand of those who have been down the path themselves.

O Arjuna! Understand that whatever being that is born, moving or unmoving, comes from the union of the field - Prakriti and the knower of the field. (XIII; 26)

He who perceives the Supreme Being equally residing in all beings that are undergoing dissolution - he truly perceives. (XIII; 27)

In our evolution we have grown slowly into the human state and now we have to grow a little more to attain the Spirit state. The Spirit state gives us a new awareness that enables us to perceive that the same Spirit resides in all beings, and that it doesn't perish when the body perishes.

Perceiving the Supreme Being equally residing everywhere, he doesn't hurt his inner self by his self, thus he attains the highest state. (XIII; 28)

Though we are all at different levels of understanding, we are one Spirit in different bodies. That is, we are cells in the one Supreme Being, in which each cell merely reflects the other. As we see our reflection in others, we become collectively conscious. Our Spirit feels another's Spirit, and we understand that if we hurt the other, we hurt ourselves. Or rather one person's hurt hurts us all. Or rather, one person's joy can bring a smile on the face of God.

But a favorite hymn of Mahatma Gandhi reminds us that only he is truly a man of God who overcomes his adversities, as much as those of others.

He who perceives that all works are done by Prakriti and the Purusha is not the doer, he truly perceives. (XIII; 29)

Nature works in miraculous ways. What could be more miraculous than a wee leaf harnessing the sun's energy into life. Even the mighty sun cannot do so. Likewise, the unmanifest Primordial Father, doesn't create anything; he leaves everything to the Primordial Mother Power, and just remains a silent witness. But in that witnessing everything germinates.

When the self perceives the multiplicity of beings unified in the Supreme One and emanating from it, then he attains the Supreme Being. (XIII; 30)

Albert Einstein brought the story of evolution and science together - "Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a Spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe - a Spirit that is vastly superior to that of man and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble."

Advances in neuro-science affirm that at a deeply fundamental level, the separate parts of the universe are connected across time and space by some higher force vastly superior to man. As we explore the frontiers of this superior force, we become aware of its laws.

O Arjuna! Being without any beginning and free from the changing threefold energies, the Supreme Being is indestructible. Though residing in the body, he doesn't act nor is affected by anything. (XIII; 31)

Though the Spirit resides in our heart, we cannot feel it if it is superimposed by layers of the mind, ego or the intellect. But equally, is not deceived by them, but rather laughs at their deception.

Just as the ever-present ether by virtue of its subtlety is not affected, similarly the Spirit residing in the body is not affected. (XIII; 32)

Our prehistoric ancestors managed to augment their chances of survival with the help of their internal compass. The internal compass is none other than the Spirit. The Spirit doesn't depend on anything but itself; hence, it is self-contained. As it doesn't want or expect anything, it cannot be corrupted or coded. It is like a light that spreads by its own nature, and opens up all the hearts.

O Arjuna! Just as the sun illumines the entire universe, similarly the knower of the field illuminates the entire field. (XIII; 33)

The sun shines not on us but in us. Likewise, the Spirit doesn't shine for itself but for the whole world. As we let our Spirit run free, we enable the world to shine.

Those who discern with the eyes of wisdom the difference between the field and the knower of the field and also the deliverance of beings from nature - they attain the highest state. (XIII; 34)

The threefold energies emanating from the Mother Power of creation create the field within us. No doubt, rationality is an important tool for understanding the field, but our understanding is not complete without wisdom. Take the case of fanatics who rationally convince themselves that they are doing a great service to their religion by waging wars against infidels.

Says Rumi:

“Out beyond all wrong-doing and right-doing,

There is a field. I'll meet you there,

When the soul lies down in that grass,

The world is too full to speak about...”

Chapter Fourteen

The Threefold Energies Emanating From the Mother Power of Creation

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

I will again reveal the absolute knowledge and the culmination of knowledge, by knowing it; the saints have been liberated from this world and attained the epitome of perfection. (XIV; 1)

Taking recourse in this knowledge, and imbibing the qualities of my nature they are not reborn at the time of creation not affected at the time of dissolution. (XIV; 2)

O Arjuna! My womb is the Almighty God, wherein I implant the seed, all beings are born from it, O Bharata. (XIV, 3)

O Arjuna! Whatsoever forms are born in the wombs, Almighty God is their womb and I am the Father who implants the seed.” (XIV, 4)

It is hard to develop rapport with the unmanifest primordial Father. Nonetheless, it is possible to develop a rapport with something more tangible as his creation. The

one who loves his creation abides in him. Or rather he abides in such a person.

O Arjuna! From Prakriti emanate three kinds of energies called sattwa, rajas and tamas. These bridle the immortal dweller in the body. (XIV; 5)

The three energies; sattwa, rajas and tamas are the play of the Mother Power of creation. A mind that gets trapped in their play, kicks in the drama of life. However, as the Spirit is the knower of their field, it merely witnesses their play, and does not fall into their trap.

O Arjuna! Of them sattwa being pure leads to enlightenment and wellbeing. It fetters by attachment to happiness and knowledge. (XIV; 6)

O Arjuna! Understand rajas to be of the nature of passion arising from yearning and attachment. It fetters the embodied spirit by attachment to the fruit of action. (XIV; 7)

O Arjuna! Understand that Tamas arises from ignorance. It deludes the embodied spirit by attachment to lethargy, negligence and sleep. (XIV; 8)

O Arjuna! The Sattwa causes attachment to happiness, Rajas, to action but Tamas eclipses wisdom and attaches to inertia. (XIV; 9)

The threefold energies fuel the three channels of our sympathetic/para sympathetic nervous system. Sattwa energizes the central channel (para-sympathetic nervous system); rajas- the sun channel (the right- side sympathetic nervous), and tamas; the moon channel (the left-side sympathetic nervous system).

The moon channel manifests our power of desire; the sun channel; our power of action, and the central channel our evolutionary process. However, as these three powers are rarely in balance, Lord Krishna categorizes people categories according to the predominant power that ties us down.

O Arjuna! Overcoming rajas and tamas, sattwa dominates. Overcoming sattwa and tamas, rajas dominates. Over-coming sattwa and rajas, tamas dominates. (XIV; 10)

The battlefield of Kurukshetra encapsulates the conflict between sattwa and tamas energies. Closer home, these irreconcilable and opposite energies are pitched against each other in the battlefield of the mind. Each energy plays to its strength, and at the cost of the other. To put it in context, if Arjuna does not vanquish tamas, tamas will vanquish him.

More precisely, if Arjuna does not kill the enemy, the enemy will kill him.

But equally, victory fuels the ego. As a sattwic person becomes conscious of his righteousness he thinks, “I don’t want anything. I do no wrong or hurt anybody. I am perfect.”

But if a righteous person lacks compassion, his ego comes in the way. Thus, much like busy bees who think they are serving others, a sattwic person could be serving his own ego - he could have a mental obsession for charity.

Yet again, a sattwik scholar could weaponize knowledge.

Though all the three energies aspire to win, Arjuna could win the battle without a fight. But he must become a witness to their play.

Says, Lao Tse;

“To attain knowledge, add every day.

To attain wisdom, remove things every day.”

When wisdom illuminates all the gateways of the body, then one can know that sattwa has exceeded. (XIV; 11)

A sattwic person is coded by conditionings that are conducive to his evolutionary process. However, according to the psychologist Sigmund Freud we should erase all conditioning. Another one, like Jean-Paul Sartre believed that will-power should be increased. Though good

conditionings (su-samskars) are conducive to evolution, will-power is the driving force. For instance, if a child is instructed not to tell lies, he needs will-power to implement it.

However, a sattwic person uses his will-power to battle against toxic conditionings and expedite his evolution.

O Arjuna! When rajas exceeds then avariciousness, action, venturesomeness, agitation and yearning emerge (XIV; 12)

Though the rajasic are very driven, but in the process, they go ahead of themselves. Sean Burch ended up being the first Virginian to ever summit Mount Everest. “It wasn’t an easy expedition by any means,” he said. “But after that, I figured if I can do this, what else can I do?”

After returning to the real world, Sean had a few revelations, “I always thought if I get to the top of this mountain and get back down alive, then I will be happy.” He said, “I came down and was riding that high for two to three months, but all the problems that people go through were still there within me. Climbing a mountain, no matter how stupid or crazy is not going to make a difference in your life. It’s going to be up to you to make a change.”

Rajasic people believe that they have to fight to win. But the key to winning lies within - winning is not winning if nothing changes within. Without change they cannot win over fear.

Thus, the ego is always afraid, 'when will I fall off the edge.' It explains why the rajasic are always on the defensive - they refuse to get off the tiger, because they are afraid the tiger will devour them.

O Arjuna! When tamas exceeds then ignorance, lethargy, negligence and infatuation arise. (XIV; 13)

Thorns and roses grow together. A tamasic person is embittered by the thorns that prick him, and thus miss out the beauty of the roses. Thus, he is quick to express his resentment against the world at the slightest pretext. In the process, he sees the world as an enemy, rather than a friend.

When sattva predominates and the embodied spirit meets death, then such a being attains the pure sphere of those who know the highest state. (XIV; 14)

As the sattwic are dharma-driven, they continue to evolve.

