

THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA THE SONG CELESTIAL

**(A Series of Lectures given by
Sri Swami Omkar in America, in 1929)**

Part - I

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THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA THE SONG CELESTIAL

Part -1

Dear Beloved ones, it is a great joy for me to convey to you the Message of the Gita or Lord's song, the song that has given life, not ordinary life, but eternal life to millions of souls in the world, especially in India.

The Message of the Gita is the same message that was given by our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, nearly two thousand years ago. It is the same message as that was given by the Great Buddha, the Lord of mercy and love. It is the same message given by Zoraster, the pious Mohammed, Confucius and other great sages of old. It is also the message given by all Divine souls of the present day world, both in the East and the West.

A real message is a message that will be given in the same manner by one and all, of all times irrespective of caste, creed, colour or nationality. As such, everyone who rises to the Divine heights of self realisation gives the same message of the Gita or Truth.

However, in egoism and ignorance, there are people not wanting it. They say, "Oh, we do not want it, because it comes from India." Others say, "Oh, it comes from a different race, it comes from a non-Christian nation, therefore we do not accept it" We are just to pity the ignorance and narrow-mindedness of such pitiable and undeveloped souls.

It is a pity that, though they are calling themselves Christians, they have not yet understood the spirit of the Real Christ, even after the lapse of two thousand years. If they had realised the Christ-consciousness, they would no fail to accept the truth from any nation or religion.

Has not the Blessed Lord said to his disciples. "Those who are not against me are with me alone". As such, the real followers of Christ will not fail to find the same message of Christ in the Gita also. Even if they persist in their own deep rooted ignorance and cling only to the outer orb of Christianity, crucifying the spirit of the living Christ, I say unto them, "Dear ones, the message of the Gita is not from India or from the East, it is not from outside, it is only from within you" However bigoted they maybe, how can they escape now?

The Gita is not a book, it is the Truth, a Divine Song. Is not the Eternal Truth in each and every one of us ? Who can dare say, "The Truth is not in me"? He must be a beast of burden, ever satisfying with the lower life of the senses, never giving thought to the Higher life. Such lives are never to be called human lives. Indeed, they are human beings in form and name alone, but never in spirit of Truth. Anyone who is earnest to realise the goal of human life, and even who understands that his life is human life, will not fail to hear the Divine Song which is eternally within him, sooner or later.

Though my stay in this country is very short. I feel astonished and blissful that so many people are anxious to know the message of the Gita. It is a great joy for me to see the many faces of my sisters and brothers brightened, when I say that I will begin my class with the Gita.

I wondered in moments of my silence why so many people of all nations and religions, are anxious to know the message of the Gita. Finally, I came to the conclusion that everyone is anxious to hear it just because it is within him. People cannot help wishing to know it, whether they are conscious of it or not. This is because it is the presence of the Truth or Divine Song. This is causing

them to crave the life-giving message of the Gita. Blessed be thier innocent hearts and their earnest desire to realise the Truth.

Therefore, the message of the Gita is outwardly taken as a story or history and inwardly as the Eternal Truth, representing Christ-consciousness. It is both within and without.

The message of the Gita is both personal and impersonal. It is a message intended not for a few, but for all. Its message is not intended for Hindus and India alone, as some imagine, it is intended for the whole of Humanity. Some confine the Gita to a story or history, and think that Gita is a message given by Lord Sri Krishna only to Arjuna. However, when they rise a little above forms and personalities, they will not fail to realise that it is a message for all souls, as it is in each and everyone. Verily, the Gita is a sacred message not only for the past and present, but for the future, for it is so universal.

The message of Gita is never confined to any sect or creed, for it is as free as the air and as broad as the earth. In fact it is an all-embracing message, intended both for the rich and poor and for the high and low. It is message for all, from the lowest sinner to the highest saint. For in it we read even the lowest of the low and the most sinful, it they worship the Lord with devotion and zeal, will surely reach Him.

Most of you hear so much about caste distinction and restriction in India. Yet, it is a great happiness to see that the Gita is not even the special privilege of any caste, even when judged from the point of caste. From the lowest to the highest, everyone is privileged to read and realise the message of Gita. The caste may be in social life, but never in God or religion. One who realises the message of the Gita is considered as the most high of the Highest. Thus we find India is practical at least in religion.

There are some people who think that the message of the Gita is intended only for hermits and recluses. It is intended both for householders and Sanyasins also. A Sanyasi is one who gives up everything and clings to God in every second of his life, living and moving and having his being in Him. One who identifies himself with God or Truth, is a real Sanyasi.

In India this state of Sanyasi or renunciation of the world is given to one and all, provided they want and desire it with heart and soul. No minister or religion on the face of the earth can help one who has forgotten about the aim of human life, ever leading a life of disgrace on the lower plane. However, those who are working to realise God are given every chance of nearing Him.

As such one finds in the sacred books of the East, that everyone should be a student for a period. In the beginning, they live learning sacred scriptures, observing celibacy, truthfulness and non-injury to others, as well as other virtuous qualities.

