

The Yoga of Arjuna's Dejection

Chapter 1 (2 of 2)

Each of the first chapters that we are dealing with here are yogas. The first chapter is the Yoga of Dejection. Yoga are the actions that take us to union; a stage in taking us to union to the truth of who we are. When you begin to wake up from your dejection, the second chapter calls that waking up, the Yoga of Discrimination. You begin to see what binds you and what doesn't bind you, what frees you and what pulls you back. This is the beginning of knowledge, true knowledge, the knowledge of the truth of your self, the knowledge of God as directly experienced knowledge, not just information.

(1:08) The second chapter is pointing to developing the ability to understand the nature of your dejection, to understand the nature of your condition, and to begin to take actions that take you out of it. That lead into the third chapter, the Yoga of Action. What action takes me away from my identification with the bondage that I have been suffering? And what action takes me towards what I am? The more one takes action, the more the discrimination becomes strong and the less dejection one has to go through. The more you take action with this discrimination the more knowledge is revealed, the more recognition of what is real or not real becomes available to you, and the more revealing of what it is that binds you and what it is that frees you.

The revealing process that follows the Yoga of Action is called the Yoga of Knowledge. It is always knowledge of truth, of what is real. When you have enough knowledge you are beginning to taste and drink your freedom, to separate yourself from this pit of bondage. You now have some series and practices of yogas that are taking you out of it. This sense of who you are in truth gets stronger and stronger. What happens is that you lose the pull to the world: the habits, the addictions, the negativities, the patterns of behavior that have formed your individual identity.

These begin to lose their hold to pull you back. This is the Yoga of Renunciation in Chapter 5. This is when we start naturally losing interest in the toys of our childhood. We begin to grow up, to rise up out of our childhood mush and soup and stew and begin to get a sense of who or what we are. We come out of the "who" we are and become more of the "what" we are. This happens naturally and can be assisted by all the previous three yogas: discrimination, action, and knowledge, as well as periodically by dejection when we aren't in touch with ourselves.

(3:38) Question: It seems like this linear process you are talking about can happen on many different levels. You could feel like you are really advanced one year and then a beginner again the next year.

Answer: Very good, or it may not be a year, it may be the next day. The dejection will stay with you until the merger process, and the stability of the merger process. Part of the

merger process is the ecstasy and the agony and the agony is the dejection, so it even carries on until you become stabilized in the truth of who you are in the fifteenth chapter. It is concurrent, and it depends upon your system. Some systems progress more effectively through the action component, and some systems progress more effectively through the discrimination component or through the knowledge component. Everybody has their different capacities relative to their abilities to make progress, but these five principles—dejection, discrimination, action, knowledge and renunciation—are the preparatory process which we will cycle through forever. All of these are necessary even after you have become grounded in who you are, because when you reenter into matter the world tries to coat you again. So you have to continuously apply your discrimination and do actions that support who you are. You have to periodically renounce and you have to get back in touch with who you are through knowledge. This is the means by which the soul continues to disassociate from its habit of identification with matter.

This is where all yoga is, where most people are. 95% of seekers are in this process of becoming stable in the self. Of that 95% there is probably another 20% that have glimpses of the next stages; they come and they go. They can come and be completely forgotten for lifetimes before they come again. So these glimpses of the universal are more rare. What is more common is this movement from dejection to the self, becoming stable in the self. This is really what all teachers try to bring their students to—to the state where your identity as your self as matter has switched to your identity as your self as spirit. That is the key. Once that has happened, then a process takes you over and it starts doing the rest of the work.

(6:56) So the journey of kundalini is from the first chakra to the fourth chakra. The sixth chapter is the fourth chakra, when you reside in the heart, when you reside in the being. When that resonance in the being comes to you, you spontaneously feel the connection and go into awareness.

So let's come back to the Bhagavad Gita and pick up where we left off.

12. At this juncture, Bhishma, the great grandfather of the Kurus, blew his conch to cheer up Duryodhana. The sound of the conch was like the roaring of a lion.

13. All of a sudden, conches, kettledrums, tabors, drums, and cow horns blared forth simultaneously, making a tumultuous sound.