If rajas dominates at the time of death, then he takes birth among the action oriented. The one who meets death when tamas predominates; he is born among the ignorant. (XIV; 15)

People believe that if they die in a holy place, they will attain salvation. But there is no evidence to prove it. According to Lord Krishna when the body is annihilated, the non-physical mind proceeds according to the antecedent state of the energy prevailing at that time. For instance, the rajasic and the tamasic carry on in the next life with the same content of the ego as in the previous one.

It is said that the fruit of good deeds arising from sattwa are pure and give happiness. Whereas the fruit of rajas is suffering, the fruit of tamas is delusion. (XIV; 16)

While the tamasic see the odds as stumbling blocks, the sattvic turns them into stepping stones. Thus, what are demolitions to the tamasic are renovations to the sattwik.

If the tamasic falls off a cliff he gives up hope, whereas, the sattwic climbs back again.

Sattwa leads to knowledge, rajas to greed. Negligence, infatuation, and delusion arise from tamas. (XIV; 17)

A rajasic and a tamasic met in a tea-house. The rajasic boasted, "I always have ready answers, because I acknowledge the evidence of only human intelligence." The tamasic boasted, "I acknowledge the sensuous world as the only reality." Both their foregone conclusions and pre-determinations sourced from ignorance - neither had found the reality. Thus, like a river that doesn't know where it is flowing, they roam forever confused about the reality.

When the adept realizes that there is no catalyst other than the threefold energies, and perceives what is beyond them then he attains my Being. (XIV; 19)

Transcending the three energies which constitute his mortal body, then the embodied self becomes liberated from birth, death, old age, suffering and attains the highest state. (XIV; 20)

Every part that is separated from its mass is incomplete, and hence desires to return to it. But bewitched by the threefold energies, we are unable to return to it. Nonetheless, the light of our Spirit guides us to return to it by the shortest route.

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna;

O Lord! By what attributes is the one who transcends the threefold energies characterized? What is his life style? How does he transcend the threefold energies?" (XIV; 21)

The Lord responds;

O Arjuna! He, who is not averse to the light of knowledge, action and infatuation when they arise nor hankers after them when they fall. (XIV; 22)

He, who remains apart like a witness, unruffled by the threefold energies, aware that it is they are the catalyst, remains firmly anchored and doesn't flinch. (XIV; 23)

A person is not less human because he sins. In fact, he is human because he needs to process his redemption. But if he goes on denying the truth, he becomes an escapist, and that delays his redemption.

Nonetheless, we have an unsuspecting agility to turn the threefold energies into a tale of redemption, and thus relate to the world in a whole new way.

He, who is anchored in the self, who is even-minded in sorrow and happiness, who regards a clod, a stone or gold equally, who looks upon the loved and unloved ones with balance, resolute, who takes praise and rebuke in the same stride. (XIV; 24)

Till we love our Spirit, we cannot cherish others. As we embrace their Spirit, we cherish them within. Thus, there remains 'no other', who can praise or rebuke, who feels honor or dishonor, who is the doer or who feels pleasure or pain. But we cannot pretend to be on an even keel, we have to be anchored within.

Who takes honor and dishonor in the same stride, and views friends and enemies evenly, renouncing all deliberations, he transcends the threefold energies. (XIV; 25)

We don't have to please everyone. We don't have to worry if people like us. What matters is to be true to our roots and evolve. As we evolve, we know how to relate to people without any bias. Confucius said something similar, "I will not be affected at men not knowing me- I will be affected that I do not know men."

He who serves me with ardent devotion, transcending the threefold energies, he too is worthy of union with Almighty God. For I am the abode of Almighty God, the immortal and indestructible. I am also the abode of dharma and eternal bliss. (XIV; 26-27)

Chapter Fifteen

The Tree of Knowledge

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

They describe it as the imperishable Banyan tree, with its roots above and branches spread downwards. Its leaves are the Vedas, the one who perceives this knows the Vedas. (XV; 1)

Its branches spread downwards propelled by the threefold energies, with sense objects for its leaves. The roots spread upwards to the world, bound by karma. (XV; 2)

The Banyan tree with branches spreading downwards and roots upwards symbolizes the Tree of Knowledge. Just as it is nurtured by its sap, the Tree of Knowledge is nurtured by the sap of the kundalini. Her sap lies in a dormant state in each one of us from the moment we are born. She records the soundtrack of our evolution thus far, as well as the possibility of self-evolution further. However, there can be no future unless she awakens and crosses the narrow door of the crown chakra. But it is not easy to cross it warns Kabira:

“The door of liberation is very narrow,
Less than the width of a mustard seed.
Your mind is larger than an elephant.
How will it pass through?”

However, upon crossing the narrow door of liberation, the kundalini turns the Tree of knowledge upside down. As she waters the brain, the roots start spreading in all directions and widens crown chakra large as the world.

However, its real form cannot be comprehended, because neither does it have a beginning, nor an end, and nor an anchor. One should first cut off this firmly rooted banyan tree with the strong weapon of non-attachment. (XV; 3)

The proud Banyan tree has an awesome personality because its many supporting roots help to spread its awesome canopy. But behind its awesome canopy is a great movement of its roots striving towards the source of life. As its roots spread deep and wide, and it is hard to detect the tap root. Similarly, the roots of the mind spread deep and wide, and it is hard to detect the tap root. Nonetheless, after Self-realization it is possible to detect it, and sever it with the weapon of detachment.

The Mandukya Upanishad speaks of the sacred tree of life on which two birds are perched - one is Jiva or the Spirit-bird and the other is the Cosmic bird. The Cosmic bird perched on the higher branch soars in the sky, and beckons the Spirit-bird perched on the lower branch to follow suit.

One should take the cue from those who have achieved that state, never to return to the world, praying, "I take refuge in the Primordial Purusha from whom emanates this cosmic power". (XV; 4)

Those who are devoid of ego and infatuation, free from the sin of attachment, whose passions are sublimated, ardently devoted to the Supreme Being, who are free from the duality of pleasure and pain; they are not deluded and attain the highest state. (XV; 5)

Attaining that abode from which they never return, which the Sun doesn't illuminate, nor the moon nor the fire, that is My Supreme abode. (XV; 6)

A fraction of my own Self transforms into the individual Spirit in the sentient world, and draws the senses and the mind as the sixth, which is inherent in Prakriti. (XV; 7)

As stated earlier, a fraction of the Primordial Father reflects in our hearts as the Spirit, and the Primordial Mother manifests the five sense organs and the mind as the sixth.

However, it is hard to put a finger on the mind. Mind can be a lot of things. According to neuro-scientists, time and space only exist as ideas in the mind. If that was to pan out, time and space are not the basic properties of the universe - rather they are the projections of the mind. Whereas, according to psychologists the mind is the central processing unit of the ego. That said, we could be conscious of our breathing without turning on the volume of the mind. Likewise, when our attention is relaxed and devoid of thoughts, we don't need the mind to enjoy children play. For sure, the power of the human mind is limited.

A seeker strived to transcend the limits of the mind, and spent long periods travelling far and wide to seek guidance from enlightened masters. As he explored a fresh terrain, he was drawn by the fragrances of roses from an adjacent garden. Just as he plucked one, the gardener suddenly appeared. He panicked.

The gardener quipped, "Why cling to one rose when you can enjoy the fragrance of all the roses!"

The seeker apologized, "Forgive me, I was deluded by my impetuous mind!"

The gardener laughed "Ha! The impetuous mind! it just plays from here to there."

The gardener went on to demonstrate the play of the mind by unplugging a sapling from one flowerbed, and then

plugging it into another flowerbed. “It is not a question of fighting the mind, but rather befriending it.”

Even before the seeker could take it in, the gardener turned around with a twinkle in his eyes, “But before that, don’t forget to wash yourself with the same water that gives roses their sweet fragrance!”

Whenever the Master (of the senses) takes up a body or relinquishes it, He carries the residue of their desires with it along as the wind sweeps the fragrance from their abode. (XV; 8)

Even when we come close to our expiry date, we are still haunted by desires. However, when the Spirit leaves the body, only the earth element is left behind; the residue of our desires carries on with it. These desires sweep us relentlessly like the wind to the next life for their fulfillment.

Pervading the senses, he experiences the objects of the senses through the ears, eyes, touch, taste, smell as well as the mind. (XV; 9)

When he relinquishes the body or remains in it and experiences the threefold energies; the deluded do not perceive it but those with the eye of wisdom perceive the threefold energies. (XV; 10)

The way people perceive the universe around them varies. However, there is a miniature universe within us that can be. But why seek the inner planet elsewhere when it can be perceived with the eyes of wisdom.

The sages who endeavor perceive Him as dwelling within, but the gross ones, who have not attained purity, despite their endeavor, do not perceive him. (XV; 11)

As a seed is bound by its dharma to sprout, human consciousness is bound by its dharma to become collectively conscious. William Blake affirmed, “Men of God will become prophets, and they will have powers to make others prophets.” That is, the Spirit which is the collective being within us manifests in our attention and makes us collectively conscious. In the real sense, we enjoy others as we enjoy ourselves and also empower them with our love. Of course, it doesn’t happen overnight – everyone grows at his own pace. Never mind, if the pace is fast or slow, Lord Krishna shows the shortcut anyway.