When he completes his student life, he can be a householder doing his duties for his family, for his country and above all, for his God or Truth. And in the third stage he will entrust all his duities of the world to his children, and will take seclusion or retirement for spending more of his time to realise God or the message of the The Gita.

In the final state, if he feels the necessity for complete renuciation, if he thinks himself that he is fit for the Highest, then he renounces the world and takes up the role of Sanyasi, having no material concerns whatsoever with the world. Even then, he will not be a burden, living a lazy life, He will be living in God, helping others to live in God and rendering the highest service to humanity by his silent and ideal life.

Dear friends, I do not want to convey to you that everyone is leading an ideal life in India. Indeed, there are many such noble souls scattered here and there throughout the whole of India, inspite of the progress of materialism. Indeed, India the land of spirituality stands and keeps on living only by the strength of its great men of realisation. Had it not been for its spirituality, India by this time have been wiped off from the face of the earth. There is possibility for the whole world to change, but so long as India clings to its religion or Truth, it is a sage, whether it remains under the thumb of a foreign government or its own self-government.

I am sorry dear friends, that the Spirit of our Gita has brought India into our present subject. Here we are concerned only with the message of the Gita and not with India. I have talked so far to make you understand that the message of the Gita is intended for the students, householders and for Sanyasins. As it is universal it is accepted by one and all.

In realising the truth of the Gita, one need not blindly believe and follow it, it contains the Eternal Truths. Everyone can live by them in this own life, by practise. But these Truths can never be understood or comprehended by mere reading or hearing alone. Precept and practise must go hand in hand. Theory without practise is mere burden. One who practises the teachings of the Gita will not fail to find its message as most scientific. It is based on sound reasoning, with firm principles of life. It is life and soul for the seekers of truth. However, for a mere reader or critic, it may appear only as an interest book of study. As such its teachings are to be realised in practical life, but not to be read merely for the sake of reading.

It is no wonder that such an inspiring and helpful book has been read and appreciated by millions of people, both in the East and the West. Many of you may be surprised to know that when Emerson went to England, Carlyle presented him with a copy of this Holy Gita, as a token of his love and friendship when parting. One who reads Emerson and Carlyle, fails not to find the same glimpses of the message of the Gita expressed in their writings.

As a Holy Book, the Bhagavad Gita is considered as the Holy Bible of the Hindus. What the gospels are to the followers of Christ, so is the Gita to the people of India.

In some of the schools and colleges, founded by Indians, it is prescribed for spiritual study. For instance, in the school where I had my education, may I tell you what they, both teachers and boys used to do as soon as they assembled for their day's study ? All of them used to gather in one large hall and sing some of the sacred verses of the Gita, Thus, I had the blessedness of receiving my first lessons in Gita as a young student.

In the family in which I was brought up also, they used to read Gita as thier daily spiritual study. I was compelled to sit there in a cross legged posture in a steady way, even as young child. In some families in India, even in this day, you will find many devoted souls who will not touch a morsel of food or a drop of water unless they first bathe and read the sacred Gita.

This great Gita has been printed over and over again, thousands of times, and has been translated also into almost all languages of the world. Even now, it is being printed repeatedly by some one or the other. Whenever spiritual souls desire to do some charity, they take joy in printing this book and distributing it freely, or making presents to their friends. This book is being distributed on marriage occasions also.

The Gita is being read not by thousands, but by millions and millions of devoted souls. Some will make it a point to read the Gita every day, unless they read the whole book they will not touch

any food or engage themselves in outer duties of life. For the people of the West it may appear superstitious, merged as they are in the glamorous life of civilisation, having no time to spare for realising Truth and confining God only to the attendance at the church on Sunday. However, the simple Hindu laughs at the external life of the sense or outer civilisation, calling it just the play of the world. On the other hand, he is contented in clinging to Truth, considering it as his all in all and very life.

The Gita has been converted into poetry by some devoted ones, and by others into songs. Thus, each will be singing in his own way, trying to realise the greatness of the Gita. Once at the request of my friend, Mr. P.W. Warman, the financial minister of the Bundi Estate, I was spending a few days with him. A blind man led by a boy had come to see me.

As you know in India, whenever a spiritual man visits any place, many people will be paying him respects, some of them getting their doubts cleared and others receiving guidance or initiation. Among many others, this blind man also came to me. Then he told me that he could recite the whole of the Bhagavad Gita, from the first verse to the last verse, without any guidance and if I cared to, I could ask him to recite any verse from any chapter and he would be pleased to do so.

However, as I am not of a curious temperament by nature, and as I never like to criticise or judge, I did not examine him. Yet, some others who were near by me asked the blind devotee to repeat certain verses and he repeated them exactly. Much credit is to be given for his devotion and attachment to the Gita, more because of his blindness.

Some people who do not have much time for reading the whole Gita every day, read only a few short chapters. Some read just a chapter or half or one fourth of it. If one can realise the spirit of the Gita, it is enough if he reads even one or two verses. By realising the inner spirit of one verse alone, one can realise the whole Gita. Such is the sacredness or greatness of the Gita. I have heard many great saints say that one who reads the Gita need not read any other book. One who reads the Gita realises all that is to be realised in all books of the world. As such one who knows the Gita, knows all that is to be known and unknown.