14. Then, seated in the magnificent chariot drawn by white horses, Sri Krishna and Arjuna blew their celestial conches.

15. Sri Krishna blew His conch Panchajanya and Arjuna, his conch Devadatta, while Bhima, the performer of terrible deeds, blew his mighty conch Paundra.

16. King Yudhishtira, Kunti's son, blew his conch Ananatavijaya; Nakul and Sahadeva blew their conches Sughosa and Manipushpaka respectively.

17. Then the ruler of Kashi, an excellent archer; Shikhandi, the great warrior; Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, Satyake the invincible,

18. Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, also the mighty-armed son of Subhadra, blew their respective conches.

19. The tumultuous sound echoing through heaven and earth rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons.

(9:07) This part of Chapter 1 is addressing the awakening of consciousness within matter. It is an acceleration of what was stuck in dejection and suddenly the whole system is becoming activated, becoming in crisis. This is the awakening of the kundalini, usually in the first and second chakras. This is a call to action. You have been planning for this and now you are going to start acting. The entire system at this stage is electrified in this sense of peril, this sense of necessity, this sense of something coming. The process is very turbulent. These verses describe it perfectly. What is becoming most disturbed by this awakening is the unconscious part of ourselves, the ego, the habitual parts of ourselves. These are the parts that get disturbed. But the parts of us that are truth become enlivened, become motivated, become capable.

At this stage we become aware of our capacity for action, our capacity to come forward and meet that which is binding us. Prior to that we are still victims. It's very difficult to wake up enough to realize that you have a say about how miserable you've been, or how bound you have been feeling or how stuck you have been feeling. This is the beginning of you waking up as the authority of your own life. It is the beginning of the struggle of the truth of you to separate itself from the untruth. Because this force that rises up is not from the ego, it is not from the habitual part of you, but it draws its strength from truth and consciousness itself, it can be very disturbing.

When I first had my awakening, it went very smoothly, but for most it is very turbulent. There was a website called kundalini emergency that would describe symptoms of people who were having this kind of awakening. There would be pain, panic attacks, breathing problems, not being able to sleep at night, endless restlessness and discomfort. These were all symptomatic of this force of consciousness rising up in the individual system, pushing its way to the surface through all this obscurity.

(12:49) A tremendous amount of turbulence is created in a person's system unless the system is ready for awakening. Then perhaps for the first time one experiences the force of consciousness within oneself. This can be a startling spiritual experience. This can be a casting into a whole other dimension of being, a much more expanded capacity for presence or love, a glimpse of the gods or the heavens. All of these would be signs that at least for that moment the force of awakening consciousness had a free channel to your surface self and you could share in something of that which is coming. But for the most part, many people, and even such a person, will go back into the turbulence, back into the process.

This awakening of consciousness is the beginning of an internal transformation process, but at this stage we have no discrimination, we don't know what is going on, we feel like a victim, we tend to take it very personally. If it was a great experience, you may feel exalted and think you are God. You found it and you are the one. Your ego will take over and proclaim itself as a realized being until someone catches on. The ego will take it over and convert it into its own thing and you will fall back into a diminished state of consciousness and the dejection will even be more poignant.

In that process your discrimination gets better. You say, "I guess that wasn't really it." When it happened for me that I had this awakening experience, and when it quieted, the next day I chalked it up as one of those Maslow peak experiences. "That was interesting." And I went about my day. I had an attitude towards these things that I knew they come and go, which was helpful. I knew it didn't mean anything more than what had happened. It was a beautiful glimpse, but I didn't have a clue what to do about it, or what it meant, or how to put it into action. I had no discrimination.

20. Seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra ready for the battle, Arjuna raised his bow,

21. And said to Sri Krishna, "Please place my chariot in the middle of the two armies,

22. And keep it there until I have surveyed these warriors who have assembled for battle and have found out with whom I will have to fight."

23. Let me scan all the well-wishers of the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra who have assembled here to fight.

Arjuna is feeling his oats, he's feeling jazzed. He is feeling like, "I can do this. This looks good. I'm the one. Show me who I am here to kill. Show me how can I convert this into something that will serve my ego."