The effulgence of the Sun that illumines this whole universe, and that radiance which is in the moon and fire, know that effulgence is mine. (XV; 12)

Pervading the earth, I sustain all beings by my vital force. I also nurture the plants by becoming Soma which is the sap. (XV; 13)

By becoming the fire in the body of beings and in conjunction with the outgoing and incoming vital airs, I digest the four-fold foods. (XV; 14)

I am seated in the heart of everyone. From me emanate memory, knowledge and their decline. I am the subject of the Vedas, I am the source of the Vedas and also the knower of the Vedas. (XV; 15)

There are two aspects of Purushas in this world, the mutable and the immutable. The mutable is all this existence and the spirit is the immutable. (XV; 16)

But above these there is the absolute Purusha who is the Supreme Self, who pervades the three spheres, sustaining them as God Almighty. (XV; 17)

Since I am beyond both the mutable and the immutable, I am recognized as the highest Being by the world and the Vedas. (XV; 18)

O Arjuna! He who is free from delusion perceives me as the supreme; he is realized and worships me whole heartedly. (XV; 19)

O Arjuna! This is the secret of secrets revealed by me. Knowing this, one becomes wise and realized. (XV; 20)

Lord Krishna has left nothing unsaid. Though, he has taken the horse to the water, but he cannot make the horse drink.

Chapter Sixteen

Choices

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna:

Fearlessness, purity of mind, pursuit of knowledge and its application with discretion, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of scriptures, simplicity and straightforwardness. (XVI; 1)

We like to get our bearings before making the next move, because we don't know when we will fall. As we imagine the worst, it darkens the mind, and renders it vulnerable. Hence, we need to transform. As an egg has to transform into a bird, we have to transform into the Spirit.

Furthermore, Lord Krishna talks of absolute knowledge. When absolute knowledge is discovered by one person, it has to become collective knowledge, else it is meaningless. But someone like Socrates who discovered absolute knowledge confessed that all he knew was that he knew nothing.

It is a question of understanding that all received knowledge is relative. Of course, the key to absolute knowledge is Self-realization. And an essential ingredient for that is straight-forwardness. On balance, the lighter the baggage, the swifter the journey.

Truth, freedom from wrath, renunciation, peacefulness, averse to spite, compassion, non-covetousness, tenderness and balance. (XVI; 2)

O Arjuna! Spirited, forgiveness, resilience, purity, free from aversion and ego; these O Bharata are the attributes of the one who is born with a divine nature. (XVI; 3)

The human brain has a mechanism for processing mental overload - it forgets. Likewise, the Spirit has a mechanism for processing emotional overload – it forgives. The Spirit forgives, because it enjoys its forgiveness. Thus, in every heart there is room for forgiveness but none for revenge.

What's more, the nagging anxieties and the hurts that we don't forgive fossilize into toxins. In the absence of an escape route, they turn up without any warning as psychosomatic ailments. Thus, we don't forgive for the sake of the offender - we forgive to unload our toxins.

Hence, let not a quarrel carry overnight - the offender would have moved on and left the quarrel behind, whereas the one carrying it would be seething in pain.

Come to think of it, if we are not the doer, then who are we to forgive anyway! The misdeeds of the offender are recorded in his black-box, and decrees his punishment. Says Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, “There is a kind of human expression of one’s own being that you want to be generous. The greatest generosity is to forgive. If you forgive others, you are generous to yourself. However, in your generosity you must have discretion – that is the part you always seem to forget.”

O Arjuna! Deviousness, arrogance, ego, wrath, and ignorance are the attributes of the one born with demonic nature. (XVI; 4)

The Divine nature leads to salvation. The demonic nature leads to bondage. But do not despair, for you are born with a divine nature. (XVI; 5)

As a diamond doesn’t know its own value, we do not know the value of our Divine nature. We should forgive our eyes for not perceiving it, because they are eclipsed by the threefold energies of Mother Nature.

Like the sun is illumined by itself, our true nature is illumined by the Spirit. But it gets clouded by the threefold

energies just like the sun gets clouded. But as soon as the light of the Spirit perceives the clouds, our Divine nature surfaces. We see it in the case of mothers who put their life on hold for their children's sake, or a person who jumps to rescue a drowning child, or the one who takes on the pain of others to redeem them.

There are two kinds of beings created in the world—the Divine and the demonic nature. The divine nature has been revealed; now hear from me O Arjuna, about the demonic nature. (XVI; 6)

The demonic nature doesn't know the right action and abstention, nor do they possess purity, or right conduct or truth. (XVI; 7)

We have achieved our present state of awareness across different stages of evolution. Yet, we continue to be inconsistent. We say that fossil fuels are choking our planet, yet it doesn't stop us from burning them. We say that nuclear arms endanger the human species, yet we stockpile them. We say alcohol diminishes awareness, yet it doesn't stop us from consuming it. We say the battlefield of Kurukshetra is inside our heads, yet we are not ready to exorcise our demons.

Any genre that stands in the way of our Spirit can be none other than a demon. Though these demons disguise themselves to deceive our rational mind, but they cannot deceive our Spirit. The Spirit functions much like the body's

“T” cells that not only recognizes them but also hounds them out.

Devoid of truth, rootless, they believe the world to be without God, without any causal consideration, but with lust. (XV1; 8)

The story of our evolution from amoeba to this stage tells us that we did not evolve through the process of sex but seeking. For instance, animals involve in sex spontaneously, but it makes no difference to their evolution.

As we follow the story of our evolution thus far, we come to understand the potential of our chakras. For instance, the first chakra unlocks the potential of innocence that provides sanctity to sex. And that’s what gives us the sense of security at the heart chakra. But, if ego superimpose on sex, then it loses its potential. It led psychologist Sigmund Freud to feed his individual sexual behavior to explain collective behavior - as if we are sex points. Significantly, Lord Krishna reminds us of our innate human nature beyond sex. For instance, it is innate nature of a newborn to turn towards its mother for fulfillment. Likewise, it is innate human nature to turn towards its creator for fulfillment. Of course, sex has a rightful place in our life, but if it is controlled by the ego, it leads to abnormal behavior. Fortunately, Lord Krishna did not incarnate in a world where sex is the end point, else he

would have been cancelled as an imaginative and unreal personality.

Adamant in their belief these lost souls of dim intellect and savage deeds, are enemies of mankind, capable only of the destruction of the world. (XVI; 9)

Indulging in insatiable lust, deviousness, ego and arrogance, having perverse perception through delusion, they engage in perversion. (XVI; 10)

Encumbered in countless anxieties which would only end with death, they Pursue gratification of desires as their highest aim, believing it to be the end of all. (XVI; 11)

Encumbered in hundreds of shackles of expectations, caught up in lust and anger, for quelling their desires they strive to amass wealth unscrupulously. (XVI; 12)

They think, "So much today has been gained by me, this ambition I shall fulfill. This much wealth is mine and so much more wealth shall be mine in future." (XVI; 13)

People are in an uncanny habit of going through their mail and indulging in every coupon advertised. They deplete their bank balance unnecessarily, and feel happy scoring great

deals. Though their income improves, their contentment level remains stagnant. Because with the rise of financial condition, their attention goes to a whole lot of new things that they did not have before.

Even though they attain the Midas touch or prolong their life or earn the highest honors, they do not earn peace because whatever they have to earn, they have to earn within.

I have already eliminated this enemy; also, I will eliminate other enemies. I am God, I am the enjoyer, I am endowed with all sidhis, I am powerful and joyous. (XVI; 14)

Under delusion they think, "I am the wealthiest and of great lineage. Who is there parallel to me? I shall perform sacrifices, give donations, I shall enjoy." (XVI; 15)

Confounded by innumerable thoughts, encumbered in the labyrinth of infatuation and absorbed in the pursuit of desires, they fall into terrible hell. (XVI; 16)

Gloating in self-importance, stubborn, overwhelmed by arrogance of wealth and ego they make offerings which are only namesake, with pomp but without proper protocol. (XVI; 17)

Full of ego, power, pride, lust and wrath, these venomous

people loathe me, who abides in their bodies and also others. (XVI; 18)

These savage haters, evil and the vilest of men, I continually hurl into the womb of hell in the cycle of birth and death. (XVI; 19)

We already know that the battle of Kurukshetra skeletal the struggle between dharma and adharma. The Pandavas are driven by dharma, whereas the Kauravas are driven by adharma. On the epic stage of Kurukshetra the adharmic clearly stand out as evil, and hence can easily be distinguished, but on the postmodern stage they play out in the brain, and hence not so easy to decipher.

O Arjuna! Penetrating the womb of evil, these deluded creatures, birth after birth do not attain me but descend into the lowest state. (XVI; 20)

Though the choices are ours to make, responsibility comes with choices. For instance, a wrong choice can lead to dire repercussions. They build up an evil force within us that passes on from birth to birth. Shakespeare said it all:

“The evil that men do lives after them.

The good is oft buried with the bones.”

Lust, anger and greed are the threefold gate to hell which leads to the ruin of the embodied soul. Therefore, one should renounce these three. (XVI; 21)

The conflict to extract the maximum from our limited biosphere has only left us poorer. Of course, money is irreplaceable in our lives, but when it comes to inner peace, it is useless. People who always have everything, are the one's always wanting more. That is not to say that poverty leads to peace either. To gain inner peace, neither wealth nor poverty matter, what matters is to give a part of ourself away.

It is argued that greed is a part of the human experience. But if we step in the animal kingdom, we come to understand that it is not true. For instance, a lion is satisfied after eating his prey, and then leaves the remaining carcass to other animals.