The study of the Gita is not such an easy thing as it appears to be. Anyone can read it, for the sake of reading. Even a boy can do it. However, it may take a long time to understand it practically. Those who are filled with devotion and earnestness, striving continuously to realise the Divinity with all their heart and soul, such devoted ones may realise the meaning of the Gita in a short period. Yet for others it may take years and years. Some who are lacking in earnestness and sincerity, may not realise it even though they read it over and over again, merely with the lips. Study with lips never helps anyone; one must study with heart and soul.

Everyone takes the meaning in his own way, according to his own standard of development. Volumes are being written on every stanza. Even to this day, many scholars are engaged in writing endless commentaries on the contents of the Gita. For realising the real spirit of the Gita, an earnest student need not bother with all the intricate mysteries and elaborate commentaries.

One who is really thirsty will never care to waste his time in asking questions about the origin or source of water or in analysing the elements of water. These words are for those who are not thirsty. However, will one who is really dying of thirst spend his time in the above questions and discussions? No, he simply enjoys the cold drink. A glass of cold water is all what he needs in preference to all the lectures and sermons on water.

In the same way, if we are craving for the nectar of Gita, if we are feeling tired with the outer life of restlessness and worries, here is the message of the Gita awaiting for us. It is ever vibrating in the innermost recesses of our hearts. As far as my little intellect has comprehended from the many long years of spiritual study of the teaching of our Celestial Song, I will try to place my practical experience of life, in the study of the Gita at your service. May all of us be prepared to receive the blessed message of the Gita, offering our hearts to realisation, ever filled with purity, love and Truth.

OM SHANTI !

PART - 2

Dear Devoted Ones, as many of you may be anxious to know the real story or history of the Gita, when it came and how it came into the world, we will deal in this second chapter with the story proper. Indeed, something cannot come from nothing, for every effect there must be an underlying cause. As such, what was the occasion or necessity for the existence or origin of this sacred Gita ? Let us first judge and understand it from the outer view, as it was given in the sacred books of the East in the story form. Later on, after understanding the history of the Gita, we can go to the inner side of its deep meaning.

As many of you know, the Vedas are considered the sacred scriptures of India. However, the Vedas were written in the Sanskrit language in an abstract way, with deep and hidden meanings. The masses, the common people are not expected to read and grasp the inner meaning of the great Vedas. They consist of the Upanishads, mostly dealing with the highest knowledge. So, for the benefit of humanity and common folks, the sages of India have written the Mahabharata and Ramayana, etc. These are in the form of stories representing the highest and noblest characters from the history of India, conveying a deep, moral and ideal lesson, even to the uneducated.

The Vedas are four in number, and as these books, (the Mahabharata, etc.) also represent the same noble Truths, they are called by many as the fifth Veda. They are full of illustrating stories and Divine examples setting moral standards for everybody in every stage of life. Therefore, they are mostly read by all classes of people in India.

I believe this Panchama Veda or the fifth Veda is being read by many more people even than the other four Vedas. It is a great epic, representing simplicity, love, duty, devotion and other moral qualities. It is respected and being read by all people, from the snowy peaks of the Himalayas to Rameswaram, at the lower end of India.

In India you will not find even one single man or woman who knows not the story of Mahabharata. Everyone that takes pride in calling himself a Hindu, repeats the story of Mahabharata, even striving to represent the same ideals of the great book. Even children are not unfamiliar with its sacred stories. My young student Atma Ram can tell you all the stories from the beginning to the end. As our Holy Gita comes from the great epic Mahabharata, I am obliged to tell you these few words on this book.

The main story of Mahabharata was a great war between the descendants of two Kings, the rulers of India. They were brothers and unfortunately, the younger King, Pandu died, leaving his five sons and entrusting them to the care of his brother King Dhritarastra. This King had hundred

sons and the eldest of them was called Duryodhana.

The sons of Dhritarastra were very wicked, especially the eldest son. They tried their best to harm their cousins, in every possible way. Their inner desire was to kill these cousins and to confiscate their kingdom for themselves. However, the sons of Pandu, the five brothers were very righteous and God-fearing souls. Duryodhana tried several times to kill them and thus get rid of them. Once he set fire to the house where the five brothers were living with their saintly mother.

However, on every occasion their virtuous lives saved them from the cruel grip of wicked Duryodhana. Seeing that he was failing in all his attempts, feeling crestfallen, took the advice of his other evil companions and finally arranged a gambling match. He defeated the Pandavas using deception and fraud. With all his wickedness, he succeeded at last in driving them away for a banishment of 13 years. He robbed them of their possessions and Kingdom. He barely allowed them to go with their clothing on their bodies.

Thus suffering untold difficulties, after banishment of 13 years they came back to claim their kingdom according to the vow or treaty they made with the evil minded one. They were true to their own word of honour, but the wicked Duryodhana refused to give them their own kingdom. They appealed to him in the name of justice to return the kingdom, but they could not move him. The pious brothers appealed in the name of brotherhood, merely to give them even a portion of their Kingdom, but they could not prevail on the evil minded one.

