

The Yoga of Discrimination

Chapter 2 (1 of 2)

We are now into Chapter 2 but first I want to remind you of the context of where we are. The Bhagavad Gita has three major stages, three major phases in the development of the individual towards the universal and then back as the individual. These three major stages are reflected in the eighteen chapters of the Gita. The first six are focused on what we all are familiar with in terms of the spiritual path. Basically the first six chapters include almost everything that we have studied and read in almost all traditions of the individual coming to a state of what you would call individual liberation, in this case, the liberation from being a person to being consciousness. When it comes it is not necessarily integrated, nor does it include the universal aspects of creation, but many people are very fulfilled to just complete these first six chapters of the Gita. In these first six chapters are basic lessons that will occur in all the rest of the journey. What you learn in these six chapters is foundational in terms of the transformation and the transcendence process that the Gita is pointing to, as do all teachings.

(2:10) Let's review this first part of the Bhagavad Gita. We just completed the yoga of dejection. Dejection is the experience of your bondage, not knowing that is what you are experiencing. It is when the being comes forward and the outer personality doesn't know what is happening. Let's talk about the outer personality.

We are so locked into our outer personality. Don't fool yourself. We might live in our thoughts and our ideas and our stories and our daydreams and our imaginings and our memories and our musings, but every one of them come from the impressions gathered through the outer sensory world through a body and its five senses. If it weren't for your body and the mind that makes sense of the senses, you wouldn't have a daydream, you wouldn't have a story, you wouldn't have a belief structure. All you have to do is sit in an isolation tank for a few hours and stay in a state of sensory deprivation and you begin to recognize how accustomed we are to live in a state of continuous stimulation. Our personality is formed through this process of interaction between our consciousness and the outer world through the body.

This becomes the only reality the embodied consciousness knows. It doesn't know anything else. It may know a higher thought versus a lower thought, a higher feeling versus a lower feeling. It may know pain versus pleasure or comfort versus discomfort. But that is all within the sensory structure that is the foundation of our personality, our sense of separate self. This identification is very entrenched in my experience here in the West. In other places it is not as entrenched. Consciousness is allowed to come forward more. I feel it is probably because our education system puts such an emphasis on our mental development. We have spent so many years training our minds to navigate through this outer and inner world, trying to come to some happy sense of self, some harmony, some balance. So it has become a cage that we were born into. We don't even know that we are in the cage because we don't know anything else. I use the analogy of a fish in water. Someone

asks the fish, "How is the water?" And of course the fish says, "Water, what water?" So how you are is kind of the same thing.

We are living inside a fish bowl that is full of accumulated impressions from the interaction of the body and the outer world. These accumulated impressions go on even when we shut our eyes and go to sleep. They are sitting there and will become part of our waking processes and dreams. So it is a huge content, subtle and outer physical. Not just our outer personality and outer relationship with the world but everything we think and muse and contemplate and analyze is all due to this gathering of impressions.

(6:02) To wake up means at first that within your fish bowl turbulence is occurring that doesn't seem to have an outward source. It is arising from something you don't know. In the analogy of the fish bowl somebody is shaking your fish bowl and suddenly all the things that were together and in order are starting to stir and you don't know what is going on. So dejection is an emerging of consciousness from this complete bodily identification and it is not known at first.

Many people are in dejection and don't know that they are, or they are in dejection at times through their many lifetimes not knowing that dejection is what they are experiencing. They think it is just a bad mood or a bad day. That is pretty much how dejection shows up; you can't keep the harmony with your outer personality that you have developed. There is a disturbance and you don't know why, and you don't know how to fix it, and the old things don't seem to work. That is the clue. In my experience dejection is much more pervasive than people realize. On the spiritual path it is your constant companion. It is coming and going. There is a sense of dissatisfaction that is not due to an outward cause, an endless sense that something is missing that is not due to desire. It is coming from an emerging out of a slumberous condition.

So when we finished the end of Chapter 1 we saw that Arjuna was in a rigorous process of trying to reestablish his equilibrium. His fish bowl had been stirred and he was trying to make it stop. So he rationalized and justified because what he thought was stirring was what was before him, this battle. All his personal qualities were being activated, the possibility of the loss of all of his attachments and beliefs and morality and ideas. So he came forward and said, "No, we are not going to do this. We are going to try to put it all back in the box."