Nonetheless, commercialism has taught us one thing- that the desert can never be satisfied with the any amount of rain. And that leaves no place for God.

God doesn't want our money, but we want his Grace, says
Pragya Pradhan:

“The well of worldly love
eventually runs dry
No matter what you do

Lust, anger and greed
take you for a ride
Don't rely on relations either
Money enters, families scatter
Trust only your spirit's intention
Connect with the source
Your well of rejuvenation"

Arjuna! The one who is liberated from the three gates of darkness, pursues what lies in the ascent of his Spirit, and achieves the highest state. (XVI; 22)

But the one who ignores the canons of the scriptures and acts under the impulse of desire, he neither attains perfection nor happiness nor the highest state. (XVI; 23)

Therefore, respect the authority of the scriptures for determining what action to do and what not to do. Knowing what is proclaimed by canons of the scriptures, perform all action accordingly. (XVI; 24)

Though the dictum of all the scriptures is for everyone, however it is not in words, but in the becoming of what the scriptures say. But unless we read our own scripture within us, how will we become that.

Chapter Seventeen

A pilot's impediments - Sattwic, Rajasic, Tamasic

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna:

Those who perform worship with faith but omit the protocol prescribed by the scriptures, what is their situation; Sattwa, Rajas or Tamas? (XVII, 1)

Lord Krishna responds:

The faith of the embodied soul is of three kinds - Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic. Now listen about these. (XVII; 2)

O Arjuna! The faith of each one is according to his temperament. A person is of the temperament of his faith. What his faith is so he becomes. (XVII; 3)

The Sattwic worship the Gods, the Rajasic worship the Yakshas. The Tamasic worship the spirits and bhoots. (XVII; 4)

There is nothing preposterous with the idea that the mind is susceptible to the invisible influences of evil spirits called bhoots. Curiously, British neurologist and Nobel Laureate,

John Eccles, discovered that consciousness is extra-cerebral. He specified an area in the brain where fusion of consciousness takes place. He revealed that a non-physical mind survives the death of the physical body and brain. Though he did not clarify the state of the non-physical mind, our Lord Jesus Christ exorcised an evil spirit from a man and cast it into pigs.

“While he was climbing into the boat, the one who had been demon-possessed pleaded with Jesus to let him come along as one of his disciples. But Jesus wouldn’t allow it. “Go home to your people,” Jesus said, “and tell them what the Lord has done for you and how he has shown you mercy.” (Mark 5)

Thus, we come to understand evil spirits as bhoots.

It was customary for a wandering mendicant never to sleep in the same village for more than once. In one village the people honored him. He blessed them, “May you scatter.”

In another, they threw stones at him. He blessed them, “May you stay put in one place.”

His disciple was bewildered, “Master, how is it that you blessed those who honored you, to scatter, while those who stoned you, to stay put.”

The mendicant smiled, “If good people scatter, they will spread goodness, but if the possessed people spread, they will possess others.”

The disciple questioned, "How could you tell they were possessed?"

The mendicant replied, "Just as dogs have an uncanny sensitivity to detect the vibrations of malevolent spirits, humans too can detect their vibrations if their awareness is enlightened by the Spirit. In practical terms, anyone who goes against his awareness is a bhoot, as in the case of the villagers who stoned me."

However, in our times, malevolent spirits do not stone anyone but much like parasites they take over human hosts and gain power.

But that's not the whole story - much like a virus that infiltrates a computer, dissatisfied spirits filter their desire through human mind to fulfill it. For instance, an alcoholic spirit quenches its yearning for alcohol by possessing an alcoholic. Worse, it leaves a trail of confusion in our mind. For instance, we often hear people say, "I didn't want to say it, but I did." "I didn't want to do it, but I did."

And that brings us to Newton's first law of motion - if a thing is at rest, it will continue to be at rest, and if it is in motion, it will continue to be so unless it is acted upon by an external force. To bring it in context, our evolution continues to spiral unless it is intersected by some variable. In parallel, just as cancer cells attack healthy cells, these

variables intersect our psyche. That is, the variable that hold us hostages without our knowledge are not any extra-terrestrial beings invading our planet but bhoots.

Interestingly, a bhoot succeeds in invading our psyche because it knows everything about us, whereas, we know nothing about it. But equally, a door must be open in our psyche that allows it to hitch a ride. That open-door is none other than our attachments.

More tellingly, possession comes from a strong personality dominating a weaker one. For instance, if the aggressor is a sadist oppressing a masochist - both put together can live happily due to the fact that one's angularity fits into the others' dents. It explains how certain compromises may in fact be possessions.

Those who perform terrible austerities not prescribed by the scriptures, these devious and egoist people are swayed by the force of their desire and lust. (XVII; 5)

These senseless people aggravate the elements that compose the body and me as well abiding in the body; know them to be of demonic disposition. (XVII; 6)

People who show off magical feats to mystify their audience use a variety of hypnotic techniques like telepathy, clairvoyance, levitation, astral travelling and auto-induced trance. But these techniques are just gimmicks. Advanced research shows that a person doesn't feel pain if a certain gene is missing. For instance, a person can walk on fire or spikes without feeling pain. Hence, magical feats should not be mistaken for Divine power. Likewise, clairvoyants and psychics predict future, because they are possessed by a dead Spirit that can foresee the future.

Also, the foods which are liked by all are of three kinds according to their temperament. Similarly, are the offerings, austerities and charities. Now listen to their categories. (XVII; 7)

Foods which augment longevity, vitality, strength, health, happiness and delight, which are sweet, succulent, sustaining and fulfilling are pleasing to the sattvic. (XVII; 8)

Foods which are bitter, sour, salty, hot, sharp, dry and burning causing pain, misery and ill health are pleasing to the rajasic. (XVII; 9)

Foods which are stale, unsavory, foul smelling, putrid, which are left over of part eaten food and defiled are pleasing to the tamasic. (XVII; 10)

Given that the sun supplies us with energy, but we cannot eat its energy. Roots, stem, leaves, fruit and grain along with many molecular components interact with sunshine, soil and water to give us energy giving food. However, people in different time zones follow different food cultures. What is sattvic in one may be considered rajasic in the other and vice versa. But there is one sattvic ritual that is woven into every culture – the breaking of bread with one's brothers.

Lord Krishna, affirms *“Those who partake the food left over from the sacrificial offerings attain God realization.”*

Conversely, *“He, who only makes food for himself, eats in sin.”*

It changes our relationship with food - not only should it be enjoyable, but also be cooked with love, offered with love and accepted with love. In the words of Rumi:

“Ask God for love not for life.

Ask God for soul food not for bread.”

The offering which is performed as prescribed by the

scriptures without expectation of reward, and performed in a balanced state of mind, and in the faith that it ought to be performed is sattvic. (XVII; 11)

The Rajasic say, “Without sacrifice the people shall perish.” But for the sattvic nothing is a sacrifice but a choice. After all, what can we sacrifice to the Almighty who doesn’t take anything! If there is anything to sacrifice, it is our barriers.

O Arjuna! But that which is performed with the fruit in sight or for show perceive such offering to be rajasic. (XVII; 12)

An offering that is performed with the expectation of return is rajasic. It is no different from barter.

The offerings which omit the prescribed protocol, which are without offerings of food, without chanting of mantras, without largesse’s and devoid of faith, are tamasic. (XVII; 13)

It has already been mentioned that we have to offer our tamasic nature at the altar of our superior being. What is not mentioned is that those who are not so empowered try to project their tamasic desires on God. In order to propitiate Divine help for overcoming their tamasic desires, they curate rituals. Take the case of Hebrew tradition where the sacrifice

of the carnal desire translates into the symbolic sacrifice of the male goat to Yahweh.

But it doesn't take long for symbolic sacrifices to distill into tamasic sacrifices. For instance, in some places alcohol and drugs are offered to Lord Shiva in the belief that he would answer their prayers.

On the other hand, tamasic gurus would have us believe that if we give them our possessions, they would produce God out of their pocket. They prod their disciples, 'go on - go on- this will get you entry in the kingdom of God.' 'It is God's will'. But why fall prey to tamasic gurus when the ultimate guru is compassion.

The worship of the Gods, the twice-born, the guru, and the wise: purity, scrupulousness, continence and non-violence are described as austerities of the body. (XVII; 14)

We have come thus far in our evolution process, but it is not the end of it. According to Khalil Gibran, "Unless a person is born again, he will remain like a blank sheet in the book of existence."

That is, we have to be born twice in our life time - first out of our mother's womb, and then as the Spirit.

Interestingly, a bird is also called twice-born - first it is born inside its egg, and then again, when it emerges out of its

eggshell. However, the imprisoned bird must endeavor to break the eggshell from within before it can come out. If the eggshell is broken from outside, the baby bird is born premature. Thus, if something in the environment attacks, the baby bird doesn't have the ability to process it. But, if it evolves from within, it gets a second chance.

Speech which is not hurtful, which is truthful, sweet and benevolent; furthermore, constant study of scripture is described as purity of utterance. (XVII; 15)

A Chinese maxim goes, "Truthful words offend the ears." As the human ego is easily hurt, it is not always easy to change the way people think or get them to see another way without upsetting the cart of their ego. However, from Lord Krishna's art of diplomacy one can learn the many ways of saying the same thing without upsetting the ego-cart. More tellingly, one learns how to make a bitter truth more palatable. Thus, it becomes possible to keep a mood which is always smiling, knowing everything, and establishing a sweet rapport with difficult people in difficult situations. Says Lao Tse:

"Therefore, sages are upright without causing injury,
Honest without hurting,
Direct but not tactless,

Illumined but not flashy.”

