

The Inner essence to be learnt from Bhagavad-gita (for a meaningful life)



From Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur's Rasikarañjana

Bg. 2.1 - Sañjaya said to Dhṛtarāṣṭra: Seeing Arjuna become overwhelmed with compassion his eyes full of tears and his mind overcome with grief Madhusūdanah (Kṛṣṇa) spoke the following words.

Bg. 2.2, 3 - The Supreme Personality of Godhead said to Arjuna: In the hour of crisis from where these lamentations have come upon you, O Arjuna? This is not the behavior of one who knows the actual goal of life; nor this lead you to higher destination but to infamy.

Bg. 2.4, 5 - Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa: O Madhusūdana! How can I counter-attack my worshipable elders like (Grandfather) Bhīṣma and Dronācharya with arrows? It would be better to live by begging than to live at the cost of their lives. Though they are yearning for worldly-gains, they are our superiors. If they are killed (by us), then everything that we enjoy will be tainted with blood.

- As per one's consciousness (that which acquired because of the reactions of his past lives' activities) he gets a particular type of material body and gets inclined to a particular type of prescribed duty such as brāhmaṇa (the intelligent class), kṣatriya (the administrative/warrior class), vaiśya (the producer/manufacturer class) or śūdra (the laborer class). [Note: As per the context of modern civilization: Doctor, Engineer, Farmer, Teacher, Administrator, Warrior, Lawyer, Laborer, etc. Please refer 'Conclusion' for further details.] When one performs his prescribed duties with genuine heart without any negligence and without any tinge of ulterior motivation (by keeping the Supreme Lord at center), he never incurs any kind of sin; rather, he progresses towards perfection.

Bg. 2.6, 7 - I am unable to understand which one is better - conquering them or being conquered by them? I got bewildered totally about my prescribed duties due to my miserly weakness and I have lost altogether my composure. In this condition, I am asking You for certain what is good for me and taking the complete shelter of You as a surrendered disciple. Please instruct me.

Bg. 2.8 - I am not able to find any mean to drive away this grief, which is making my senses weak. This cannot be dispelled, even if I win a prosperous and unrivaled kingdom like demigods.

Bg. 2.9, 10 - Speaking thus Guḍākeśah (Arjuna) said, "O Govinda! I shall not fight", and he became silent. At that moment the Supreme Personality of Godhead smiling in the midst of both the armies spoke the following words.

Bg. 2.11 - The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: You are speaking like a learned-scholar but you are lamenting for something not worthy of grief. One who is learned, laments neither for the living nor for the dead.

Bg. 2.12 - Undoubtedly never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you or all these kings, and never in the future will any of us cease to be. [Note: The living being (soul) never dies; only the material body repeatedly takes birth and dies.]

Bg. 2.13 - As the embodied-fallen-conditioned living being continuously transmigrates in the current material body from the childhood to youth and to the old age similarly at the time of death it transmigrates into another material body. One who is learned, does not get bewildered by such a change.

Bg. 2.14 - O Kaunteya, the temporary appearance and disappearance of happiness and distress (that which occurs due to the reactions of one's own past activities) are like the appearance and disappearance of summer and winter seasons. They are experienced only because of one's sense-perception, O Bhārata. One should learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

- One good information about the reactions of one's past lives' activities is that they appear now in this life in the form of prescribed duties. Therefore, one should always perform his prescribed duties very sincerely (with utmost care) to purify his existence. Otherwise, it is highly

impossible to get rid of the (crocodile) grip of the reactions of one's past activities.

Bg. 2.15 to 22 - As one accepts a new garment by discarding his old one similarly the fallen-conditioned living being accepts a new material body by discarding his current one.

- The fallen-conditioned living being has to accept a temporary material body one after another till he achieves all-perfection. After achieving all-perfection he goes back to his original home, the spiritual world. [Note: The material world, in which we are living at present, is like a school. It educates us through the process of repeated birth and death (based on our own actions and its reactions). That's why this material world is called mrityu-loka.]

Bg. 2. 23 to 36 - By considering your specific duty as a warrior, you should know that there is no better engagement for you than fighting against the irreligious principles, adharma. When you become indifferent to your prescribed duties, then certainly you will incur sin and people will always speak of your infamy. The great warriors who have highly honored your name & fame will think that you have left the battlefield out of fear. What can be more painful than this?