Do you know what Duryodhana replied to all the entreaties of the great men and saints ? He said that not only would he not give a town, village, house or even a room to them. He said that he would not even think of giving even a spot that could cover the sharp edge of a needle. Such is the gross nature of the wicked.

Thus the righteous ones, when they were ill-treated, insulted and repulsed could not resort to anything to get back their own kingdom, other than to declare war on the wicked ones. All the evil-minded people joined the wicked one, and the devoted and God-fearing people joined the Pandavas.

In that great war, Krishna the friend and relative of Arjuna, was the charioteer, guiding him. When both armies were ready to fight, Arjuna seeing his own relatives and friends facing him, refused to fight, saying that death was better than killing his own people. Thus began our immortal Gita, amidst the great war between Kurus and Pandus, Krishna enlightening Arjuna about the duties of life for a man of action and for a man of wisdom.

Finally Krishna teaches Arjuna the wisdom of the Soul. He makes him rise above his weakness. Thus Arjuna with the soul-inspiring and life-giving message of Gita, not only fights, but also defeats completely the evil minded ones. He enjoys full victory with the blessings of Lord Krishna.

Thus so far, you understand the occasion or cause for the origin of the Gita. Regarding our immortal Gita, it has been said by the sages of India, the men of realisation and beautifully put in short verse, that the Gita represents the Divine milk, or nectar of Eternal Life. It is said that all the Upanishads are cows, and the one who milks the cows is Krishna, the shepherd. The calf is Arjuna who tasted the milk at first and those who drink the milk are seekers of Truth or God. It is only by drinking this milk of the Gita that one's thirst will be quenched and his desires will be fulfilled, giving him everlasting life.

Now we are to see, going deep into the teaching, how Gita's message is universally accepted by all great philosophers and saints of all times, irrespective of religion or nationality. What is its life giving message ? Indeed the Gita's message is not a pessimistic one, but full of spiritual optimism. Really, its message is never negative, but always positive. Verily it is not a message of fear or weakness, but of strength and Divinity. Its message is all hope, joy and eternal Peace. Its message is never to despair, but to be brave. Its message is not despondency, but cheer. It is not inactivity, but activity filled with wisdom. Its message is not a blind renunciation, but knowledge filled with practical realisation. It has a message for everyone and in every stage of life.

The Gita's message is never bound to one religion or creed, for Sri Krishna says in the Gita, by the raft of wisdom everyone will be saved. We find the following apt illustration in the Gita. Even though the various rivers of the world originate at different sources, whether they are flowing straight or curved, fast or slow, deep or shallow, all are bound at last to empty into the ocean alone. The river keeps its particular name so long as it has not reached its goal. When once it empties itself into the ocean, we cannot say whether it is the Ganges or the Mississippi. All rivers are one in the sea. There is no more separation in the ocean. All forms and names will disappear in the sea. In the same way, when we reach God, there we are no longer called Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, nor Theosophists. In the Almighty we are inseparably one.

As such, in the Gita we find that we can realise the goal of human life according to our own Dharma or path. Everyone has a right to reach the Lord in this own way. Therefore, our Gita has been repeating, 'Oh you dear Christians, come to me in your own path. Oh ye dear Hindus, come to me in your own path, Oh Buddhists, Mohammadans, Theosophists and other religions of the world, come also unto Me through your own paths.'

Verily, the Almighty God is our Goal. We cannot but go into His arms, for He is the goal of all. The goal is One and all the paths lead only to the same goal. If we are walking in any path filled with purity, patience and perseverance, we will surely reach the same goal as any other one. For, the goal has been always one, though the paths of faiths are manifold and different. For instance, let some people in every nation, belonging to any sect, take a journey towards the Sun. Will they not reach the same Sun, provided they are going in the right way towards it ? How childish it will be if one says, that each will go to a different Sun according to his faith or belief ! Is there one Sun or many Suns ?

In the same way, is there one God or many Gods ? Oh, the pity is that we have not understood what God really is in the practical sense. Here mere lip repeating that God is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient is not religion nor real understanding. Even children can repeat these words. Parrots can be made to repeat these words.

When God is everywhere and when He is all in all, how can any other thing exist besides Him? As Infinity, He is One without a second. His love is universal. He is embracing the whole of Humanity. We are from Him, we are in Him and we cannot help but to reach Him sooner or later, whether we label ourselves as Christians, Hindus, Buddhists or heathens.

On the contrary, the Gita forbids the Christians to become Hindus, or the Hindus to become Christians. A Buddhist can remain a Buddhist and so with a Mohammedan, each striving in his own religion to realise perfection. One should not be satisfied with the externals of religion, but should strive unceasingly until he reaches the goal, where it is all One. It is plainly stated in the Gita that one's Dharma, his own path is better than another's path. For, the path of another may be new and

unknown. As such, a Christian should strive to be a better Christian ever seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within. The same with a Buddhist and Mohammedan.