Tranquility of mind, tenderness, silence, self-control, purity of temperament is described as purity of mind. (XVII; 16)

When a lake is in turmoil nothing can grow in it, but if it is silent Lotuses can grow. Likewise, when the mind is in turmoil nothing can grow, but when it becomes silent, love grows. Love cannot grow in an impure mind because the temperament of such a mind is ego-oriented.

The threefold disciplines when practiced with complete faith with a balanced mind, without expectation of fruit is said to be sattvic. (XVII; 17)

The discipline which is practiced with an eye to gain recognition, honor, reverence for show, or any self-interest is rajasic: it is considered unauthorized and momentary. (XVII; 18)

The rajasic practice disciplines with an eye on profit. As everything is money for them, they cannot separate God from it. But God cannot create money because he doesn't have a mint. Says Khalil Gibran:

“Money is like love;
It kills slowly and painfully
the one who withholds it,

And it enlivens the other who turns it upon his fellow men.”

The discipline which is practiced with foolhardy obstinacy with body, mind or speech for self-torture or harming others is tamasic. (XVII; 19)

“Once I have decided, I have decided.”.

But what’s the harm in changing?

“No, no, no, I don’t want to change”, argue the tamasic.”

Obstinacy comes from the ego, and thus blocks the light of wisdom. In the darkness of ignorance, the tamasic mistake self- torture to be a purifying agent. For instance, if a plant is not watered, it dies, and if it is over-watered, it also dies. After all, even if a hundred buckets of water are poured, a plant will not become a tree overnight.

Likewise, the mind has to be watered wisely, lest it rots.

The gift which is given without any expectation of return, perceiving it as one’s duty to give, with due consideration of proper place, time and to a deserving donee; such a gift is sattvic. (XVII; 20)

A mother lovingly cooked food for her son. But then a friend dropped in. So, she asked her son to share the food with his friend.

The son protested, “The food for one is not sufficient for two.”

The mother answered, “It depends on who the one is. If he is a sattwic person, his food is sufficient for both.”

What counts in life is not how much we give but how much we give of ourself. Thus, our gift becomes like a candle that burns for others selflessly. Its light doesn’t lessen when it gives - it creates abundance. After all, what can we give when the giver is someone else!

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi elucidates, “Culture of a yogi is to give, give and give

And never ask for anything

After all you have got the highest”

A gift which is made for a fruit or future gain, given reluctantly or niggardly is rajasic. (XVII; 21)

A king visited the Sufi saint Baba Farid with a gift of gold and a village. The saint politely refused, “The king wants to do us a favor by giving gifts. God has overpaid us, and never suggests he has done us a favor.”

A gift that is made at an inopportune moment or place to an undeserving donee, unceremoniously and curthly, is tamasic. (XVII; 22)

It is not in the tamasic nature to be generous. Generosity entails giving more than one can. But what is the use of a gift of gold to a person who is dying of thirst in a desert.

Aum Tat Sat'; is the threefold symbol of Almighty God. By it were ordained the Brahmin offerings, the Vedic mantras and the sacrifices. (XVII; 23)

Aum Tat Sat is the threefold name of the Supreme Being. 'Om' expresses the Supreme God, 'Tat' - the All-pervading power that runs the universe, and 'Sat' -the One truth.

The Spirit is the reflection of the Supreme Being, and hence all these three qualities put together stream through it.

Therefore, after reciting Aum the offering of gifts and ceremonies are to be commenced according to the protocol practiced by the seekers of Almighty God. (XVII; 24)

Auspiciousness is often mistaken for superstition. At the end of the day, auspiciousness is what is conducive to self-evolution. Ancient seers discovered conducive vibrations in certain configurations of sound. For instance, when a

realized being recites a mantra like 'Aum' it enlivens vibrations, and evokes Divine blessings.

The recitation of 'Tat' without expectation of fruit is undertaken for the offerings and gifts by those desiring salvation. (XV/II; 25)

'Tat' symbolizes the Supreme universal Being. The recitation of 'Tat' in conjunction with 'Aum' before all offerings implies that everything that is being done is being offered to the trans-conscious Being, and nothing is being kept behind.

O Arjuna! 'Sat' signifies reality and goodness and also 'Sat' is used for acclaiming praiseworthy deeds. (XV/II; 26)

Truth (sat) is independent of all human opinions. As we take to truth, it's light passes on from one to the other unchanged. If something is changing, it cannot be the truth. For instance, the Spirit never changes – it is the eternal truth.

Ardent adherence in offerings, discipline and charity is called as 'Sat'. Also, any action directed towards such intent is also classified as 'Sat'. (XV/II; 27)

Truth is the nourishing sap within that embellishes us with the human quality of genuineness. It is the quality that acts, works and above all loves. |

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O Arjuna! Whatever is offered or given away, whatever discipline is performed, and whatever rite is performed without faith is called "asad". It is of no consequence either now or hereafter. (XVII; 28)

What denies truth is nothing other than the ego. It is said that the tongue tells lies before the heart has a chance. Take the case of Hitler's right-hand man, Goebbels who believed, "If you spread a big lie and repeat it often, you can get away with it."

No one understands this better than the faceless people behind social media who systematically mislead good folks with disinformation. The technological shift of the world getting its information on line not only spreads disinformation rapidly, it also spreads more credibly as it is often forwarded by a friend or a family member.

Thus, when there are many voices, it is hard to hear the truth. Yet it is unchanging and eternal; we can't command it - we can only bow to it. But if we deny it, we deny our essential self.

After all, we do not want to live a life that is not our own,
reminds Pragya Pradhan:

“One says it cannot be proven
Another says, you must be chosen
Some say, it’s an eternal mystery
Go find it in seclusion
Whether the scientist
Or the pandit
two Half-truths
don’t make an equation

If the heart beats with love,
If the spirit shines bright
Who put it there,
And why?

Take your mind
into a blank plain
Breaking barriers
of disbelief
Holding off before
diving too deep
For blind faith
You don’t want to reap

Experience it for your own
in your brain
Don't be misled
into another illusion
Remember
your dormant light
Waiting to be awakened
Give a little thought
to true meditation”

Chapter Eighteen

The Pilot Takes Off

Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna:

O Lord! I want to understand precisely the innate nature of renunciation and relinquishment. (XVIII; 1)

Lord Krishna responds:

Renunciation is discerned by the wise as giving up of actions motivated by desire. The giving up of the fruits of all action is described by the wise as relinquishment. (XVIII; 2)

As Lord Krishna talked about karma initially, people got stuck at that point that whatever karmas they do, they will earn its merit. But now he clarifies that whatever karmas they do should be without desire or an eye for its reward.

An ascetic claimed, “I have renounced all my desires at the feet of the Lord.”

The master pointed, “Though you have renounced mentally, you have not renounced from your heart. When

you renounce from your heart you don't don the mantle of an ascetic, you blend with the world.”

Some learned men say that action as possessing an element of evil should be given up. Others believe that performance of sacrifice, charity and discipline should not be relinquished. (XVIII; 3)

O Arjuna! Now listen first to the fact about relinquishment. Relinquishment is of three kinds. (XVIII; 4)

Performance of sacrifice, charity and discipline should not be relinquished but most certainly be undertaken, because sacrifice, charity and discipline purify the adept. (XVIII; 5)

O Arjuna! However, even these actions should be undertaken after giving up attachment and expectation of fruit. This is my final and decisive opinion. (XVIII; 6)

Lord Krishna doesn't suggest that we should abandon action, rather that we should perform it without desire or an eye to its fruit. That is, we have to keep our attention detached like the birds that fly over the ocean yet they don't drink its salty water.

Renunciation of action that ought to be performed is not proper. Relinquishing it through ignorance is of tamasic nature. (XVIII; 7)

What would we avail from our offerings in temples, churches and mosques, if we don't see God in our brethren.

But the tamasic don't create space for their brethren, and hence, the future shocks they receive is the outcome of their own apathy.

Renunciation of duty because of fear of suffering is the relinquishing of rajasic nature and doesn't attain the merit of the true relinquishment. (XVIII: 8)

During the ride called life, we are faced with newer challenges all the time. However, to remain mindful of one's sense of purpose, renunciation is the key marker. That is, we should perform an action that ought to be performed but without ego. For instance, it is obligatory for the parents to take care of their children. Likewise, it is obligatory to correct a wayward child. However, disclosure of truth might cost a friend, but true friendship entails its disclosure.

But the rajasic follow the path of least resistance because they are afraid to face the truth.

O Arjuna! Performance of duty that ought to be performed, relinquishing attachment and the expectation of fruit, such a relinquishment is of sattvic nature. (XVIII: 9)

While others walk away from a difficult situation, a sattvic person walks towards the call of duty. That said, there should be no hidden agenda behind an unselfish act. For instance, one should not bask in the ego of his generosity. Or in the absence of recognition, one might not donate. In a deed of no merit there is no ulterior motive - no recognition, and no expectation. It is spontaneous - we respond to someone's needs, and then forget about it as though we were carrying money on his behalf.

