



On Bhagavad Gita – 4 by Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha



Bhagavad Gita, the Universal Message

Dear and blessed souls:

Harih Om Tat Sat.

Krishna continues the discussion: “Whoever is not afflicted, assailed or dislodged by these sukha-duhkhas, O, great Arjuna, and whose mind becomes equal towards these dvandvas, becomes fit for liberation, for gaining immortality (2.15).

Moksha, freedom, its nature and purpose

Immortality, moksha, is the goal of human life, especially of a seeker. For, he always aims at freedom (moksha). What is freedom? It is certainly not the physical freedom from anything. In fact, the entire world is full of panchabhootas – earth, water, air, fire and space. Our body also is made of the same panchabhootas. We cannot be free from earth, water and air, nor from fire and space. Our body contains panchabhootas, which surround it also. There is no question of getting any release from their hold.

Naturally, the freedom or moksha the seeker aims at is ‘inner’. It is freedom from the shackles our mind and intelligence seemingly impose. Sukha-dukkhas are the only binding factors. Sukha produces preference and dukkha causes abhorrence. And we are not able to get away from their trap. When with discrimination you are able to know clearly that sukha-dukkhas can only be together, one succeeding the other, neither of them can reign alone. The preference naturally becomes irrelevant, fruitless; prejudice also; resulting in our internal freedom!

Drop preference to sukha and prejudice to dukkha

Sukha-dukkhas by themselves do not do anything; each of them comes and goes. There is no time when either alone prevails or becomes absent. So, what should be the right attitude towards them?

Prefer not sukha, abhor not duhkha too. This is a marked change in your attitude inspired by the true knowledge about interactional life and the recurring sukha-duhkhas. Sukhaduhkhas are in the mental plane. The attitude and orientation towards them are subject to change and improvement. Intelligence holds the key for it.

If sukha can only follow duhkha and it is always succeeded by duhkha, how can it linger for long? Can we do anything about it? Is it not an unavoidable outcome of sensory interaction? Everything has a nature of its own. Fire is hot, ice is cold and milk is white. Likewise, our life is interactional. Interactions irresistibly bring the sukha-duhkha alternates. Can this course be altered? What should a discreet seeker do in such a context?

By a close analysis, sukha loses its special endearingness, because it is duhkha that brings sukha, and also takes us from it to duhkha again. It is like the sumptuous meal given to a criminal just before hanging him! Who will relish it? Should not then the whole attitude of a rational thinker towards sukha change abruptly and drastically? Remember, knowledge is the greatest persuasion in human life!

Intense introspection weakens sukha-duhkhas

When you know that duhkha alone fetches sukha, and duhkha also succeeds sukha, what endearingness can sukha claim before the

intelligence? When you know, just before sipping a cup of tea, that it contains deadly poison, will you drink it? Your entire response will be to keep it away. As is the reaction to the cup of tea, more so should be the one towards the cup of sukha!

There is something more. The cup and the tea are material objects. They are different from your body. Sukha and duhkha are inner, generations of your own mind and intelligence. When discrimination starts acting on the mind and intelligence, automatically the very emergence of sukha-dukkhas will dwindle considerably. Their moderation and extinction are inevitable. It is all the mystic work of human mind and intelligence. Try it, reflect upon it and see what happens.

Meet sukha-dukkhas, like wave and breaker in sea

It is like learning to swim in water and after having learnt the art, remaining afloat by keeping your head up and limbs moving. Here too, you have to learn to swim in the waters of sukha-dukkhas and remain afloat.

It is like taking the refreshing sea bath. Get into the sea, be neck deep in its waters. When the wave comes, raise your feet from the sand below, the wave will take you a little towards the shore, and you will be back on your feet. When the breaker comes, do not hold your head up. Instead dip it below the breaker, which will then pass over your head, leaving you safe. In both cases, you will have

the joy of rising and dipping. Dear souls, what works here is the art and process of discrimination – viveka!

Equipoise – panacea for interactional life

Introspection is the esteemed art of our intelligence. By introspection, you can unearth anything you want from the depth of consciousness.

