

The Bhagavad Gita

Transcribed by Peggy from Ram's talks in Spain 2013

INTRODUCTION

The Bhagavad Gita is perhaps the most important text in Vedanta. It's one of the three main source texts: the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras being the other two. The Upanishads are texts appended to each Veda that are humankind's most ancient documents concerning the non-dual nature of reality. In the Upanishads the self is presented in its essential nature as nameless and formless awareness. In the Bhagavad Gita the self is personified. It appears as a person with non-dual knowledge: Krishna. The Brahma Sutras are statements on Brahman, the self, written by a great sage named Badarayana.

Many of the Brahma Sutras are arcane arguments proving that the topic of the Upanishads is *moksha* or liberation. Many people said the Upanishads weren't about *moksha* at all but were about avoiding hell, getting to heaven and gaining things—*kama*, *artha*, and *dharma*—here in this world. *Kama* means pleasure. *Artha* means security. And *dharma* means virtue. People did not understand the Upanishads. Badarayana, the author of the Brahma Sutras came along and proved very carefully through sophisticated arguments that in fact what the Vedas were about is *moksha*. The Brahma Sutras are more or less for Vedanta teachers. They are advanced, sophisticated arguments, not necessary for *moksha*.

However, they begin with a very important statement: *athāto brahma jijñāsā*. It means, "Now, therefore the inquiry into Brahman." When we say "Now, therefore" we mean assuming a person is qualified, we can now inquire into Brahman. Understanding these qualifications is very important for *moksha* and Vedanta explains these qualifications in detail.

The Bhagavad Gita draws its main ideas from the Upanishads. There are no ideas in the Bhagavad Gita that are not in the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita is a *dharma shastra* and a *moksha shastra*. *Shastra* means a weapon and it means a scripture. Why is the scripture a weapon? Because it protects you from great suffering. If you are given this weapon you can protect yourself from all manner of suffering. So it's a *shastra*.

It's also a *dharma shastra* and a *moksha shastra* because it covers the same two topics that are the subject matter of the Vedas: action or *dharma* and knowledge or *moksha*, freedom. Experience and knowledge is another way to categorize these two topics. Some Vedanta texts don't deal with karma, with action at all. They just deal with discrimination or knowledge. *Vivekachudamani* and *Atma Bodha* are two examples. Other Vedanta texts deal exclusively with karma. This text, the Bhagavad Gita, deals with the relationship between action and knowledge so it's got everything. That is the beauty of it. It integrates these two subjects.

If we take the statements in the Upanishads as truth, then this is a non-dual reality. What does that mean, that reality is non-dual? It means there is only one principle operating or appearing here, not two, not four, not seven, and not ten. There is only one principle. And that is what? Consciousness. If everything is only one principle, awareness then I have to be awareness. I cannot gain myself, awareness, by doing an action, can I? No. There is no action that I can do that will make me aware. Why is it a problem understanding that reality is non-dual? Because my experience contradicts this statement in the Upanishads. I know that people in the spiritual world think that they are becoming more and more aware. But you are not becoming more and more aware because there is only one principle: awareness. And awareness does not grow and it does not shrink because there is nothing other than it. It cannot get more aware and it cannot get less aware, because it's unchanging and eternal. So the problem is how to reconcile my experience with this statement in the scripture that, "I am limitless, non-dual, action-less, ordinary, unconcerned awareness."

The basic topic here is what good is action and what good is knowledge? If you listen to some of the Neo-Advaita people they just say, "There is nothing you can do. There is no doer." So they just dismiss action altogether. They just say, "It's all consciousness. Just get it." That is all they say, "Just get it!" Well, I can tell you that it's all consciousness and that you are consciousness but you cannot just get it! If you just get it then we can all go to the beach and have a nice time. But you cannot just get it! You may get it for a minute or two. But the getting of it depends upon what? The instrument that is going to do the getting. If I have a mind that is going to get it, then that mind needs to be what? Capable of getting it. If the mind is not capable of getting it then it does not matter how much you are told that you are going to get it, that you are okay, that you are free, that you are awareness. It's not going to work. You are not going to feel free. You are not going to act as a free, liberated person. And that means what? That action is absolutely essential in the quest for *moksha*.

Action is not going to get me what I already have, awareness. It's not going to make me aware because I am already aware. In order to do an action I have to be aware first, don't I? Prior to every action, I am there as awareness. So action always comes after the fact, comes after me. And the self knows, awareness knows that it's awareness. But there is a part of the self—we call it the Subtle Body—that does not understand what is being said. It does not understand that, "I am awareness." That part is under the spell of *Maya* or ignorance. And it does not get it. So, action cultivates or prepares the Subtle Body for understanding.

You are going to see how the Gita lays this out and what actions you can do to prepare your mind to understand. During the teachings you may understand. But later your knowledge might desert you. Then you go back and do the work that is necessary to get your mind clear enough to assimilate the meaning of these teachings. And the Gita leads us through this step-by-step.