It is most wonderful that all have a common factor, namely, looking or merging within, though each one is separate in the external forms of worship and religion. Contrary to the laws of Spiritual life, instead of merging within, when men begin to merge in external things of life, the result will be strife and differences from the beginning to the end. Then each will be busy fighting over the non-essentials, forgetting the common message which is ever within in ego-lessness or undividedness. We cannot find it anywhere else in the world. Unto restless souls even the whole world of religions and their Masters cannot give Peace.

Our blessed Gita, is divided into eighteen chapters consisting of 700 stanzas. The first chapter is only an introduction into the story of the book. We will find in the first six chapters Karma or action is being taught. In the next six chapters Bhakti or devotion is being taught. In the last six chapters we find Jnana or the highest wisdom is being taught, quite scientifically and logically.

When it teaches Karma or action. Gita teaches not to engage in action blindly without knowledge. Even in action we are being taught devotion and knowledge. The central doctrine of Karma Yoga, or the path of action is to do our duty for duty's sake, never caring for results. We have the right for action alone but never for the fruits. If we engage in our actions renouncing the results to the Almighty, our actions can never bind us. Thus we gather no fresh Karma. When our old Karma is finished salvation will be near at hand. On the other hand, if one works only for the fruits or results of his actions, his life will be made miserable and he will entangle himself in more and more Karma or bondage. Thus he will never be free from the circle of delusion.

It is not an easy task to understand what Karma (action) and what Akarma (inaction) is. When one understands these two perfectly, he will not be bound by any more fetters. To observe Karma in Akarma (action in inaction) and Akarma in Karma (inaction in action) is a deeply intricate problem, confounding the greatest intellects and philosophers of both the East and the West. This is a problem to be deeply thought of, in silent meditation.

In short, when one engages in the duties of life, doing his duty for duty's sake, never caring for the results, such a one is observing inaction in action. Such a one is called a great soul of action. One who is sitting in silence and solitude, even though he is not engaged in any action, if there is egoism in him, if he is not free from desires and thoughts, such a one is doing action in inaction. Such souls can never be free.

Freedom comes from knowledge. Knowledge is nothing but to rise above all desires. Thus we see even in Karma there is knowledge. The same goal that is reached or realised by men of devotion or by men of knowledge will be realised by men of action, when they rise above desires and by doing duty for the sake of duty, never seeking temporary reward. Verily this is the path of acts or salvation by acts, according to the Bible.

In the next six chapters of the Gita we find prominence is given to devotion. It teaches Bhakti or the path of devotion. The path of Devotion is nothing but the intense desire for Truth or God. The devotee will do everything and every work only for the sake of his ideal God. He is all sacrifice for the Ideal he worships. He lives for the sake of God. He works for the sake of God. He eats and drinks and keeps his life in the body only for the sake of God. Thus finally the devotee merges and becomes one with the Almighty.

The beauty of Bhakti is childlike devotion towards the Almighty Lord and implicit faith and trust in Him. The greatness of the Gita lies in its teaching one and all, by more than one path. It is nothing but ignorance and childishness to say that all rivers must flow in one course and in one channel. Let them flow as they please according to each one's individual ebb and tide. What is that to us so long as they are all reaching the same goal ?

Gita teaches duties according to the temperament of the individual. All are not expected to be the same. All may not be fond of pork or beef. If one is and says the whole world must live on pork alone, what are we to say to such ? All are not expected to eat the same kind of food. Let each live on his own diet according to his own health and system. What we need is the growth and final emancipation or realisation of Oneness with God.

Therefore, to those who are fond of doing some work or the other the Gita teaches to engage only in the right kind of actions, but rising above desires and never seeking the results. For those who are of devotional nature, it teaches only devotion and love towards the Almighty, merging in Him by observing a particular posture for steadiness and concentration.

The souls that walk in the path of devotion also realise the same God or reach the same goal as people who are walking on the path of action or knowledge. Verily, the path of devotion is called the easiest path of all paths, for here the devotee clings to the Lord as a child clings to its mother, with love and faith. Verily this is the path of faith. Indeed, faith works wonders as said by Lord Jesus, though small as mustard seed, it can remove mountains. According to the Christian Bible, there is salvation by faith.

Now dear Beloved Ones, coming to the close of our present chapter we are to speak only on the last six chapters of the Gita, which deal entirely with the knowledge portion in all its glory and dignity. Here also we will find faint glimpses of action and devotion, for these three paths are inseparable from one another. Each is connected with the other two. The highest state of action or desirelessness is nothing but knowledge. Action with desires is said to be the way for the undeveloped souls. Action-less-ness or inactivity is the way for men of realisation or knowledge.

In no other book in the world but the Gita, has the knowledge portion been so beautifully and boldly explained and expressed. As repeated in the Bible, 'Before Abraham,' the same thing has been repeated by Sri Krishna in the Gita. With many practical illustrations, he compares the physical body to a torn or old cloth. As we are leaving the old clothing, so we are renouncing or leaving these bodies when their work is finished. The body is nothing but a mere cloth. As a man is not expected to perish when he discards his old clothes, so also the soul is imperishable even at the death of the body. Death is only a mere change. In the Gita we find such simple illustrations.

In religions the non-essentials may differ, but the basis or fundamental doctrine of all religions will be the same. When people realise this truth and Divine love, there will be peace and harmony among the different sects of the world, instead of strife and discord.