Now Arjuna didn't know he was doing that. He didn't have a clue. At the end of the first chapter he is still in dejection. The symptoms might quiet: the burning of his skin, the weakness, the inability to hold the sword and fight, the tiredness, the fatigue, the inability to be comfortable or to rest or to find some peace. Those symptoms may quiet, so he came up with what the mind will do: rationalization and justification to find the cause of the problem. You go to a psychiatrist, you go to a doctor or counselor and they will tell you what to do and then you will do those things, hoping it puts it back in the box. Sometimes it works. That's the bitch of the thing. A spiritual awakening occurs and you didn't even know. All you thought was that it was a bad month.

(9:26) This would not be anything an ordinary ego would seek. Let's be clear. No ego would seek what you find on the spiritual path. The ego gets tricked and fooled. It thinks the spiritual path is about something it wants. So it collaborates until a higher state of dejection comes, and it realizes it has been tricked. It has been losing all along. So the Yoga of Dejection is a yoga; it is a means of union to the truth of who you are.

Every time we live in this outer personality we are not realizing that this outer personality came with an expiration date. Every time you signed the certificate you didn't see the certificate underneath was a death certificate. They are signed at the same time. Your birth certificate and your death certificate are concurrent. The only thing that is not filled in is the date. Who knows, on some plane, the date is probably also there. This is the untruth of this deal: no matter what body you got, it is going to get old and die. It is going to get sick, get diseased, get uncomfortable. You are going to have all kinds of things going wrong and before it is over you are going to wish you never had one. So when you get this, then you get what it is we are trying to find out. We are trying to find out what is real, what lasts, what it is that lives this life, what it is that has a body.

Now you can understand this intellectually as I am speaking to you and that is the beginning of the second chapter. The second chapter is the beginning of a description of what it is you truly are, and the correct relationship with that in such a way that it becomes real for you or begins to become real for you. It is really beginning to understand, like the fish that has been taken out of the water, what it is experiencing when it is out of the water. It's a momentary, periodic, occasional recognition or revelation of what it is other than what it is when it is in the water. So this discrimination is actually a tangible experiencing in the mental or vital or physical plane of your true nature. But you don't know that is what it is at first, so it takes time. You have to teach the outer personality in the same way it was programmed to be an outer personality: it has to be programmed to recognize itself as truth, as consciousness.

(12:56) So the yoga of discrimination takes us to a place where we begin to understand the distinction between who we are as a personality, and who we are as that which has a personality. When that distinction at the superficial level has begun to happen, then what happens at the next stage is in the next chapter of the Gita: the Yoga of Action. You start applying it, you start practicing it, you start finding ways of repeating the experience of being out of the water, finding ways of making a distinction between this outer personality and the inner being. So this could be through spiritual practices. It is going to include the process of inquiry, of action, of questioning, and talking with people and being exposed to people who have a more radiant presence that can actually enhance your ability to experience your own presence. Any of these are within the Yoga of Action.

From action, automatically and without effort, discrimination gets clearer and of course you have more periods of dejection. You have more clarity about how bound you are. And then as action proceeds, that experience begins to build a basis of knowledge. The action strengthens the discrimination and the discrimination is in fact knowledge. That ability to experience, to have glimpses, to know that which you are without a personality, without a story, without a mind, emotions, beliefs, or attachments, that ability to build a sense of who

you are outside of a conditioned state of consciousness which has a signed certificate of expiration, is knowledge. As that knowledge grows, automatically your discrimination grows, automatically your dejections occur with more clarity, with more sharpness, with more precision; and you learn how to refine your actions, and those actions bring more knowledge, and more knowledge feeds it, and so on. They feed each other. Each feeds the other.

(15:32) When the knowledge comes to a certain point you begin to say, "I am not going to do that any more." You begin to step out of the habit of your old personality. You begin to say, "This doesn't work for me. This isn't what is important to me." You begin to lose interest in the childhood toys. You lose interest in the things that kept you entertained in your more immature state of consciousness. So with renunciation, we can consciously renounce and we can notice how things fall away. The falling away is a sign of maturation, a sign of the maturation of these first four stages. Things start falling away automatically. The more we consciously renounce the easier it gets. After a while renunciation reinforces our ability to discriminate and take right action and we have a direct experience of ourselves and we naturally renounce more and more.

When all these previous five stages reach a certain threshold, we then find that that which lives us, that which we are in our essence, starts coming forward into the outer personality, causing the outer personality to grow quiet. The experience of the emerging being or the emerging essence of what we are as consciousness is always a quieting, a making things still, settled, and present. We come out of this frantic restlessness of treading the water of our lives and we begin to let ourselves sink into the ocean of quietness and stillness that we are. This is meditation. Meditation in Chapter 2 is also called samadhi. Samadhi is simply just another form of intense meditation.