The one who is unaffected by works pleasant or unpleasant; such a one of sattvic temperament who relinquishes is wise, doubtless, and of pure nature. (XVIII; 10)

Whatever choices we make affects how we relate to the world. No task is big or small. Small sattvic things can set big things in motion.

While abiding in the body, it is not possible to give up action completely but he who relinquishes the fruits of action, is considered as the one who has relinquished. (XVIII; 11)

Those who do not relinquish the fruit of action are subject to the threefold fruit; agreeable, disagreeable and mixed after death. But these do not accrue to those who have renounced. (XVIII; 12)

O Arjuna! Know from me the five factors for undertaking all actions, and how they can be neutralized is propounded by the Samkhya doctrine. (XVIII; 13)

The seat of action, the doer, the various instruments, the kinds of efforts and providence is the fifth. (XVIII; 14)

As the planets keep shifting, we don't know what's coming next. Providence is the biggest variable we can't predict. People wish for providence in order to secure an unpredictable future. Thus, men throw dice, hoping the stars would tip in their favor. But when the dice doesn't fall in their favor, they blame providence.

Though providence doesn't play dice with us, we play dice with ourselves. It is a game within a game. And the name of the game is 'winning'. Hence, if Arjuna gets a hold on the game inside, nothing can stop him from winning it outside. He will not only shine within, but also outshine all the stars in the sky. That's what Pragya Pradhan is trying to tell us – when we are in sync everything clicks.

“Everyone was in sync,
I alone was trudging out of place.
Much like a true friend
Providence kept coming back to play games
It said, don't panic
Just detoxify

All else will fall in place!
The stars will help us,
The sky will give us its way,
The whole of nature will come to our aid.

Then I came in rhythm
The world felt different.
Its upheavals, battles
And sudden occurrences.
Like a true friend- inspiration spoke to me.
For sure, a true friend deserves to be listened to!”

All actions whether right or wrong that man undertakes by body, speech or mind, arise from these five factors. (XVIII; 15)

With the situation being thus, the man of distorted mind, because of distorted understanding perceives himself as the doer, and as such he errs in his perception. (XVIII; 16)

A person with distorted understanding doesn't know the difference between right and wrong. Not just that, he is convinced that he knows what is right, and justifies his erroneous ideas. If he is told he is confused, he would retort, “How do you know? What makes you think that? And who are you to tell me so?”

Says Shakespeare:

“The fool doth think he is wise,
But the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”

He who is free from ego domination, whose intellect is not clouded, even if he were to slay the three spheres, he neither slays nor is he bound by his actions. (XVIII; 17)

When a person understands that the driving force behind everything is the all-pervading power of Divine love, he outgrows his ego. Thus, he is not responsible for actions, because the doer is someone else.

Knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower of knowledge are the threefold catalyst of knowledge. The instrument of action, the object of action and the doer are the threefold factors of action. (XVIII; 18)

Two birds sit by a fountain. One drinks from it, while the other, watches her drink. Likewise, as the doer in us goes about the workplace, our Spirit watches as an outsider all our deeds. Thus, the Spirit doesn't engage in our deeds nor does it get corrupted by them. However, as its light shines in our attention, we get liberated from our ego. That is, the knower of knowledge, knowledge and the object of knowledge converge.

Knowledge, action and doer are of three kinds according to their variant and now listen to their classifications. (XVIII, 19)

Whereby one is able to perceive amidst all the beings the one immutable Being, undivided in diversity, that knowledge is sattvic. (XVIII; 20)

Whereby, one perceives amidst all beings, diversity of multiple nature on account of their being apart that knowledge is rajasic. (XVIII; 21)

While selecting his team, a good coach knows how to see value in an individual player. Still, his focus is not on the individual, but on the team because the team's strength does not arise from an individual, but the collective.

Thus, a sattvic player does not play for the medal, but for the team. It makes him belong to something bigger than himself.

Conversely, a rajasic player perceives himself apart from the team. His rules are simple: outshine others.

Whereby one adamantly sticks to a single effect as the whole without cognition of the cause or concern for truth, that knowledge is tamasic. (XVIII; 22)

The tamasic dwell in darkness, and if you switch on a light, they don't like it. A Chinese maxim aptly describes their

knowledge, “He who knows not, and knows he knows not, and knows, is a fool.”

That is, tamasic knowledge only shows one side of the coin, but life is both. Think of a man who loves his wife, and yet is devoted to his mistress. If the wife accepts the triangle as fate, then her mindset is no different from a slave who wallows in self-pity. But unless a slave fights for his freedom, how can he set himself free?

Yet again, take the case of a widow who resigns to her fate believing that her life is finished. In fact, she is not a prisoner of fate, but prisoner of her own mind. She hides in a cave, closes it, and then claims there is no sun - she doesn't explore the possibilities of life.

An action performed as a duty without attachment, without like or dislike by one who has no expectation of fruit is sattvic. (XV/111; 23)

We carry a long list of things we like and dislike. However, just as the sun shines on all the trees without attachment to one, likewise, a sattvic person performs his duty without any likes or dislikes or any attachment to the fruit. Much like the sun, he shines in his own glory - nothing else is required.

An action performed to satiate desire or ego and undertaken with great strain is rajasic. (XVIII; 24)

In the rat race called the corporate world, a rajasik executive strives to reach the finishing line as a winner. However, he doesn't move an inch - he gets addicted to a drug called success. It is a drug he chases all the time to gain power over others.

Take the case of a rajasik executive who works like a super-efficient machine but is completely insensitive to any kind of ethics or emotion. Others who love him give him all they can, but it is not enough for him - he destroys any obstacle that stands in his way, leveraging rationality to justify his unjustifiable acts. Thus, he ends up addicted to success oblivious of its emptiness.

An action performed without awareness, regardless of outcome, loss, injury and one's capacity is tamasic. (XVIII; 25)

A tamasic person is like a character out of a Greek tragedy who is inexorably drawn to the very fate he is trying to escape, 'there is nothing about me that wants to change, evolve or grow into- we can't change anything - circumstances are ordained by fate'.

For sure nothing ever changes if we are running away from change.

A tamasic person who held a grudge against the world commented, ‘You don’t know, there are such problems everywhere. Soon the world will be doomed.’

His sattwic friend saw a cart pass by and observed a dog walking under it, “Do you see the dog under the cart. Much like you he is worried, because he thinks he is carrying the cart. But look at the bullocks drawing the cart – they are least worried!”

*Free from attachment and egoistic speech, filled with fortitude,
unperturbed by success or failure such a doer is of sattvic nature.
(XVIII; 26)*

It is not always easy to pick ourselves up when we fall - we get used to it if our life is one fall after another. However, a sattwic person doesn’t give up; true to his form, he picks himself from where he falls. No matter how many times he falls, he is never broken, and doesn’t turn his back from Kurukshetra. He has a Phoenix-like resolve to rise from his ashes. But that’s not all, each time a mightier resolve arises from his ashes.

The famous Japanese fashion designer, Issey Mayake, was a seven-year-old school boy when the Americans dropped an atom bomb on his hometown Hiroshima. His mother died three years later of radiation exposure. But he was determined not to be labelled as an atomic bomb

survivor. In an invitation to the American President to visit Hiroshima, he recounted, “When I close my eyes, I see things on one should ever see.”

He spent his whole life in a bid to make things beautiful in an effort to forget the horrors of that day.

It goes to show that if we handle pain and frustration, we can never be broken. Goethe said something similar: “Daring ideas are like chessmen moved forward. They may be beaten, but they may start a daring game.”

While the one who is suffused in passion, anxious for the fruits of action, avaricious, of destructive nature, impure, swayed by happiness and sorrow, such a doer is of rajasic nature. (XVIII; 27)

A guru praised his disciples, “You understand two things when I teach one. Hence, I want to reward you with the knowledge of truth. I hold the knowledge of truth in my right hand, and its quest in the left. Now it is up to you to choose between the two.”

While the sattvic disciples rushed towards the guru’s right hand, the rajasic argued, “There is no excitement in truth, it’s quest is far more exciting- let us choose the left hand.”

The one who is unsteady, uncouth, stubborn, devious, treacherous, lethargic, depressed and dilly dallying, such a doer is of tamasic nature. (XVIII; 28)

A father put his life on hold to send his only son abroad for higher studies. Before departure, he cautioned, "There are a lot of brothels abroad, don't ever visit them, son."

In a society where the culture of the Spirit is woven into its fabric, one doesn't visit such places. But the father's warning aroused the son's curiosity to uncover the secret of the forbidden. Inevitably, the brothel was the first place he visited because the tamasic nature longs for the illicit.

O Arjuna! Now listen to the three types of intellects and steadiness, emanating from the energies explained comprehensively and individually. (XVIII; 29)

O Arjuna! The understanding that discerns what leads to ascent and what leads to descent, what is proper to do and what not to do, what to fear and what not to fear, what causes bondage and liberation. The intellect which discerns this is of sattvic nature. (XVIII; 30)

Said the donkey to the fox, "The sky is yellow".

"No", retorted the fox, "It is blue."

The argument heated up, and the case was brought before the jungle King.

The fox argued, "Your majesty, the donkey claims that the sky is yellow."

The king nodded, "Hmmm, the sky is yellow."

The donkey claimed, "The fox lied to me that it is blue - he should be punished."