Self-knowledge is the summit or goal of all religions. Sooner or later everyone must come to this fountain head of knowledge to find emancipation. So long as one feels he is finite he cannot help but engage himself in some action or the other.

Even in the path of action the Gita teaches one to be a Master but not a slave to action. Thus by desire-less-ness, one reaches the state of Self Knowledge. In the path of devotion also, a man will be a Prince of Love, never fearing God but loving Him and finally merging in Him, the devotee reaches the state of self-knowledge. In a way, right action develops into ripe devotion and ripe devotion into self-knowledge.

However, as everyone is not expected to realise the Highest immediately, in the Gita we find so many paths opened to all kinds of people. Men of active temperament can take the path of action, and men of a devotional nature can tread the path of devotion. Men of philosophical tendencies can walk in the path of knowledge, realising God within themselves.

Verily, Jnana or knowledge is the highest pinnacle of religion. As such, Sri Krishna says in the Gita of all the people in the world, the man of knowledge alone is nearer and dearer to Him for he is not in any way separate from Him.

Indeed, the Knower of Self or Truth and Krishna or Divinity are not two but one alone. For, Truth is eternally one.

May we be all one in Him !

OM SHANTI

PART 3

May Dear Divine Ones, in the first part we dwelt on the greatness of the Message of the Gita and its use in the spiritual world. In the second part, we have spoken about the source of origin of the Gita and the occasion for its coming into the world, on the great field of Kuruskhetra in Mahabharata. To a certain extent we have gone through the story of the great fight between the brothers of the two parties. Finally, here and there we have succeeded in learning the Message of the Gita as taught to Arjuna by Lord Sri Krishna, in all the phases of action, devotion and knowledge.

Now we are here to understand the inner and deeper meaning of the Gita from the Highest Spiritual point of view. The Gita gives us the nectar of immortality when it is understood only from the highest standard. So long as we are away from the Gita we cannot hear the real message or voice. As far as the story is concerned, it is very interesting, as far as its message is concerned, it is most holy and uplifting.

However, now we are launching into another field of spiritual consciousness, where the Gita will be no more a story and where the Gita's Message comes not anymore from the outside but from the inside. To many of you, the explanations and interpretations that are going to be given now surely will be most astounding and fascinating. Even in the great land of India, the Gita's birthplace, you will not find many who read and understand the Gita in the way we are going to understand it now. By that I do not mean to say that I am now newly interpreting and inventing some other fresh and unknown Truths. These Truths have been known by many sages but the vast majority are contented with the outer meaning and the form of the Gita.

Now let us see dear devoted ones, how the Gita is not outside of us and how we have been eternally one with it in the past, present and future. *'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.'* Of course in the beginning exists the word. The word is in Him. The sacred word is not in any way separate from Him. It is from Him, it is in Him, it is He alone. No doubt the word is God alone, in the beginning, middle and end. When we know the word, we know the Almighty God or Truth. When we know the Son we can know the Father also. He who has seen the Son has verily seen the Father also, for the Father is never separate from the Son. 'I and my Father are one,' is the central doctrine or the keynote of the Holy Bible.

Indeed, the word is never separate from God. The word is the effect and God is the cause. The cause is not separate from the effect. The word is the manifestation of the unmanifest God. As we realise the Father through the Son alone, so we are to know and realise the Truth of God, through the word alone. Through the help of the manifest we will reach the unmanifest. The word takes us into God, for in the beginning was this word and this word has been with God, and the word is God.

Dear blessed ones, we are to know now what this word is, which is going to take us into the presence of the Almighty. Unless we know the word we are not expected to realise the Almighty God. For, how can we know the Father, when we do not know the Son ? As such, our salvation is through the Son alone. Except through the Son we cannot see God.

In the same manner, except through the word we will never reach the goal of our lives so in the first place, knowing this important word is most essential for everyone. When we understand and realise the word, we realise the Almighty. We are taught in the Gita the glory of this holy word and how by repeating it, one realises the Almighty. Verily this word is within us alone.

A Hindu calls this word Aum. It is too sacred to be uttered in the public or external life. This simple word OM represents the whole of the Holy Vedas. By repeating OM you are repeating the whole of Vedas. Please note, that the Vedas are not the books but they are the Eternal Truths of God. Truth is Truth alone, whether we place it in a book form or not. Divine laws will always remain as Divine laws, whether we print them in books or not. As such the whole of Vedas, all the laws of God have been represented by the Divine word Aum or OM.

AUM consists of three letters, representing the past, present and future. AUM also represents the waking, dreaming and sleeping stages. It represents also passivity, activity and harmony. OM represents both the seen and the unseen, both the heard and unheard, and it represents both the manifest and the unmanifest. AUM represents also life, light and love. What is love except God ? All-love or Universal love is nothing but God. As such, by repeating OM we are repeating the whole of the Vedas which are all knowledge. By repeating the sacred word OM, we are repeating God, for the word is God alone.