Once natural meditation starts occurring, the forces of that which come in while we are meditating start enhancing our effectiveness in all the previous stages. Our ability to move through our dejection, our ability to discriminate, our ability to take right action, our ability to have a direct experience of what we are and what that means, our ability to articulate it, to know it, and a falling away of the patterns of our life that kept us in our outer personality—all get enhanced once meditation begins. This is why in my work I put so much emphasis on meditation because so much more can be done to bring the being forward than with all those other activities that require process and effort. Meditation takes no time, although it seems like when you are connected there is not being connected, then again being connected, then not being connected. That seems to occur in time, but the moment of being connected is timeless.

(18:56) So effectively all of these are processes, with meditation being perhaps the most effective, renunciation being the second most effective, knowledge being the third most effective, and action being the fourth most effective. Discrimination alone, intelligent understanding, often comes last. Some people have a discriminating intelligence right at the beginning, but discrimination alone is the fifth most effective means of coming to truth. Understanding is the next to the least means of coming to the truth of who you are—intellectual understanding, discrimination.

Of course there are discriminations of the heart and discriminations of the body. Through the use of kinesiology the body knows when something is true or not true. When it is true it can resist pressure. When it is not true it is weak. Everything knows at some level in ourselves when we begin to attend to that part of our being. The body is so simple. The mind makes everything so complicated.

So let's go into the Gita, Chapter 2, the first part. There are two key concepts.

Chapter 2, Samkhya Yoga: The Yoga of Discrimination

Sanjaya said:

48. To him who was thus overcome by grief, dejected and confused, and whose eyes were filled with tears, Krishna spoke thus:

The Blessed Lord said:

49: From where came this attachment to you at this hour of peril, Arjuna? It is not for noble souls: it will lead you neither to heaven nor to glory.

50. Yield not to cowardice: it is not befitting of you. Get rid of this faint-heartedness and stand up, you, the scorcher of enemies.

(21:30) This is coming down to the relationship between the Krishna to the Arjuna. Arjuna, of his own, wouldn't have done what he ends up doing at the end of Chapter 12 if it weren't for Krishna. Arjuna would be in the woods somewhere dodging his enemies. Clearly Krishna was there to bring out what was hidden in Arjuna's nature. Arjuna now has just laid out in the previous chapter his perfectly justified rationalization and explanation of why he shouldn't fight. These are the first words that came out of Krishna, "Where did this come from? You are a warrior, why are you talking like some kind of philosopher, what is this whole thing you've created?" He's pushing the consciousness in Arjuna to the surface to question his assumptions so that he won't slip back into dejection.

Arjuna said:

51. Krishna, how shall I fight against Bhishma and Drona in the battle; are they not worthy of my reverence?

52. It is better to live on alms in this world than to kill these noble elders and enjoy all riches and wealth stained by their blood.

53. We do not know which would be better for us. We are also not sure who will win over whom. These very people, the sons of Dhritarashtra, killing whom we will not want to live, are standing before me in the enemy's rank.

54. I am overcome by pity and faint-heartedness. My mind is puzzled; I am unable to know what is my duty. I surrender to Thee; I am Thy disciple. Please guide me in the correct path.

(23:40) This last verse where Arjuna recognizes that he doesn't know what is going on and turns to Krishna to guide him is the first time that he has seen that he has a problem outside of the category of his outer personality. It is a recognition of something inside him that is saying, "Krishna is right, it is not so simple, I can't just go into the woods and be happy with that." Some part of him knows that what he has just rationalized and justified isn't real for him. When Krishna pointed that out, he is bewildered. He doesn't know what to do next. All his structures for explaining and rationalizing and organizing his life have just collapsed and he is saying, "I don't know what to do."

This is a moment of awakening. This is a moment of humility. He is not being arrogant as he was, "Lead me to the front of the armies and show me with whom I will have to fight." He's saying, "Oh shit, I don't know what is going on, I don't know what is happening." He has reached that third stage of knowledge. First you don't know you don't know, in the second stage you think you know but you don't know—which is where Arjuna is—and in the last and higher stage you know you don't know. He's come to, "I know I don't know." This is the critical transition point that takes us out of dejection. Prior to that we resist, we fight, and the outer personality still rules. But until we come to that moment of receptivity, of knowing we don't know, nothing will change. We will repeat the same cycle again and again.

(25:56) This inability here in the West to be open to teachings because we are so willful and independent and striving to do things our own way acts as a barrier in our outer personality to being able to step outside of ourselves. Of course there are a lot of people who would give us wrong information at that stage, and of course it takes grace to be able to have the capacity to recognize true advice. It is not about just letting yourself be convinced by somebody; rather it is a recognition at some part of your being that what this person is speaking of is true. This is the first surrender in the Bhagavad Gita. This surrender, just like dejection, is a constant companion because it is only through surrender that we come out of dejection.

