

10. The Ideal Disciple

Swami Vidyananda, in the Hindi Address that he read just now, welcomed Me to this Naini Tal, describing its beautiful scenery and praising its climate. Well, that is taking Me to be an outsider, who has to be formally invited and welcomed. I am in your Association (*Sathsang*), for wherever the *Gita* is studied, I am and will be present. I do not care for the external beauty of nature as much as the beauty of “character and conduct”, which you are seeking to acquire by the constant study of the *Gita*. I came to the *Gita Sathsang* to see all of you, because I bless all efforts by man to raise himself by study and spiritual practice. “Wherever My devotees sing of Me, there I install Myself (*Madhbhakthaah yathra gaayanthe, thathra thishhtaami Narada*),” is the declaration. Why, the Lord is always there and everywhere, whether you sing of Him or not. The singing only makes Him manifest, like the radio receiver, which catches the tune from the ether when it is switched to the correct wave length. The current is flowing ever; when you fix the bulb, you will get the light.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is a textbook for all mankind, giving the secrets of spiritual science in clear and simple terms. But it will be useful only when the reader has as much detachment as Arjuna had when Krishna started the discourse. If you have as much despair as Arjuna had, you have the competence to get the teaching that removed the grief. Only a patient ailing from a disease is entitled to the specific that will cure it. What business have others with it? What profit can they draw from it? The *Gita* will act on the mental system only when the symptoms of grief are strong.

Spiritual surrender will get God’s response

Arjuna, the greatest Bowman of those days, anxious for years to destroy the wicked Kauravas, who had angered him by merciless and systematic vendetta, suddenly gets disinterested in everything that he thought precious until that moment! “Of what avail is victory in the field of battle?” asks this hero of a thousand encounters! “Nor do I see any good from killing kinsmen in battle,” says the warrior who had vowed to wipe out the Kuru clan! “I do not wish to kill them, though they may wish to kill me; I shall lay down my arms; I shall die unresisting” wails this foremost warrior; “I would rather beg from door to door and live on alms,” says this scion of an imperial line.

In short, his mind had become ripe for the illumination. He has the Lord Himself as Guru by his side, and he knows it. He asks Him, “I am struggling in ignorance; I am confused; I do not know which is *dharma* and which is not.” He seeks disciple-hood and lays himself at the Feet of Krishna in self-surrender!

Anyone anywhere who reaches that stage of spiritual surrender will get the response from Krishna, and Krishna will teach the *Gita* from the chariot that is driven by Him, that is, his own heart.

End delusion and gain recognition of the Self

The purpose of the *Gita* is to remove the delusion (*moha*) that overwhelmed Arjuna and made him feel that he was the doer, whereas the truth is that he was but an instrument. So Krishna asks him at the very end of the discourse, “Has the delusion born out of ignorance been fully destroyed in you?” For, like a good teacher, Krishna is evidently quite willing to resort to some other means or to discourse a little longer in order to make the pupil understand the teaching. But Arjuna is a good student; he declares, “Destroyed is the delusion. I have gained

recognition.”

Now what is the recognition he has gained? The recognition of the Self or *Atma*. He has seen himself as basically *Atma*, and he has seen the world and all objects as superimpositions on the *Atma*, due to ignorance or illusion (*maya*).

An emperor, while sleeping, dreams that he is a beggar; he wears tattered clothes and cries piteously before other people’s doors for a morsel of food; no one listens to his clamour; he can no longer contain his sorrow. He weeps aloud and wakes up his mother. She comes and wakes him up from that dream. Now, the mother need not tell him, “Listen to me, you are the emperor. You are not a beggar.” He knows it as soon as he awakes. The recognition of the Self happens as soon as the delusion goes, the delusion that this dream world is real!

A prince who falls into the hands of a forest tribe while yet a child and behaves like one of them does not thereby lose his prince-hood. Rescue him and he knows he is a prince. So too, Arjuna says, “I got back my memory, I have gained recognition. I know Myself; I am Thyself!”

Gita is the greatest harmoniser of all yogas

The study of the *Gita* must end in this result; your Association must have this consummation as your goal. Do not be enamoured of the skill exhibited by some *pandit* who can recite the *Gita* in record time, or write the whole of it on a post card, or repeat it upside down, or reel off commentaries.

A man walked on the beach played with the waves and had a dip in the water. His feet are wet! No, there is no miracle in this. This is what happens to many a scholar who wades in the sea of the *Gita*.

In the Court Hall, when the Maharana is arriving to seat himself on the throne, the couriers call out his polysyllabic titles, but in daily conversation his short name is used; his principality is but a tiny state. Similarly, the *pandit* may have great pomp before others, but to himself, in the secrecy of his own conscience, he is a small man indeed. Greatness depends upon the spiritual discipline and the success achieved in it, in the practice of religious austerities and firm adherence to them.

“Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached,” it is said — “*Uththishtatha, Jaagratha, Praapyavaraan nibodhatha.*” But one need not march toward the goal. It is not some place where you have to go. It is just the opening of the eye, the removal of the veil, the waking from the dream, the lighting of spiritual wisdom.

To get the fruit of this discourse on the *Gita*, one-pointed concentration is essential. Krishna asks Arjuna, “Has this been heard by you with an attentive mind? Have you heard it without distraction?” For the battlefield where they were had plenty of distractions to disturb the concentration of Arjuna’s mind from the invaluable lesson he was receiving from Krishna. It is really admirable that Arjuna, seated in the chariot between the two armies, manages to master his mind and rid it of all the passions with which it was filled when he rode in for the fray! Truly, he is an ideal disciple. You should thank him for eliciting the *Bhagavad Gita* for humanity.

Some people argue that the *Gita* teaches this *yoga* more than any other. That shows only their partisan nature. Once you begin to practise the *Gita*, such ideas as trying to exhibit your superior scholarship, by propounding a new theory or meaning, will vanish. The *Gita* is the greatest harmoniser of all *yogas*. As a matter of fact, once the *Gita* is made the guiding star of your life, the way you act will be the *yoga* of action (*karma yoga*), the way you feel will be the *yoga* of devotion (*bhakthi yoga*), and the way you reason will be the *yoga* of wisdom (*jnana yoga*).

It will become automatically so. What you do must be in line with righteousness (*dharmā*); what you feel must foster love (*prema*); what you think must reveal truth (*sathyam*). Then this association (*sathsang*) will be blessed with peace (*santhi*), with even the Supreme Peace (*prasanthi*).

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Success comes when your effort and His Grace both complement each other. How can Grace enter when you do not seek it? Open the door of endeavour; the Merciful Lord will then come in, with the Crown of Success.

Sathya Sai Baba