Dear Friends, volumes and volumes can be spoken and written on this great syllable OM. However, as our present subject is not OM, let us pass onto the subject in hand, contenting ourselves so far. We will know more of this great syllable OM as we study the Gita.

If I am allowed to explain this great and unfathomable subject, from the spiritual consciousness diving deep within, we can realise beautifully everything in our own beings. God is the unmanifest or the formless form. Vedas are OM or His Holy word. Mahabharata is the man or the bearer of the body. And Kurushetra is the body, the field of battle, where the great war took place between the Pandu and Kuru families. These two families are also inside of us, representing virtue and evil or good and bad.

In the very first verse of the Gita, we find Dhritarastra, or ignorance, asking Sanjaya, or wisdom, how the battle is going on in Kurushetra, the body. The war is between his son Dhuryodhana, lust and his evil party, with the saintly party of resignation, etc., of Pandus. Thus we find the two parties of both good and bad are in ourselves, with their respective followers.

The party of passion consists of egosim. anger, pride, envy, hypocrisy, deceit, etc. Then, the part of resignation or renunciation consists of virtue, truthfulness, contentment, peace, joy, mercy, love etc. The endless and great war has been going on, not in India in Kurushetra, but in our own bodies

continuously, in every second of our lives. We may as well call this a constant fight between the flesh and spirit or bad and good. Verily, the flesh is ever at war with the Spirit.

It is a pity that people, forgetting the inner fight which is going on restlessly, look for outer fights. People are ready to conquer the external world, forgetting the holy precept of our Lord Jesus, *'What shall it profit a man even if he conquers the whole world, losing his own soul?'* What is that thing, by conquering which, one conquers everything? It is the internal Self. Victory over the flesh in the inner fight is needed for the final emancipation or full peace.

As such, in us alone the great war has been going on ceaselessly between flesh and spirit, whether we are conscious of it or not. Duryodhana, passion or lust and the son of Dhritarastra, ignorance, is always near at hand. He is ever within us alone, with all his dangerous and terrible party of wickedness and selfishness. So is the good party of righteousness also within us, ever striving to conquer the flesh but never seeming to succeed completely.

By persistent practice, the evil is bound to be defeated. Truth cannot be hidden forever. Truth crushed to earth will rise again sooner or later. Verily, evil is phenomenal and the Truth alone is the only Reality. As the party of Arjuna triumphed over the party of Duryodhana, surely we are bound to succeed in our inner fight over the selfish propensities, if we can only fight persistently without yielding to weakness in the beginning like Arjuna.

So Krishna asks Arjuna smilingly as if mocking, *'Whence cometh this unmanliness and this weakness? Yield not to impotence for it doth not become thee. Shake off this faintheartedness and dejection, stand up and conquer the foes!'* Arjuna hearing the voice of the Blessed Lord, following in the footsteps of Truth, completely masters himself by defeating and conquering all that was low and evil.

There is no use of despairing, for Arjuna has set before us the right example of victory over evil nature. The path is straight and the goal is certain. Surely victory will be ours if we can only aspire to get it. Yet in everyone however great one might be, there will be moments of weakness and ignorance. There alone we are to exert all our strength. Even the greatest saints were not free from some temptation or other. In everyone there is both the good and bad, in men of discrimination, the evil will be crushed down. In men of non-discrimination, the Truth will be crushed down, for the time being, by the strength of their sensual nature.

Was not even our Blessed Lord Christ tempted by Satan? In Him also there were Arjuna and Krishna. There were both the parties of good and evil. However by right discrimination, He refused and rejected all the temptations offered by Satan and thus completely gained the victory of Truth. He stood by His Heavenly Father, realising the Kingdom which was within Him. Thus the Lord Christ has been another example of Holy life and conquest over the flesh, showing the way to millions of people.

So, dear friends, we are walking now in the same path as Christ of olden days or any other saints have followed in realising the Divinity. We are facing now the same problems of life and the same difficulties and temptations as they did. It is now our choice to become Christs or Judas Iscariots. If we allow the temptations to rule over us, if we stoop to the magnificent offerings of Satan, we will find ourselves placed in the army of Duryodhana, the evil minded one. If we rise above these seeming tests and temptations, we will find ourselves in the army of Arjuna, having the guidance of Krishna at our back.

Now to understand our present subject directly and in simple words, each and everyone must know that the Gita, the nectar of Divinity, the Song Celestial, is within himself alone. The great war of Kuruskhetra or body is being waged continuously within alone, between the two parties of Spirit and Matter. It is never outside of us. It is always inside of us alone. By the help of the Pandu party, that is goodness, we are to conquer the party of evil, the Kuru party. Thus alone peace reigns, war ceases and one enjoys the sweet melodies of the Song Celestial, drinking deep the Nectar of the Gita or Truth.

Instead of conquering the evil which is within with the help of the good, no amount of reading of Gita without understanding its spirit will help anyone in realising the Truth. By reading, understanding and assimilating the spirit of Gita, one should plunge within to engage within the inner fight, setting aside the book of the Gita. Matters will not be adjusted by weeping and begging. One can never gain victory by yielding to weakness. One must be as bold as a lion to win the laurels of victory, by the strength of Truth, in the field of the body between the good and bad.