Allow them to surface and subside, just like when you breathe air in and out, your lungs bellow consistently. Let your mind likewise generate and discard sukha as well as duhkha, one after another. You have to do nothing about it. Let sukha surface. Drop your preference to it. Let duhkha also surge forth, drop your prejudice to it. When you become free of preference and prejudice, the sukha-duhkha waves will also lose their effect of dividing your attitude. The mind will become flexible, not rigid. It will allow the sukha wave to surface, without getting involved in it in any manner.

Equally so, duhkhas will also surface, but will no more evoke any strong response or reaction from the mind. Imagine the subtle process with the sharpness of discrimination. The pleasant buoyancy in sukha will cease and the unpleasant response to duhkha will also be extinct. These are the two alternates which stifle the mind. This is the constriction the unthinking mind and un-introspecting intelligence constantly instill and preserve strongly in one. When its stronghold

vanishes, can you imagine the freedom, relaxation and ecstasy the mind will gain from its own depth and profusion?

Use mind to reflect on the subjectude it richly hosts

Mind you, your mind has the body and senses on one side. They reveal the external objectude of infinite variety. The senses interact with the objectude only to bring the sukha-duhkha opposites. But these take place only in the surface of the mind.

Take a look at the mind itself, devoid of the senses. Try to reflect on the subjectude where the entire world is imprinted by and in the mind. Tell me, is the inward presence greater or the outward objectude. Where is the objectude reflected? Who or what perceives it? Is not the perceiver inside, together with the perceiving process? Where is then any objectivity at all?

When I say, by evenizing the sukha-duhkha alternatives, you will get into an inwardness of infinite magnitude, which, by its very nature, is supremely joyous, delightful, ecstatic. Sukha is but a very constricted measure of the subjective inward ecstaticness. In fact, the very role of sukhaduhkha alternates is to lead you to unearth this inner subjective, spiritual profusion. But, alas the hold of delusion is so powerful that people verily miss it.

Nature and God, fair to humans

Krishna significantly leads Arjuna by analyzing life and showing how fundamental is the evenness, equipoise, we must cultivate towards sukha-duhkha alternates. Remember again that life is interactional throughout and all interactions produce only sukha-duhkhas. So, the opportunity to practise and pursue evenness towards them is verily ceaseless. Even if you fail once or even more, you do not lose the opportunity altogether. It knocks again and again. What more do you want? Can you say Nature is unfair or God is unkind?

Know the distinctions of human life

Human is indeed blessed. Unlike all the rest of the creatures on earth, he has the power to think, understand, speak and share his knowledge with others to benefit all others alike. See, how well Krishna shared his knowledge with Arjuna, making him as enlightened as he himself is. This is the unique role the Spiritual Teacher alone can fulfil for the committed disciple.

Earlier mind's turn, now intelligence's display

It is the same Arjuna who, a few minutes back, was shedding tears, sternly arguing against fighting and wanting to retreat from the battlefield, that now listens assiduously to Krishna's instructions, true to his own submission. He wanted Krishna to instruct

him on shreyas, how to attain it, even while standing on the battlefield.

Where was the acute grief scorching his whole senses, and where now is the instruction he is listening to? The entire difference is what the mind and intelligence bring.

Earlier it was the mind's turn to cook up the distress. Now it is the turn of intelligence to churn out the nectar of wisdom. Mark the difference. Spiritual enquiry can start in any one, anytime, anywhere. It can be a full-fledged interrogation by intelligence about the world's complexity and total evanescence it reveals everywhere in all respects. It can also be triggered by any of the unpleasant traits the world displays. Whatever may be the ground for enquiry, it will evoke finally grief, delusion and doubt.

Intelligence's wisdom redress for mind's all ills

For all the ills of the mind, the wisdom and clarity of the intelligence is the sole redress, every time, in any situation. Keeping all these in mind Krishna wants to instil in his friend-disciple a fundamental introspection and finding. He relates it to the Seers of the land, tattvadarshis, who were experts in probing into the supreme truth of existence.

Krishna was born in Mathura. Before his birth, Kamsa, his maternal uncle, had placed Vasudeva and Devaki, in a well-guarded prison. What more? He had also chained their feet, to make sure they

would not escape. The child to be born, the eighth, was fated to kill his uncle.