The king decreed, "Let the fox be exiled from the jungle."

Before being exiled, the fox questioned the king, "Your Majesty, everyone knows that the sky is blue."

The king nodded, "Of course, everyone knows the sky is blue."

"Then why am I the one to be punished?"

The king smiled, "The punishment is not about the color of the sky – but that a clever person like you ought to have the discretion not to argue with a stupid donkey."

That's how Lord Krishna's diplomacy deliberately puts us in two minds. But his diplomacy is driven by benevolence to help us develop a swan-like discretion. Though both the swan and the crane share similarities, the swan is endowed with the discretion to separate milk from water, which the crane lacks.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi elucidates:

“A person with discretion knows what to believe and what not to believe”

Where to say what, and how to change the subject.

Where to assert more, and where to handle the situation in a strong way.

Where to be a gentleman and where to shout.

Where to be bold and where to be humble.”

O Arjuna! The understanding that discerns what is dharma and adharma, what is proper to do and not to do, the intellect which errs in discerning this, is of rajasic nature. (XVIII; 31)

Instead of enjoying the fragrance of a flower, a rajasic mind analyzes ‘where did you get it from’, ‘how much did it cost’. Take the case of rajasic stereotype at the helm of government affairs who places himself above questioning, and expects his subordinates to be compliant. He appoints a

briefless lawyer as a law minister with the strategy to neutralize all the immediate deputies lest he be challenged.

The minister might be efficient, but he doesn't promote efficiency by appointing immoral people. Though he lacks a sense of morality, he carries on with his own convictions that he knows what is best for the public, and that he can do nothing wrong. He demands blind loyalty, whilst our loyalty should be to the Spirit.

Clouded by tamas that which perceives adharma as dharma and everything in a distorted way, such intellect is of tamasic nature.
(XVIII; 32)

A tamasic woodcutter woke up in the morning feeling sorry for himself. He looked out of the window and lamented, "Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

As he began chopping wood in the forest, he cut the branch on which he sat, "Ah! God created me and made me fall... to fall is engraved in my destiny."

A passing mendicant overheard him and chided, "Why bring God in between their self-created problems? Because of the problem in human awareness, people are quick to blame God for their sufferings. For instance, electricity is stored in the power house, but if the wires are faulty, how can we blame electricity for it?"

That is, a tamasic person thinks he is a victim of life, but he never suspects that he is the victim of his own circumstances. He wallows in self-pity, and looks for someone to blame – parents, siblings, friends, teachers, employers and even genes!

Thus, he inevitably comes to the wrong conclusion. For instance, he concludes that he committed murder, because he inherited tamasic genes. But the Spirit is beyond the genes. Though genetic engineering can edit the genes, it cannot edit the Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit edits tamasic genes to save tamasic people from being reborn in the animal kingdom.

O Arjuna! Through meditation by which one is able to sustain the activities of the mind, the vital functions of the senses with equanimity, is of sattvic nature. (XVIII; 33)

The conditioning, O Arjuna, by which one holds fast to dharma, sensory pleasures and wealth with expectation for their fruits, is of rajasic nature. (XVIII; 34)

For sure, earning wealth is a blessing, but the real blessing is in how we use it. After all, what is the use of having wealth if we don't evolve. Take the case of a rajasic businessman who made a wager with God, "God if my land gets sold for a million, I will donate half the money to charity."

No sooner had the land deal been clinched, than his stance changed. He stipulated the price of the land at 100 dollars on the condition that the customer should buy his dog for a million. Though he got out of his commitment to charity, but in the bargain, he left his Spirit behind!

O Arjuna! The conditioning by which a stupid person doesn't give up sleep, fear, sorrow, depression and ego - that, O Partha, is of tamasic nature. (XV/III; 35)

A hundred caravans pass by, but the tamasic remain fast asleep. Their philosophy is, 'When death is the end of life, why should life all labor be.' However, animals abide by their nature - none are lazy. Likewise, there is a living process inside that is ever alert.

O Arjuna! Now I shall reveal the three kinds of happiness. Whereby one finds joy by constant practice and attains the end of sorrow. (XV/III; 36)

Happiness which is like poison in the beginning but like ambrosia in the end is of sattvic nature. It arises from a deeper understanding of the self. (XV/III; 37)

Just as beneath the bitterness of a cough syrup is a gentle herbal quality which in the end gets rid of our cough,

happiness and unhappiness are the bitter and gentle flavors that define us.

Though a sattwic person enjoys all the flavors, he is not defined by them, because he is not attached to any flavor. He is in a different space where he experiences joy in the comfort of his Spirit and nothing else - even if it means choosing the difficult over the easy or the catastrophic over the convenient.

His case is that of a child who is lost from his mother. He cries for her and cannot be consoled by all the toys in the world. But when his mother embraces him, the scene changes.

Happiness born from the contact of the senses with their objects is like ambrosia in the beginning but like poison in the end, it is of rajasic nature. (XV/III; 38)

Since ages, people have debated over the source of happiness. While the sattwic believe it lies in Self-realization, the rajasic ascribe it to wealth, fame and power. Wars ravaged, ideologies turned and the human Spirit lay defeated. In all of this the mind raced to grab the next quick fix – only to find again the pain that outlives happiness.

Tears and laughter are Jason faced. Take the case of rajasic couples who share happiness in the first flush of

marriage, but swiftly turn into strangers. But joy is different from happiness, it flows from the Spirit's love, says Rumi:

“Ask God for love not for life,
Ask God for Spirit's food not for bread.”

The happiness which deludes the self at the outset and in the end; which arises from sleep, lethargy and negligence is of tamasic nature. (XVIII; 39)

Two inmates peeped out of a prison window. The tamasic saw mud, while the sattwic saw stars. The tamasic bemoaned, “Life is so strange!”

The sattwic smiled, “What is stranger my friend, is you do not seek beyond.”

Though our inside light never goes out, but if the lampshade is unclean, the light doesn't pass through.

There doesn't exist on earth or heaven amongst the Gods or any being which is free from these three energies emanating from Prakriti. (XVIII; 40)

The nature of our temperament is determined by the three energies emanating from the Mother Power of creation. According to Lord Krishna, there is no one that exists in heaven or earth who can escape their play. Though they react

to our Spirit, our Spirit doesn't react to them, because it is a detached witness to their play.

O Arjuna! The functions of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are allocated according to their aptitude. (XVIII; 41)

This verse relating to the four-fold castes is incongruous with the central message of Lord Krishna. It appears to be introduced by the Brahmins who were the custodians of the Gita. As explained earlier Lord Krishna himself grew up among the low-caste cowherd folks, and therefore was not unaware of the evils of the caste system. Thus, it is obvious that Lord Krishna did not categorize people according to their birth but according to their temperament.

Tranquility, self-restraint, simplicity, purity, forbearance, truthfulness, knowledge, realization, spirituality comprise the duty of a Brahmin. (XVIII; 42)

Valor, high spirit, steadiness, mindfulness, never fleeing from battle, charity, qualities of leadership, comprise the duty of a kshatriya. (XVIII; 43)

Farming, tending cattle and trading comprise the duties of the Vaishya. Works of menial service are duties of a Shudra. (XVIII; 44)

A man attains perfection in happily pursuing his own duty. Listen, how he attains perfection in happily pursuing his own duty. (XVIII; 45)

He from who arise all beings, by whom all this is pervaded; by worshipping him through the performance of his own duty, man achieves perfection. (XVIII; 46)

We are each an unfinished work of art striving for perfection. However, by worshipping God in our deeds, it is possible to attain perfection. The one who is kissed by the Spirit needs no further blessings says the poet Rabindranath Tagore:

“I slept and dreamt that life was joy.

I woke and saw that life was service.

I acted and behold, service was joy.”

O Arjuna! Better is one's own dharma though imperfectly implemented than the dharma of others though perfectly implemented. No sin accrues in doing the duty arising from one's dharma. (XVIII, 47)

O Arjuna! One should not abandon one's work according to one's aptitude even if it is imperfectly implemented; for in all work there may be imperfection, like in fire there is smoke. (XVIII; 48)

Hope can transform our lives. Hence, no matter what life throws at us, the greatest mistake is to give up hope. As long as we face it head on, the Spirit gets a chance to shine its light brightly, and guide us towards attaining perfection.

He whose intellect is detached, who has conquered the self and free from desires, he attains the Supreme state transcending all work through renunciation. (XVIII; 49)

O Arjuna! Listen briefly, how having accomplished perfection, he attains God, for that is the absolute knowledge. (XVIII; 50)

Having a pure intellect, possessing firm control of senses, renouncing sound and other objects of senses, and giving up passion and aversion. (XVIII; 51)

Taking to seclusion, eating little, restraining speech, body and mind, absorbed in meditation and concentration, and abstaining from passion. (XVIII; 52)

The one who has found contentment lives life king-size. He sleeps without dreams and wakes without worries. His

breathing is deep, he wears a calm countenance, and a relaxed brow.

It reminds us of someone like Socrates who said that the secret of happiness is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less. That's how he disciplined his bodily cravings. Though he socialized and attended parties, he limited how much he ate. He renounced the needless, and turned down a profitable job offer. He even denied himself the chance of building a large house on the land offered to him. Nor did he try to control others or seek disciples.

He was majestic, yet not fierce. Friendly, yet not self-righteous. Respectful, yet had a habit of laughing at himself.