The Bhagavad Gita is a very lovely text. My teacher taught it for almost 50 years, every day. He went all over India. The first times when he did it, it used to be 90 days. People would come, set up these big tents and sleep on mats on the floor. They would have the bhajans, the singing and pujas. He would teach the Bhagavad Gita for 90 days at a time. As he got older and India changed a little bit, he worked it down to 30 days. When I met him he was teaching 10 days at a time and not the whole Gita. He would do as much as he could or focus on various chapters. The beauty of this text is, as I said, that it integrates the two apparently contradictory approaches, knowledge and action. We are going to see.

This text is a *Purana*. Actually the more technical term is *Itihasa*. *Itihisas* were *Puranas* that apparently had some historical significance. Some say the war that we're talking about is based upon a factual war. There was a big war about that time, a couple of hundred years before the time of Christ. This war took place in Northern India, above Delhi on this big plain called Kurukshetra. *Shetra* means, "field." Kurukshetra means, "field of the Kurus." The Kurus were the people who fought. The Indians believe that Krishna and Arjuna were there and that this dialogue between them took place on the field of battle as a real historical event. Maybe it did and maybe it did not. We don't really care.

It's like, did Jesus live or not? We don't really care. Jesus made certain statements, lived a certain kind of life and that is all that is really relevant to us. Even if Jesus was cooked up by the fantasies of spiritual people later on, that is fine because what he stands for and what he says is good enough. So we're not really concerned with the historical nature of this text at all. We're only concerned with the symbolism that is operating here.

The *Puranas* are Vedas in the form of symbols and stories. We are in the Puranic age now. But a long, long time ago in the Vedic age, there were no *Puranas*, only Vedas. Many of the Vedas have been lost. But before they were lost the *rishis*, those people who understood the knowledge, who received, preserved and protected the teaching, realized that India was changing. As India became more agrarian the people moved out of the hunter-gatherer stage. They started growing grains, preserving their food and civilization changed. People got more active, more busy.

The Brahmins who were keeping this Vedic knowledge alive slowly stopped sending their children to *gurukalas*. These schools were called forest academies or *arsha vidya*. They were places of learning out in the forest, out in nature. They were usually at the home of some *mahatma*, some teacher who understood the texts, who was enlightened and who could teach. As Indian society got more complex, more materialistic and busier, the *rishis* realized if they did not do something this knowledge was going to be lost. So they invented—"invented" is not quite the right word—the *Puranas*. So the *Puranas* are the Vedas in code. They are stories filled with symbolism. We don't need to get out our deities, meditate on them and worship on them and have the knowledge that is encoded in those deities unfolded for us slowly over time. We can actually understand just the pure ideas.

For example you may have read the analysis of Ganesha. You know the god Ganesha? It's got a big belly. It means what? Ganesha is a symbol of yourself. That is weird isn't it? You've got this weird person with a human body and an elephant head and a big belly and one tusk riding on a rat. What does that have to do with the self? The big belly means that you are full, whole, complete, not missing anything. When your belly is full, you are totally satisfied. So your self is totally satisfied. It has one tusk. Elephants we know have two tusks. But this funny elephant only has one tusk. What does that mean? That the self is not two, but one. It is non-dual.

Ganesh is riding on a rat. What does that mean? Normally for an average person, the rat is riding on the person. We are like little tiny people with a big rat on us. Big rat means what? Desire. Rats are always eating and gnawing. They are never satisfied. They have to keep eating or they die because their teeth will grow right up into their brain and kill them. So they have to keep gnawing. Rodents are like that. They have these insatiable desires. Well, Ganesh is riding on the rat and that means he

is the master of his desires. That is to say, the self is unaffected by desires. And so on and so forth. There is much more to the symbol.

But the creation of these *Puranas* had a huge impact on the Vedic knowledge. It preserved it. It made it available to people everywhere because people could understand the symbols once they were unfolded carefully by the Brahmins. In those days nobody had TV or radio or anything like that. And so in the evening after they had worked they would sit around and the Brahmin in the village would come out and tell the stories and explain their meaning. Even if you did not understand the depth of it, something in you understood. They touched that deep part of yourself, and it awakened the spiritual impulse in you.

So this text is a *Purana*. It has 700 verses. There is a lot of stuff that has gone on before this text. And there is going to be quite a lot of stuff after this war. We're not going to get into the details of what went before because it's not really relevant. It goes back and explains the psychology of the great warriors who are going to fight on both sides of the battle. It's very interesting.

So we've got a symbol here: the war. And what is the war a symbol of? It's a symbol of the conflict within ourselves that is going on all of the time. Between what? Our spiritual impulse and our self-centered ego impulse.