Let us illustrate this Truth practically by going back to the story of our Gita proper. After the sons of Pandu, namely the five pious brothers, yielded their kingdoms into the hands of the wicked one Duryodhana, they requested him and prayed to him to return their property. However all their requests and prayers would not move the evil minded one. For evil can never be conquered by weakness or by weeping. Or will it disappear by prayers?

If we examine our lives also, when we are placed in the tribulations of life, we will not fail to see that our success has been always due to our strength of Divinity. If it was a failure, it was due certainly to weakness and faint heartedness.

If we are visited by sins and calamities, even now our sneaking habits of weakness and prostrations will not raise us from these trying conditions. Even though we appeal to thee sins or weaknesses again and again, repeating, Oh sins, go away! They will not leave us just by our repetitions and begging. Remember what Duryodhana, the evil minded one answered to all the prayers and humble requests of the righteous ones. He said shamelessly and unflinchingly, "I will not give an atom of space for any of you as long as I live." Such is the grossness or wickedness of the nature of the evil one.

What could the poor Pandavas do, other than wage war against the Kurus ? They tried to succeed in getting back their Divine inheritance in all humility and patience, using every means which was within their power. However, alas, they were bluntly refused and repulsed, hence they could not help as a last resource to wage war. So by the power of strength alone, they regained their kingdoms but never by the power of words or appeals.

In the same way, for our complete success in the path of spiritual life, there is only one way to conquer the physical life. In the words of Jesus Christ, we must say unflinchingly and boldly, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' Then alone the victory will be ours. With all the strength of our heart and soul we must wage war over the flesh, thus alone we will triumph in our terrible conflict. Sin is nothing but weakness, so it is to be conquered by the strength of Divinity.

Wherever there is success, it is due always to the power of strength but never to weakness. Not only in the Gita, but in all the sacred books of the Hindus, it has been over and over again repeated that the Atma, the Divine Truth can never be attained by the weak. Divine strength is the all consuming fire that dispels and destroys all clouds of ignorance and weakness. From the beginning to the end, our Gita is teaching us only to stand always on this Divine strength which is our

birthright. As a story, our Gita is uplifting and advocating the great glory of strength. And as a spiritual message of inner life, The Gita ever flowing in our blood and veins like a perennial spring of hope and peace, always quenching the thirst of all earnest seekers after Truth. Thus we see Gita is not far away from us. It is within us alone, always inspiring us with Peace and Joy. We are never separate from this life-giving Gita whether in the past, present or future. It is immortal, though appearing to be seemingly hidden under the imaginary sheaths of forms and names.

As the Gita is ours by our very birthright, let us all manifest it either in death or life and thus consciously enjoy its sweet milk of eternal Truth. One who drinks the Nectar of the Gita verily attains to the state of deathlessness and birthlessness. He reaches to that eternal abode of peace or Nirvana from which there will be no more return.

All men of realisation in every religion have said that one should rise above all qualities, so for our final emancipation we must rise both above good and bad qualities and thoughts. It may appear strange to some of you to hear that we are to give up our good thoughts also. Indeed, thoughts are thoughts whether they are good or bad. Final Peace or complete freedom lies in non-thinking alone.

Indeed good thoughts help us in conquering bad thoughts. The party of Pandus is needed to crush and defeat the party of Kurus. When once the evil is rooted out, no other party is needed. One should try to be free from every kind of duality. Thoughts whether they are good or bad are only in dual life. If the thoughts are evil, they sap the very vitality of our life. Wherever Duryodhana, the passion or lust resides, we cannot expect to find there any peace. As all the enemies are within us alone, first we must try to be free from every kind of evil thought. Thus as we advance in the higher life, we are to strive to be free from every other thought also. When the glory of that universal consciousness is manifest then alone one enjoys uninterrupted Peace.

Now in conclusion I desire to end my lengthy introduction of this Holy Bhagavad Gita, quoting a few more words on the sacred syllable Om from the Gita itself. For, OM is the key to unlock the secret chambers of Divine Nectar of our song Celestial. Sri Krishna is summing up the whole teaching of his philosophy and giving us here in plain and simple words, the right and easiest way of realising the Highest Truth.

That imperishable Goal which the knowers of the Veda declare, which the self controlled and the passion free enter, which desiring they lend the Godly life, that Goal will I declare to thee with brevity.

Having closed all the gates, having centred the mind in the heart, having fixed his life-breath in the head, engaged in firm Yoga, uttering Brahman, the one syllable AUM, thinking of Me, who departs leaving the body, he reaches the Supreme Goal.

These are the blessed words of Lord Sri Krishna. Katha Upanishad, Prasna Upanishad, and other sacred books also are teaching the same Truth in a similar manner. So with the unfailing and one pointed arrow of OM, through the Divine bow of our Gita, let us hit the mark, the Brahman, the living Truth, the aim and goal of our lives, which is never outside of us but eternally one with us.

May the whole of Humanity be filled with the Divine intoxication by drinking deep the sweet nectar of immortality or the Gita, the song Celestial !

May Peace Be Unto all - OM Santi Santi Santi!