Dejection begins to end when we surrender and recognize that we know we don't know. In that moment when we cry out for God, when we cry out for help, when we cry out knowing we can no longer do it ourselves—that is surrender. That brings in forces much larger than ourselves—even if the guru isn't present—that assist us in making this transition. This is a very key transition, these openings—a shift from the old paradigm to a new paradigm that you don't know yet. You don't know what this new world is that you are entering into. You don't even know it is a new world. You just know the old doesn't work any more.

55. I am not finding it possible to get rid of this grief, even if I am to get the lordship of this world and that of the gods too.

Sanjaya said:

56. *O King! After saying this to Sri Krishna, Arjuna, the destroyer of foes, proclaimed, "I will not fight," and became silent.*

57. *Then, O Bharata, Sri Krishna, with a smile, spoke the following words to Arjuna, who was full of sorrow.*

The Blessed Lord said:

58. *Arjuna, you are speaking like a wise man but grieve over those who should not be grieved for. Wise men grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.*

59. *There was never a time when you, I, or these kings, ceased to exist, nor shall there ever come a time when we will not exist.*

60. *Just as the embodied self undergoes the stages of adolescence, youth and old age, so also it acquires another body. The wise are not deluded about this.*

61. *Arjuna, the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, are caused by the contact of senses with the objects of pleasure. These feelings are temporary and recurring in nature, therefore, endure them calmly.*

62. *O best among men, the wise men who do not get perturbed with this feeling of pain and pleasure are indeed fit to attain immortality.*

(29:38) In this case Krishna is beginning to teach the Gita. In verse 57 Sanjaya says, "*Then, O Bharata, Sri Krishna, with a smile, spoke the following words to Arjuna, who was full of sorrow.*" Krishna smiled because Arjuna was ready to receive. He could hear it now. And Krishna began to say what we have said previously, "We never cease to exist." We are not that which has an expiration date. We are something other than that. "*Just as the embodied self undergoes the stages of adolescence, youth and old age, so it acquires another body.*" It is just a body, it is just a personality, it is just an ego which we inhabit for a period of time and then we drop it. So what is it that inhabits this personality? Who are we if we are not our mind or thoughts or feelings or our sense of personal self? When you get a sense of who you are as other than the body, then comes a capacity that is revealed in verse 61, an ability to endure calmly the ups and downs, the moods and the swings, the happy moments and the sad moments, the angers and sorrows and regrets. These all are simply temporary feelings, reoccurring in nature; and the art is an ability to not take them so seriously, to not take them so personally. Taking it personally and taking it seriously are the same thing.

To see where you are identified all you have to do is to look at what is serious for you in your life, where your issues are, where your problems are. This is a clue to know where your consciousness is still locked up. When you begin to experience the authentic truth of yourself, then you move towards a true recognition of what you are; and in that, the you who does not get perturbed with this feeling of pain and pleasure is indeed fit to attain immortality. That means that you attain your true nature.

63. Untruth has no existence and truth never ceases to exist. The knowers of truth have come to this conclusion after scrutinizing both these maxims.

64. That alone which pervades this universe is indestructible. No one has the power to destroy this imperishable substance.

65. Arjuna, all these bodies are perishable but not that which dwells in them; therefore, grieve not and fight.

66. One who thinks that it is the slayer and one who thinks that it can be slain, both are ignorant because it neither slays nor is it slain.

67. It is never born nor does it die. It comes into embodiment again and again; it is birthless, eternally present, and is not slain when the body is slain.

(33:20) Just reading these verses can connect you to something. These verses are pointing to truth. They are pointing to the reality that you are actually, that is not dependent on your personality, your body, your story, or your memory. This is the magic of the Bhagavad Gita. It is a book that points to truth and how to move into a living relationship with it. This idea that untruth has no existence and truth never ceases to exist is the key to the Bhagavad Gita. It says that even this outer personality is not untruth, even this human identity is not untruth. It is an expression of the one truth and has its own validity. That expression is temporary and reoccurring in nature. The higher truth, the one that pervades and permeates everything, that truth is eternal and unchanging even though outwardly it may be endlessly appearing to change.

This concurrent knowledge, this co-knowing of both the passing and the permanent, the unsettled and the settled, the silent and the noisy, the still and the active concurrently, is the unique message of the Gita. It is not just pointing to the unchanging truth alone. It is pointing to knowing it all. But in the interim, in the first stage of this process of moving ourselves out of our absolute identification in the outer personality, we have to put our attention on that which is eternal. We have to meet it, find it, and know it until it is equal in strength to our sense of reality as our outer personality is. Then we have become who we were always meant to be, which is truth incarnate, consciousness incarnated.