Kamsa lost all his sleep as Devaki was approaching the delivery date. His fear was so much that he was virtually seeing the child Krishna to be born everywhere! He had already killed all the earlier children. Now was to be born the last one, his killer. By hook or crook, he had to escape the fate pronounced by the ethereal voice years back. That is why he had taken all possible safeguards. Little did he care to think that to plot against Providence was of no avail! No repentance for the crime he did to his sister or any sense of surrender before the Supreme ever occurred to him the least! The wicked fosters hope against hope, enhancing his wickedness every time!

Invisible hands stronger than the visibles

But, who can obstruct the behest of Providence? The invisible hands are always stronger than the visible ones. Do all that you can, but the will of Providence cannot be countered.

The sun set and the day passed. Devaki's delivery was imminent. Kamsa's anxiety grew tremendously. He posted special guards to keep vigil outside the chamber, where Devaki and Vasudeva were. **Born a Mathura prince, bred as a cowherd boy**

Darkness grew. It was midnight, the time even guards' eyes are likely to close. There was rumbling in the sky. It started drizzling. Gentle, cool wind was blowing. In the still comfort it brought and

spread, the guards' eyes closed. The fated child was born. Devaki and Vasudeva saw the little one, the sparkling divine form, not seen by them earlier. The child told the father: "Take me instantly to Vrindavan, put me there in Nandagopa's palace. Bring the female child born there back, in the same manner as you would go there. Do not fear, all safeguards will be done. Your journey will be smooth. None will see you or me on the way."

Thus, the prince of Mathura, Kamsa's nephew, became a pet in the cowherd settlement of Vrindavan, as a dear child of Yashoda and Nandadgopa. Krishna did not have his regular schooling. He grew up with the cowherd boys as the dear friend of all. Though denied the princely privileges and facilities of Mathura kingdom, he grew up well with his own intrinsic lustre, spreading his unique charm and precious mischiefs.

Kamsa's plot to kill Krishna by tusker and wrestlers

Kamsa made various efforts to kill his nephew. All of them utterly failed. He became panicky and hatched a plot to invite him to Mathura and finish him.

A huge tusker trained to kill the nephew was posted at the entry point to Mathura under the pretext of greeting Krishna. Krishna and his brother Balarama jubilantly marched to Mathura, bidding goodbye to Vrindavan and all its residents.

With tusks on shoulders Krishna up in wrestling arena

The residents of Mathura greeted Nanda's children with overwhelming heartiness and delight. On seeing the Vrindavan lads, the mahouts charged the tusker Kuvalayapedam to do his task as planned. But Krishna sported with the tusker by running around his feet, but out of reach for him. Only seconds passed. He jumped and pulled the tusks. The huge tusker fell and his life forces left. Keeping the tusks on his shoulder, he and Balarama marched to the wrestling arena where Malla and Chanura were ready to welcome and dispatch them to the palace of Death. **Chanura-Malla fallen, Krishna leaps and throws Kamsa to the arena**

All the people seated in the gallery shouted against the unequal combat, condemning the King and his unthinkable cruelty. The wrestling did not last long. Chanura and Malla fell on the arena and left their prana. Krishna took a leap to the gallery, where his uncle was seated witnessing the combat he had arranged. Before Kamsa could sense matters, the nephew lifted his uncle and threw him into the wrestling arena. He then fell on the uncle, who was lying almost dead. It was the only blessing of his uncle – to have his nephew lie on his back for a while, an unsolicited embrace indeed!

Ugrasena anointed as Mathura king again

Krishna straight went to release Ugrasena, Kamsa's father and anointed him as King of Mathura again. The Kamsa chapter was thus over. Life in Mathura was restored to normalcy.

Krishna's formal learning under Sandeepani

It was then that Vasudeva conducted the sacred thread ceremony for Krishna and Balarama and sent them to Sandeepani vidyalaya for schooling. Krishna had a very good tuition in the hands of Sandeepani, a great Teacher of the time. Those were days, when Vedas and Shastras were the subject of teaching and learning. Naturally, the Upanishads which expose the Soul, the 'I', the inmost identity of every one, also became a vital part of education.

Like any other boy of his time, Krishna also underwent the usual education and it is this exposure that formed the basis of his dialogue with Arjuna. By treating Krishna as God, a Superhuman, instead of seeing him as a source of inspiration, a man of supreme excellence and perfection, we are losing the truth about a glorious human life, the potential and possibilities it holds within it.

(to be continued)

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