Bg. 2.37, 38 - Either you achieve victory in battle and achieve the kingdom or you may achieve a glorious death and achieve a higher destination, O Kaunteya. Therefore, stand-up and fight with determination without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat - in this way, you never incur sin.

Bg. 2.39 to 41- I have been explained to you till now in terms of sāṅkhyayoga, the analytical study of activities but now I am going to explain to you in terms of how to perform activities without having any desire for fruitive results. On this path (the path which leads eventually one to pure devotional service), O Arjuna, there is no loss or diminution; even a little

advancement can save oneself from the most dangerous fear of material existence.

Bg. 2.42 to 44 - Whoever's mind is too attached to sense enjoyment and heavenly opulence, the firm determination for pure devotional service does not take place in his heart. [Note: Performing one's prescribed duties without any negligence and without any tinge of ulterior motivation (by keeping the Supreme Lord at center) - which eventually leads him to love of God is the most effective and practical path to achieve the pure devotional service. - Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur's Rasikarañjana 3.7, 3.19, 3.33]

Bg. 2.45, 46 - Vedas, in general, deal with the subject matter of three modes of material nature i.e., the subject matter of action and its reactions. You be transcendental to them, O Arjuna, and be always situated on the platform of pure devotional service, and be always free from dualities and anxieties for gain & safety - in this way, you be established in the self.

- Three modes of material nature is nothing but an extra-ordinary divine force that governs us at every step of our life as per the reactions of our own past activities. Under the spell of these three modes, every single activity that we perform determines our level of consciousness and finally at the time of death whatever state of consciousness we may have accordingly we receive our next material body (either it may be a higher or lower form of human life or it may be any other form out of 84 lakhs species). [Note: In the Padma Purana it is stated that there are 84 lakhs of varieties of material bodies, out of which 9 lakhs varieties are the aquatic bodies, 20 lakhs varieties are the bodies of trees, 11 lakhs varieties are the bodies of insects, 10 lakhs varieties are the bodies of birds, 30 lakhs varieties are the bodies of animals and 4 lakhs varieties are the bodies of humans.]

Bg. 2.47 - You have the privilege only to perform your prescribed duties but you do not have any privilege to enjoy it's results (i.e., you can utilize them for your needs but not for your sense enjoyment). You should never become

attached to the results of your labor (i.e., you should never have any concern over your success and failure) as they are very strictly controlled by the three modes of material nature (based on the reactions of your own past activities). Also, you should never become attached to not performing your prescribed duties.

- The fallen-conditioned living being, being bewildered by the influence of false ego, thinks himself as the doer of his activities. But, in reality, those activities are performed by the three modes of material nature (based on the reactions of his past activities). - Bg. 3.27

Bg. 2.48 to 53 - O Dhanañjaya, keep all the materialistic fruitive activities at far distance by performing your prescribed duties sincerely & devotedly without any negligence and without any tinge of ulterior motivation. Those who want to enjoy the end results of their labor are misers because they hardly (very miserly) utilize their valuable human form of life.

Bg. 2.54 - Arjuna inquired: O Keshava! What are the behaviors of those whose mind and intelligence are thus fixed?

Bg. 2.55 - The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: When one altogether gives up his desires for enjoying the worldly pleasures and his mind finds satisfaction in the self alone, O Pārtha, he is said to be fixed firmly in pure consciousness.

Bg. 2.56, 57 - As long as the fallen-conditioned living being possesses a material body he is sure to experience the dualities of material existence like happiness and distress, good and bad, success and failure (based on the reactions of his own past activities). Those who are unaffected by these dualities by neither praising them nor hating them, are said to be fixed firmly in perfect knowledge.

Bg. 2.58 to 61- As a tortoise retracts its limbs within its shell similarly one who retracts his senses from its objects, is said to be fixed firmly in perfect consciousness.

- In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is mentioned that the four most detestable sinful activities performed for one's sense enjoyment are meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex (i.e. relationship outside marriage) and gambling (i.e. earnings through improper means or easy earnings). [Note: Earnings through improper means or easy earnings are considered to be the worst as they totally destroy one's understanding about his eternal life (i.e., his understandings will be very much restricted to the bodily conception of life.)]

Bg. 2.62 to 70 - As the ever-full steady-ocean never gets disturbed by the incessant flow of rivers similarly one who never gets disturbed by the incessant flow of his desires (that which occurs due to the reactions of his own past activities) - he alone can attain peace; not one who strives to satisfy them.