68. Arjuna, one who knows the Soul to be birthless, imperishable and eternal, how can he kill anybody or how can he be the cause for killing?

69. As a person changes worn-out clothes for new ones, so also the soul discards worn-out bodies and takes on new bodies.

70. Neither can weapons cut it nor can fire burn it, water cannot drench it nor can wind dry it.

71. It cannot be cut or burnt and is incapable of getting wet or dry. It is eternal, all-pervading, constant and primordial.

72. It is unmanifest, unthinkable, and immutable. Knowing this you should not grieve.

73. And even if you think that this soul is subject to constant birth and death you still should not grieve.

74. Whosoever is born shall die and rebirth is inevitable for the dead, therefore you should not grieve over this.

75. Beings are unmanifest before birth and unmanifest after death. They are manifest between these two states. Then what is there to be grieved for?

76. Some see this as a wonder, others speak of it as a wonder, others listen to it in wonder, and there are people who are unable to understand anything even after hearing about it.

77. Arjuna, the soul that dwells in the body of all beings can never be slain therefore you should not grieve for anyone.

(37:36) This is the key to discrimination. The key principle of discrimination is to know your self as the soul. From that vantage point, when you look at your life, you can see what is really going on. In the normal course of human life we come to an understanding of what is going on from one part of our personality, looking at another part of our personality. Our emotional nature can feel empathetically what is happening in the room even though our mental doesn't know; or our mental can understand what is going on with us emotionally even though the emotions don't know. So within the outer personality there is a knowing. This is psychology. But this knowledge, this knowingness, draws its face from something other than the outer personality. It is not intellectual. That is why it is so difficult to explain or identify. It is not just a mental knowing. It is a knowing of your whole being that knows what is true and what is not true.

(39:02) When the sense of the soul has come forward in discrimination it is as if you are in a magnetic field of attraction and repulsion. You are repulsed by that which is not truth, and attracted to that which is truth. It is this compass, the way a compass is pulled to north, it is this compassing, this sense of what is true, what is real, what is not true, what is not real, that comes to you. And there is repulsion to that which is not true and attraction to that which is true. Of course it is an interim, a relative repulsion and a relative attraction, and it can still be coated very much by the personality; but if you follow that down the road you will see that even the personality, through the veils of the personal self, is trying to emerge from this entrapment and is seeking what it is attracted to as a way to come to the thing it truly seeks.

Why do we seek comfort? We seek comfort so we can be quieter when we are comfortable. When we are uncomfortable we are more restless. So comfort is not a wrong thing because it brings us to some relative aspect of the silence and stillness of the soul itself. It is also true with pleasure. Seeking things that are attractive, that we want to have, is not wrong. It is just a veiled looking for that which brings us the bliss that comes when we are with

ourselves as truth. It's a veiled truth, a veiled experience of our connection with our higher possibility.

This whole dimension is bliss. We separate ourselves from the bliss in the process of figuring out who we are, and maneuvering through life, and surviving, and succeeding, but basically the underlying current of this physical existence is bliss. So seeking bliss is not wrong in terms of its foundation. Its foundation is seeking the happiness of the being because when it experiences pleasure it quiets. When it experiences pleasure there is a sense of fulfillment. It is looking for something, but through outer things that are temporary, reoccurring, and only a partial piece of the bliss that exists when we begin to seek truth from the point of view of truth.

(41:53) Finding the means out of this quagmire of partial truths takes time. But if there is some clear understanding of where you are heading, some capacity to catch the structure of the old habit, to watch yourself being pulled into your outer personality, or being pulled into the veil, then you are going to be able to start emerging from this error or partial truth into a more complete truth. The more you know yourself as the eternity, then many of the concerns that drive the ego and separate personality quiet because the basic foundation of the ego is that it knows it is not going to last, it knows it could die. So the foundation of ego is identification with the outer vehicle. The foundation of truth or being is that which animates, that which lives, that which is. When we live in the truth of who we are, this ability to distinguish ego from being becomes a means to come to peace, a means to come to relaxation, a means to come to quietude and resting, silence and bliss.

This is as far as we will go today. There is the first key concept of discrimination as the moment of awakening and recognizing you don't know. And the second key concept is the principle of the soul. Understanding these principles is the basis on which the rest of this chapter will proceed and the rest of the Gita will proceed. The rest of the Gita is: how do we know what is true? How do we make that real for us? How do we live from that place?