That is, to shine as our own guru not only means keeping track of our daily life habits but also the humor to laugh at ourselves.

Renouncing ego, power, desire, wrath and possession; void of ego and at peace, he attains union with Almighty God. (XVIII; 53)

A saint sat in deep meditation under a tree. Suddenly he felt the presence of an intruder and enquired, "O King, what can I do for you."

The intruder prayed, “O great master, what I have in me is too small and humble. But you are the king of kings. Can you tell me which way my men have gone?”

“Yes, my King,” responded the saint. First, your servants came, then your ministers and now you.”

“But you are blind, how did you see them?”

The saint smiled, “By the manner in which they approached me. The servants yelled, ‘Hey, you!’ and I knew it must be the servants. However, the ministers were more reserved. But when you respected me as a king, I knew you must be the king.”

The king nodded, “It is not the question of giving up anything, but merely giving up the ego”

Attaining union with Almighty God, delighting in his spirit, he doesn't grieve for anyone nor has any expectations. Regarding all beings evenly, he attains the highest devotion to me. (XVIII; 54)

By devotion, he perceives my infinite and true nature. Thus, knowing my true nature, he abides in me. (XVIII; 55)

Thereafter doing all actions under my protection, he attains by my grace the eternal and immutable abode. (XVIII; 56)

*Dedicating all actions to me, perceiving me as the ultimate goal.
Developing equanimity, anchor your attention always in
me. (XVIII; 57)*

Though the Divine dwells in our hearts, we are unaware of it. Nonetheless, if we have trust in him, he takes care of our welfare.

A disciple questioned the Prophet whether he should leave his camel in God's care or tie him.

The Prophet answered, 'Tether the camel first, and then leave him in God's care.'

*With your attention anchored in me, by my grace you shall overcome
all hurdles. But if because of ego, you refuse to pay heed to me then you
shall perish. (XVIII; 58)*

Obstacles lead us to believe that life is a hard game. But if we understand that there is no obstacle in our way but ourselves, life becomes an easy game. The cause of suffering is ignorance of reality. For instance, a little girl is sitting next to a pond, but because of darkness she cannot see it, and keeps crying for water. Likewise, we are in Divine light, but because of our ego we can't see it.

*Your refusal to fight is due to the delusion born of the ego. Such
resolve is in vain. Your nature will compel you. (XVIII; 59)*

Arjuna is under the delusion of his ego. It is truer to say that his case is that of a pen in the hand of a writer that thinks that it is writing.

O Arjuna! Though the action that under delusion you do not want to undertake, you will be driven to do helplessly by the compulsion of your own nature. (XVIII; 60)

A warrior has to fight before he can win. Likewise, as a warrior Arjuna has to overcome the threefold energies – sattwa, rajas and tamas before he can win over his ego.

O Arjuna! God dwells in the heart of all beings, and through his maya, he spins them in circles as though mounted on a vehicle. (XVIII; 61)

In a fast-track life, a novice thought that the world is not spinning fast enough, till he got lost in its spin. He approached his guru, “How can I escape the spin of maya?”

The guru answered, “Maya is akin to a game of chess; if you hold fort at one point, the opponent attacks from someplace else, and just as you fend off the attack it strikes from another end! You don’t know when and where he will strike you. Though he strikes you when you least expect, still he cannot win unless you harbor an ego. Now go and find out for yourself.”

The novice went out in the world. Knowledge bloated their ego but his heart remained closed and he disdained the ignorant. When he returned, the guru was sad to find him stinging like an angry bee.

He reflected, “You have come thus far holding my hand, but I have to tell you that spiritual knowledge without compassion is useless. Thus, you inexorably fell into the very maya I taught you to escape. No matter, how proficient you are in the scriptures, but unless your heart unlocks there is no way you can escape the spin of maya.”

O Arjuna! Surrender to his protection with all your being. By His grace alone you shall attain eternal peace and the highest state.
(XVIII; 62)

There could be several reasons for people to have faith in God. It could be a childhood conditioning, or a crutch during a crisis. For instance, when we are challenged, we tell ourselves, ‘God abides in me, he will take care of everything.’ But it doesn’t change the narrative - doubts still keep nagging at the back of our mind. Over time if the problem remains unresolved, our patience wears out, and we ask, ‘how come it didn’t work out despite our faith.’

However, faith in God is different from absorbing our attention in him. Upon Self-realization our attention gets

absorbed in our Spirit. As the Spirit is the attention of God, it is not apart from him, and hence, as our attention gets absorbed in him, our problems resolve.

The secret of the secrets has been revealed to you. Reflect deeply and then do as you will. (XVIII, 63)

Though Arjuna is not the version Lord Krishna wants him to be, still he doesn't bat for him. After all, Lord Krishna is not the one who keeps disciples in his pouch like a Kangaroo. Nonetheless, he scales up the conflict inside Arjuna's head to a high-definition screen to enable him to see that the only person he has to beat is himself. Unless Arjuna sees that, Kurukshetra is meaningless.

Again, listen to my ultimate words, which is the secret of all secrets. You are loved by me; therefore, I shall reveal to you what is for your good. (XVIII; 64)

O Arjuna! Absorb your mind in me, be devoted to me, offer all actions to me, offer salutations to me, thus will you attain me, I assure you because you are dear to me. (XVIII; 65)

We know that God loves all his children in the same way, but how can we love a God who we have never seen? However, we can feel his love when we love our brethren who we can

see. As we experience the inflow of collective love, it distills down to a devotion that needs no decoding. Says Pragya Pradhan:

“You’re a study, my friend
like unexplored ocean water
You contain treasured pearls
that I must explore further
I see your smiling shells
dancing with the rays under
I reach out to hold you
to realize you is my endeavor
Yet I cannot know you
till I become a jeweler
I’ll set you in gold untarnished
so you can shine forever.”

*Renounce all dharmas and take refuge in me alone. Do not grieve
- I will deliver you from all sins. (XVIII; 66)*

Addressing his monks about the nature of Buddhahood the great Zen master Rinzai propounded, “If you seek Buddha in external forms, he would not be more than your mind. Do you want to know your own mind? The true Buddha has no shape - the true way has no substitute. The true Dharma has no form.”

This is not to be revealed by you to one who is not following discipline, who is not a devotee or who is not seeking or disrespects Me. (XVIII; 67)

He who reveals this highest secret to my devotees, and sufficed with the greatest devotion to me, shall no doubt attain me. (XVIII; 68)

None amongst men is there who does greater service to me nor is there going to be in the world another dearer to me than he who studies this dialogue of ours, by that offering of knowledge I shall be worshipped by him. (XVIII 69- 70)

He who listens to it in complete faith, free from doubt; he too shall be liberated, and reach the highest state attained by those practicing righteousness. (XVIII; 71)

Perhaps Lord Krishna saw artificial intelligence coming thousands of years ago, and hence, made an alternate proposition that if his teachings are followed with faith, then also one can be liberated. In fact, he and his teachings are not different, but the latter proposition is more appealing to the ego. That is, we can follow the moon or the moonlight, the sun or the sunlight, the word or its meaning and Lord Krishna or his teachings.

O Arjuna! I trust that you have listened to this with concentrated attention. Therefore, O Dhananjaya, the delusion caused by ignorance must have perished. (XVIII; 72)

Arjuna responded;

O Lord! My delusion has perished. By Thy grace, I have regained the memory. I stand here resolute and freed from doubt, ready to follow Thy command. (XVIII; 73).

We should bear in mind that though Lord Krishna is Arjuna's charioteer, he doesn't carry any weapons. If he carries any weapon, it is love. And that weapon is mightier than all the weapons in Kurukshetra. As soon as Arjuna discovers this weapon, he takes off with all his heart.

Sanjaya spoke:

Thus, I have heard this amazing dialogue between Lord Krishna and the noble soul Arjuna which has caused the hair of my body to bristle with raptures. (XVIII; 74)

By the grace of Vyasa, I have heard the highest secret, this yoga being imparted by Lord Krishna in person, the Lord of Yoga. (XVIII; 75)

Saint Vyasa is the author of the epic Mahabharata.

O King, as I repeatedly recall this amazing and sacred dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, I delight in bliss again and again. (XVIII, 76)

O King! Whenever I reflect on that most stupendous manifestation of Lord Krishna, I am amazed and delight in bliss again and again. (XVIII:77)

Wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of yoga and wherever Arjuna, is the archer, there assuredly will be good fortune, victory, prosperity and morality. (XVIII; 78)

In evolutionary time, it seems only yesterday that Lord Krishna promised Divine intervention for the protection of dharma. Our Lord Jesus Christ said something similar, “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”- (John 14 25)

With a clearer voice, he foretold the incarnation of the Holy Spirit. But contemporary times are complicated, and to deal with it she has to transform human consciousness.

Arjuna’s story shows that the power of transformation is already built within us. However, his story is far from

over - if one Arjuna could be transformed, why not the whole world? But one Arjuna being transformed is like a drop in the ocean. Though each drop is precious, but alone, it doesn't hold the oceanic power of transformation.

Perhaps, en-masse Self-realization could well be the Big Bang of global transformation. Fortunately, Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi discovered the way for en-masse Self-realization through kundalini awakening. The kundalini has the ultimate power to transform human beings collectively. Rather, our fate as a species hinges on it.