Sanjaya said:

24. O King, being thus addressed by Arjuna, Sri Krishna placed the magnificent chariot in the middle of both armies,

25. In front of Bhishma, Drona and the other kings and said, "Partha, behold all these opposing armies of the Kurus assembled here."

26. Arjuna saw fathers, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends all standing there ready to fight.

27. He also saw fathers-in-law and well-wishers in both armies.

28. Seeing all the relatives and friends standing on the battlefield eager to fight, he was filled with deep remorse and with sadness spoke thus:

(17:24) “Oh shit, what am I up against.” Notice who allowed Arjuna to come to that “Oh shit” moment. Krishna is the one who drove the chariot between the two armies. The divine in Arjuna was the one who allowed him to see what it was that this was heralding and what this was about. Arjuna had a glimpse of his ego. He had the first glimpse of how vested he was because of his attachments.

The Kuruvas represent all of our human addictions, all our human ideas of ourselves from the lowest to the highest. It is all our various qualities of human nature: our envy, our jealousy, our pride, our need to control and dominate and be right. It is our sense of worth and power, our diminished sense of worth, our powerlessness, our meaninglessness, our hopelessness. It is all these things we have believed to be true. Some of them are qualities we are very attached to, that were critical for our sense of self-worth, for who we are in the world and what other people think of us. Some of these also are obstacles, barriers, veils. So in this moment for a brief instant, Arjuna saw the problem.

Arjuna said:

29. Krishna, seeing these relatives arrayed for battle, my limbs give way, my mouth is parched, my body trembles and my hairs stand on end.

30. The Gandiva is slipping from my hands and my skin is burning. I am unable to stand and my head is reeling.

31. And, Keshava, I am seeing inauspicious omens and find no good in killing my kinsmen in this battle.

(19:42) I want to talk about the symptoms that Arjuna is experiencing. Unlike early dejection where we don't know what is happening, what is happening at this point is because of the activation of the kundalini. It is starting to push up issues to the surface consciousness. Arjuna is beginning to experience, as the seeker, the nature of what it is that is before him even before his mind has discrimination and the mental clarity. He just knows he feels awful. He just knows he feels like shit. He just knows that this is wrong. And who is saying it's wrong? Ego is saying it's wrong. Ego has its own harmony. It has come to this point by getting all its aspects to collaborate together. When this force comes in, it is a disturbance, a change, right down in the fundamental structure of your identity. And it just feels wrong. What do people do with this wrong feeling? They take medication for it, they get treatment, or get drunk or get laid, anything but to be with this. But in this case Arjuna rationalizes and justifies why he shouldn't continue.

32. Krishna, I am not desirous of victory or kingdom or pleasures; what is the use of all this happiness or even life to us?

33. Those for whose sake we desire kingship, happiness and pleasure are all arrayed here risking their lives and wealth.

34. Teachers, fathers, sons and grandsons, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law, and all other relatives are here.

35. Krishna, I do not want to kill them even if they are ready to kill me; not to speak of the gains on earth, even the lordship over the three worlds will not prompt me to kill them.

36. What would we gain by killing the sons of Dhritarashtra except sin, even though they are the aggressors?

37. Therefore, we should not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra and other relatives, for how can one be happy after killing his own kinsmen?

38. Even though they are unable to see the evil of destroying their own family and committing treachery to friends due to greed,

39. Why should we not desist from this sinful act as we can clearly see the evil that will follow the destruction of our clan?

(22:34) Sounds like Arjuna is convincing himself. If you look at the nature of rationalization and justification it is to convince ourselves not to take the required action. Let's look at the nature of this. There are multiple aspects to this allegory. One of the aspects I am describing is what the mind does when the awakening happens. It tries to find a rationalization or justification for why it is occurring and it tries to make it stop so you can feel better. It is total ignorance; you don't know what is going on, so you treat it as if it were a physical or psychological problem.

But in this case, there is another way to look at it. What is making it impossible for Arjuna to go forward is his attachment, his affection, his sense of identity that came from the community he was born into, the shared life experiences with his cousins and teachers and other important people that helped shape his sense of self and the formation of his positive ego because he was a successful man. He had a lot of positive influences, he had gratitude but he also had sentiment and attachment. The idea of destroying these was intolerable to his surface consciousness even though they were trying to destroy him.

So in the allegory we have the struggle between the dark side and the light side, the good and the bad. We are attached to things that bind us. The very nature of identity is repetition and agreement. You make something real, even if it is not real, by repeating it enough and getting enough people to agree with you. Falsehood is nothing but repetition and agreement. Republicans are being very effective with that these days. It's a strategy that has existed throughout ages—repetition and agreement. Your relatives are the agreement for you, they are the ones that say you deserve to exist, that you are OK. There is also the other side. We become attached to affirmations of who we are as separate beings.

(25:25) Spiritual awakening is not only the end of the dark side and the obscure side; it is also the end of human happiness, human pleasure, human comfort, and human security—those little pleasures that make life worth living. It doesn't care when truth wakes up. It

sees these are all simple attachments, structures by which we have been favorably hooked in versus unfavorably hooked in. Of course we are going to rationalize and justify why to keep them in place. We are moralistic people, we are good people, and we'll hang onto what feels good versus what doesn't feel good. What doesn't feel good is not to have what feels good. So this process is really a difficult process to collaborate with at the beginning because it runs counter to everything your ego has been organized around: the good and the bad, the pleasurable and the unpleasurable, those who love you and those who don't, those you get along with and those you don't, your attractions and repulsions—they are all bondage.

What hooks us in? Happiness hooks us in. Love hooks us in. Attention hooks us in. Recognition hooks us in, as well as rejection, judgment, complaint, dissatisfaction, or criticism—they all hook us in. Either side of this metronome hooks us in. Happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain—this is the music we all dance to whether we know it or not.

This is about ending the movement. This is about getting rid of the metronome. It is a completely different thing, utterly outside of human ideas. It is not about nobility, not about greatness; it is really not about an accomplishment, unless you consider undoing that which would want accomplishment an accomplishment. Of course Arjuna would rationalize and justify to not go forward. Not only is he feeling like crap, he can't by any stretch of the imagination understand why he would have to destroy all these loved ones, all the things that helped form his sense of worth and who he was.

So you are beginning to get what a truth book is about. You are beginning to get a sense that we are not talking about a happy human accomplishment here. We are not talking about being a better human. We are talking about a completely different paradigm of a completely different order.

40. When the clan is destroyed, the age-old family virtues disappear and vice takes over the entire race.

41. Krishna, with the preponderance of vice, the women of the clan will become corrupt and that will lead to a mixture of castes.

42. Intermixture of castes will lead to hell for the destroyers of the clan and also bring down the entire race; this will lead to cessation of ancestral offerings.

43. Thus, the intermixture of castes that is caused by the destroyers of the kinsmen will destroy the traditional customs and rites.

44. Krishna, we have heard that men who have lost their clan traditions dwell in hell permanently.

45. What a pity! We are bent upon committing such a great sin of killing our own kinsmen just for the sake of the pleasure of the crown.

46. It will be better for me if the weapon-wielding sons of Dhritarashtra kill me in this battlefield when I am unarmed and unresisting.

Sanjaya said:

47. Saying thus, Arjuna, whose mind was agitated by grief, threw down his bow and arrow on the battlefield and sat silently in the chariot.

Thus ends the first chapter of Gita entitled The Yoga of Arjuna's Dejection.

So you can see this is trying to reveal something of the nature of dejection. True dejection is a fundamental recognition that it is all a lie, and it is difficult for the consciousness to be present with it. It is the destruction of everything. The Gita is talking about Arjuna getting a glimpse of the nature of what he is doing from the point of view of his ego, his attachments, his ethics and morality and from the point of view of his good traditions, of society and the harmony of the cultural order. He is seeing that this utter destruction is wrong and if he has to take part in this he would rather die; he would rather be killed and forget this awakening, go back to sleep, go back to unconsciousness, go back into not knowing. He doesn't want to experience this, next lifetime or the lifetime after. He has talked himself out of it. It is complicated. He is a great warrior. Of the five Pandava brothers he is the one with the celestial weapons and he is saying, "I can't do this."

(32:24) It is a paralyzing moment in the journey of consciousness when it has come along enough in the journey to where it gets a glimpse of where it is headed. It is never as horrific as the ego sees it. It is actually wonderful. But at the moment when you enter into your next stage of evolution, what you see first is the darkness, the unworkability of it relative to what you have known. It is like trying to get a child out of the sandbox. At first it is about leaving behind the sandbox. The child doesn't know what is going to happen next. He doesn't know yet about riding bikes or playing baseball or being with his friends. He just likes his little sandbox.

It is this unwillingness to change, this unwillingness to let go of what you know, this resistance. He wants to go back to denial. He doesn't want to know that this even exists. It is actually quite a high state. I have people come to me sometimes in that state and I am thrilled. They are telling me how awful it is and I can't help but to smile because I know it is a true glimpse, a true showing of that which is not yet known but from the vantage point of ego it looks awful; it looks like your undoing. But from the vantage point of truth it looks like your freedom. That's why they call it the gateless gate. From the side of ego it looks like there is a barrier. From the side of truth there is no barrier. But at the time it is looking formidable, impossible.

These moments occur along the spiritual path at regular intervals. The more you are with the teacher the more often they occur because the delaying and resisting and denying aspects of the ego can't hold up. You keep being shown what the next thing is you have to let go of or stop doing; what the next thing is that is keeping you stuck that you don't know

how to stop. It looks like too much, it looks like you can't do it and that's where you stop. Learning to be in these moments and not believe them is the key to going beyond dejection. Krishna was right next to Arjuna. If he hadn't been, Arjuna probably would not have had this experience. He would have gone and slaughtered his relatives. He wouldn't have had this philosophical moment, this perspective. Without the presence of Krishna he wouldn't have seen the consequences, which was the end of his life as he knew it. That's the key here.

When the light of truth is sufficiently bright, we come out of the morass of our identification with matter and begin to recover who we are as spirit. Until then we fall back in. If Arjuna had gone out and lived in the woods, being a sannyasi, avoiding his relatives, hiding in caves, he would not have recovered his true self. Many, many, many, people spend lifetimes and lifetimes popping out and falling back in because they don't want to change, or it looks too hard. It takes something else to create sufficient momentum to push against the collective tide of the habit of ego and to begin to really re-enter the path, this yoga.

(37:06) Q: There is a really cheesy phase in there where you get the taste of transcendence but you still get the flesh. Can't I have both?

Answer: That happens all along the way. When things start getting good again and you get this new ego that can handle the spiritual path, that's when you really start negotiating. Is there a way to keep the good parts and just get rid of the bad parts? Without the presence of a Krishna you can't keep proceeding. We don't have sufficient light or freedom for the force to move in our system at the beginning of the journey in order to keep us moving.

You understand the nature of this first phase. The Gita is describing what really happens. It took me a long time to move through the story part and get to the essence but once I began to match my experience with the understanding I started seeing this. That is what was happening, that is what was going on in me, that is what is going on in me. I start to get a glimpse of the next thing and then I retreat because my consciousness doesn't know how to hold it. Even at the highest realizations, even when I came to the Sat realization, it looked like a dark ship and I was insignificant flotsam floating on the ocean. It was a shock as to how huge this was. Non-existence is what it was. That is what each one of these is because from the vantage point of consciousness it doesn't know it either can or cannot exist. It doesn't think of death or not death, it is only ego that thinks of these things. Consciousness doesn't have an issue with existence or non-existence. It's not real for it. It is both. It is existing and non-existing at the same time. But for ego it looks like the end of you. It looks like non-existence. The part of you that experiences terror when you have a glimpse of the truth is your ego. That is your ego in terror. Your being isn't in terror. Being is what is there when the terror goes away. It is hard to stay in a state of terror. Those who are in that state are in a very high state, but you end up wrecking your body so you are prescribed medications in our society.

So this struggle between existence and non-existence is not real but from the point of view of the ego it is real. What Arjuna had was a glimpse of the end of ego, but truth always looks like your worst nightmare at first. It keeps showing up as the thing that you don't want to experience. For Arjuna, because of the poignancy of the situation, because of the vested

forces at play, he was brought to that moment of recognition of what he was up to and his ego just wanted to retreat and hide. And if Krishna had not been there, that is just what he would have done.