Bg. 2.71, 72 - After giving up one's desires for enjoying the worldly pleasures, who lives without any sense of proprietorship and false ego - he alone attains real peace. If one is thus situated (even at the time of death) - he attains the kingdom of God.

Important Verses:

As I am the Supreme, there is no prescribed duties assigned for Me within all the three planetary systems, O Pārtha - yet I myself get engaged carefully in all of My prescribed duties. (Bg. 3.22)

Arjuna inquired: What actually is inducing one to indulge in sinful activities even unwillingly as if he is engaged by force, O Vārsneya!? (Bg. 3.36)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Certainly it is lust, O Arjuna, which is born of contact with mode of passion that which is acquired from the reactions of one's own past activities. Lust is the all-devouring greatest sinful enemy, which gets transformed into wrath later. Therefore, O Bharata-ṛṣabha, you should curb this great symbol of sin by controlling your

senses from the very beginning of life, and thus kill this enemy, which is the destroyer of knowledge and self-realization. (Bg. 3. 37 & 41)

Even, in case, if you are considered to be the most sinful of all sinners but still when you get situated in the boat of transcendental knowledge, you will be able to transcend the ocean of material existence. As a blazing fire burns firewood to ashes similarly the fire of transcendental knowledge burns all the reactions of one's past activities to ashes, O Arjuna. (Bg. 4.36, 37)

Sacrifice (in the form of one's occupation), charity (in the form of one's ashram) and spiritual-austerity (in the form of one's sādhana) are not to be given up. In fact, sacrifice, charity and spiritual-austerity can even purify the great souls - but they should be performed without any expectation of results; as a matter of responsibility, O Pārtha. This is My final opinion. (Bg.18.5-6) [Note: As the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself says here (this is his final opinion) this is the essence of the entire Bhagavad-gita.]

- Time and energy should be sacrificed for the benefit of others through one's occupational duty. Accumulating wealth through one's occupational duty is not the goal of life. Of course, one should get paid for his endeavour (in the form of reasonable salary or profit), so that he can peacefully address his day today needs. Charity should always be in the foreground of one's ashram. Householders should do charity with the strength of his possessions. Renounced orders should do charity with the strength of his purity. Whatever ashram one may belong to he should perform spiritual austerity to uplift his consciousness.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said to Arjuna: Whether you heard, O Pārtha, My words with an attentive mind? Whether your ignorance is now dispelled, O Dhanañjaya? (Bg. 18.72)

Arjuna said to Lord Kṛṣṇa: O Achyuta! Now, my illusion has gone and I have regained my memory by Your mercy. Now I am firmly situated and free from all doubts and prepared to act according to Your instructions. (Bg. 18.73)

Wherever there is Yogeśvaraḥ (Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead) and wherever there is Dhanur-dharah (Arjuna, the pure devotee) certainly there will be all-opulence, victory, extraordinary-power, determination and morality. (Bg. 18.78)

Conclusion: (as per Bg. 18.5-6)

Eventhough one's prescribed duties can be many but still they can be categorized into three.

1. The prescribed duties which are related to one's occupation (Varna) Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya or Śūdra. [Doctor, Engineer, Farmer, Teacher, Administrator, Warrior, Lawyer, Laborer, etc., as per the context of modern civilization.]
2. The prescribed duties which are related to one's family (Ashram) The prescribed duties which are related to one's parent, children, parents-in-law and others (like saintly persons, inter-dependent living beings i.e. all the living beings, etc.). [Note: Devotional service is not a set of ritualistic activities; it is an act of responsibility, which are performed through the body and the self simultaneously i.e., the body should get engaged constantly in the prescribed duties (Bg. 3.19) and simultaneously the self should get engrossed in love of God (Bg.12.8).]
3. The prescribed duties which are related to one's spiritual-austerity (Sādhana)

According to the level of one's consciousness, the platform of his sādhana varies: virāṭ-rūpa, sāyujya, sālokya, sārṣṭi, sārūpya, sāmīpya, śānta, dāsyā, sakhya, vātsalya, śrīngāra and śrīngāra-audārya. [The most easiest and simplest form of sādhana for this yuga i.e., the kali-yuga for all is singing congregationally the holy names of the Supreme Lord (at home) out of unlimited attachment like the inhabitants of Vrindavan (which is explained elaborately in Śrī Chaitanya Charitamrita).]

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare