

31. The Gita Balance

Many pandits and scholars have explained the *Gita* in many ways to you all these days. If you ask Me, I will say that the *Gita* is like a balance —scales, needle, and all.

The scale on the left is verse (*sloka*) 7 of chapter 2, speaking of “miserly man (*karpanya dosa*)” (Arjuna is speaking of his helplessness, neediness, blemishes, his worldly problems).

The fulcrum is verse 22 of chapter 9, beginning with “*Ananyaaschinthayantho maam*” (Krishna promises He will ever be with one and help one who is wholly immersed in contemplating Him, with no other thought.)

The scale on the right is the verse in chapter 18, speaking of “*Sarva-dharmaan parithyajya*” (Krishna calls on Arjuna to give up all desires, to surrender to Him.)

See how apt the fulcrum verse is; it speaks of single-minded attention, steady, like the needle of a well-adjusted balance! Really, the *Gita* begins with two scales and a fulcrum, the two armies of Unrighteousness and Righteousness, with Krishna the Teacher in the middle! We have the two scales of worldly and other worldly, clamouring for attention and respect, and spiritual knowledge (*jnana*) alone can remove Arjuna’s ignorance. That is the will of the Lord.

Spiritual wisdom has to be put into practice. Otherwise, it is useless. Once, the deer of the forest gathered in a great assembly and discussed their own cowardice in the face of the pursuing hounds. They argued, “Why should we, who are equipped with fleeter feet and sharp antlers, be afraid of these insignificant dogs?” At last, a resolution was moved and passed that no deer should henceforth flee before hounds. But even while the cheering was going on, they heard the distant baying of the hounds, and not one stayed there. All fled as fast as their legs could carry them! The resolution could not be put into practice!

Karma has to be done as it is one’s nature

Now, these pandits are well versed in the art of teaching and explaining the sacred scriptures to people. What is lacking is training for the people in the art of listening to them and following their suggestions for spiritual advancement. The art of engaging in action (*karma*) without getting involved is the thing that has to be learnt, *Karma* has to be done because it is part of one’s nature, not out of any external compulsion.

The sun is a worker by nature. He draws the vapours of water high up to form clouds, which pour back as rain. No one taught Him to do this. When you do action dictated by nature, it won’t be a burden. It is when you go contrary to it and do something out of the way that you feel the misery.

The police constable’s life is not natural, so he feels happy when he comes home and, doffing his uniform, gets into ordinary clothes. When the baby wails, all rush toward the cradle because its true nature is to smile and be contentedly happy. So too, *karma* done for the profit arising therefrom accumulates consequences that bind a person. It increases in size like a snowball. But *karma* done without any thought of the fruit therefrom keeps on diminishing and leaves you free from all consequence.

One cannot escape from doing karma

Virtuous actions have to be done; there is no escape. Fleeing to the forest is no solution, for it only gives the situation a new turn. Your body may be in the jungle, but your mind will wander in the market place!

A spiritual seeker was once initiated by a *yogi* into some mantra (holy words); he wanted to meditate on it undisturbed, and he found his home too full of distraction. He fled to the forest and discovered a convenient tree under which he could meditate. Before long, the birds roosting on its branches started to clamour aloud, and they showered their droppings on his head. He was greatly incensed. “Have I no place where I can commune with God!” he cried. “Children at home; birds and bats in the jungle! I shall immolate myself, get born under better auspices, and then start spiritual practices afresh,” he decided.

So, he collected a pile of fuel and making a pyre out of it, lit it, and was about to ascend it, when he was accosted by an old man. “By all means, carry out your decision, but just now the wind blows from here toward those huts where we live, so please wait until the wind turns its direction, for the smell of burning human flesh does not agree with us. Or, if you are in hot haste, you can shift to some other place and avoid being a nuisance to us poor folk.”

The seeker felt he had no freedom even to die. So he returned home, and decided to brave it all there itself. He understood that *karma* has to be carried through in the objective world itself, and there is no use trying to shake it off in a huff. From the unrest—the confusion and travail of the world—one has to snatch harmony and peace.

Be in the world but not of it

Vishnu is described as lying on the snake and also in absolute peace! The snake which has poison (*visha*) represents worldly desires (*vishaya*), and when you rest upon it instead of allowing it to envelop you, you can afford to have peace (*santham*). Let your boat be on the waters, but do not allow the waters to enter the boat. Be in the world but not of it. That is the secret of a successful life.

Desire leads to ultimate ruin. It can never be destroyed by fulfilment. It grows upon each satisfaction and becomes a monster that devours the victim. So try to reduce your desires, go on reducing them.

A pilgrim once accidentally sat under the wish-granting tree (*kalpatharu*)! He was terribly thirsty and said to himself, “How I wish someone would give me a cup of sweet cool water!” Immediately, a cup of deliciously cool water was placed before him. He was surprised, but drank it nevertheless.

Then, he wished for a meal of tasty dishes, and he got it in a trice. This led to a wish for a cot and a bed, and when he wished his wife was there to see all this wonder, she appeared in an instant. The poor pilgrim mistook her for an apparition, and when he exclaimed, “O she is an ogress!” she became one, and the husband shook in terror, crying, “She will now eat me up,” which she promptly did!

The chains of desire binds one to the point of suffocation. Control, curb your tendency to wish for this and that. Tell the Lord, “You are enough for me. I do not wish for anything else.” Why pine after golden jewels? Pine for gold. The *Gita* teaches the lesson of unconditional surrender to the Lord (*saranagathi*). Wish for His will to prevail, not for your wish to succeed. This is what Krishna meant when He said, “Be one who renounces all self-centred actions.”

Surrender is the main gate to attain liberation

Death is but a passage from this life to the next; it is the change from old clothes to new, as the *Gita* says. But some cynics laugh at the comparison and ask, what about the death of new-born infants, children, youth, and middle-aged persons? Their bodies cannot by any stretch of meaning be classified as worn-out! Well, the clothes might not be old, but the cloth out of which they were made must have been from very old stock, so that though new clothes were prepared out of it, they had to be discarded soon.

Again, there are some crooked people who refuse to believe in a previous life because they cannot recollect the events! These people cannot recollect the events of one particular Dasara festival, say, 5 or 10 years ago, though they are certain they were alive on that day! Forgetting the events of that day does not mean that they were not alive at all. It only means that they did not pay any special heed to them, they had no objective or special reason to keep it in memory.

Surrender is the main gate to enter the mansion of liberation from birth-death cycle (*mukthi*). It has four floors: meditation, activism, devotion, and spiritual knowledge (*dhyana, karma, bhakthi, and jnana*). Each floor rests upon the one beneath, and the topmost one cannot be reached without ascending the first three. Remember this when you hear people arguing about the relative superiority of the yogas or labeling themselves as ‘this’ or ‘that’ in the spiritual field.

Human life is superior even to the life of gods

The *Gita* does not refer to any problem of family or social life. It teaches the spiritual aspirant the path that leads to perfect communion with the Divinity inherent in themselves. Bulusu Appanna Sastry extolled this human life as superior to the life not only of beasts but even to the life of the Gods, because only the human can strive to squeeze answers to questions on the human’s own origin, significance, and goal out of experience in this objective world. Ramachandra Sastry indicated the measures for clearing the mind of enmeshing obstacles so that the answers might be reflected therein. And the third pandit who spoke today, Maddulapalli SathyaNarayana Sastry, made it clear from the scriptures (*sastras*) that the world has peace, bliss, and spiritual knowledge (*santham, anandam, and jnanam*) as its fundamental base, real Reality. What is needed is to remove the shade that is hiding the effulgence, the screen that covers the truth from view. The Prasanthi *Vidwan Mahasabha* (Society of Pandits) has been designed by Me for this very purpose.

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Try to break the coconut as it comes from the tree. The shell is covered compactly by a coat of fibre, and you cannot break the nut even by hitting it with a crowbar. But take off the fibrous armour, and breaking it is very easy. When you take a coconut to be offered in the temple, you take it after removing the fibre. Then, you offer it to God, breaking it into two halves. This is the symbol of destroying the ego and surrendering to the Lord.

So you have to remove the fibre of desire for sense objects and then go before the Lord devoid of desire and anger; there you declare that you are egoless by breaking the coconut into two. Then you will be accepted, not before.

Sathya Sai Baba