I read last year there was a court in Siberia that outlawed the Bhagavad Gita. They said it promotes violence because Krishna says, "You must stand up and fight! Get out your sword and kill the enemy." Well, of course, they took it literally. They thought it was encouraging violence so they said, "This is a very bad text." We're going to see that Krishna was not advocating violence.

This war is just a war that is going on between the two 'people' inside you. Everybody's got this person inside them called Duryodhana. Duryodhana comes from the word "dur" like the word durable or obdurate. Obdurate is a very nice word. It means hard, really hard. It means that hard part of yourself that is self-centered, that cannot accommodate or give, that is only thinking of itself and that is full of fears and desires. And this fellow is controlling a whole bunch of people.

And the other side is Arjuna. And Arjuna represents that spiritual part of yourself that wants to know, that is open to understanding and to knowledge. He knows that we are here to understand who we are, not to get anything particular from this world. The purpose of life is to understand. It's for freedom, for understanding

So people say, "What is the purpose of life, James?" Well, insofar as there is a purpose—and if this is a non-dual reality there is no actual purpose—then the purpose of life is freedom. Now, how do we know that we're really here for freedom? Because every single thing that we do is an attempt to remove a sense of limitation, isn't it? When you chase objects you are never really going for the object itself. You mistakenly believe that you are limited and so you desire objects, believing they will somehow complete you, that they will remove this sense of limitation. So, for example, you don't want wealth for the sense of security it may bring. What do you want? You want freedom from insecurity.

You know I was bitten by a mosquito. When you get bitten by a mosquito, what do you do? You scratch it. Why? Because that little bit of pain, that little limitation on your happiness is not

acceptable to you. You want to get rid of that feeling of limitation so you scratch it. And when you scratch it, that sense of limitation or pain disappears.

If you want a relationship, you don't want the relationship for the relationship's sake. You want a relationship because it frees you from loneliness. You are feeling limited because you are lonely and you figure if you get this object, this relationship, then you'll be free of this feeling of loneliness.

I am ignorant so I go to school because I want to be free of my sense of ignorance. That feeling of being ignorant and not knowing is painful for me. So I put forth all these efforts to erase that sense of limitation. So Vedanta says that just by analyzing and observing human beings, we see that everything is about freedom, about not believing that you are limited.

Arjuna knows that we are not here just to get what we want from this world. Duryodhana, he's the guy who does not care about knowledge or about freedom. He is actually trying to get rid of his sense of limitation too but he has no knowledge of this whatsoever. He just wants to win. He just wants to chase his enemies out, control the whole kingdom all by himself and get rid of all the problems that his relatives the Pandavas, led by Arjuna, pose for him.

So, we have this conflict in ourselves between the knowledge-seeking, spiritual part and the hard, ignorant, material part of ourselves. And that is the war that we are talking about in the Bhagavad Gita. How to solve this conflict is what Vedanta's about, what the Bhagavad Gita is about. It's not about going to war and killing people. It's about understanding yourself. In other words, it's about self-knowledge.

Now, how does this situation, this conflict unfold? There were two clans each lead by two brothers who were born of a king named Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra was blind. What does that mean? Ignorance. He cannot see and does not know. Out of him came the dualistic condition, the two brothers, the good guys and the bad guys, so to speak. In other words we have duality.

And these people were all cousins and friends. They used to get together regularly for celebrations, for various rituals and for just enjoyment. One night they all came to the palace for a party. Everything is fine. They are all enjoying, dancing and drinking. And the men, as men are, they want to gamble. So they propose a game of dice. But what the Pandavas, Arjuna and his crew, don't know is that Duryodhana's uncle is a gambler and a dishonest gambler. He has shaved the dice. Shaved the dice means you take a little bit off of one side so the tendency of a particular number to come up is more than it would be if the dice were balanced. In Las Vegas they have machines with lasers that calibrate the dice exactly so there is no bias. And that uncle, he represents *Maya*, that part of you that is going to trick you. You want to win don't you? And eventually the Pandavas, because they are being cheated, lose everything. Everything! They just keep putting good money after bad and they lose their shirts, their property, everything. They had nothing. And they said to Duryodhana, "Oh, just give us a little something. We'll go live in one corner of the kingdom." Duryodhana says, "No way!" even though he's the one that has cheated, has broken the rules. That is why we call it dharma shastra. Dharma and *adharma*. *Adharma* means breaking the rules. Dharma means sticking to the rules, whatever they are. It's a very complex topic. We are going to discuss it very carefully during the next few days.

Duryodhana says “Get out! You have to live in exile. You cannot stay in this kingdom at all.” And so the Pandavas are exiled for thirteen years. They were hounded by Duryodhana who sent out spies and assassins. He sent people to kill them even though they were his relatives. Duryodhana is not happy with them just being out of there. He wants them dead. He’s that part of yourself that is just so fearful, vindictive, uncertain and insecure that it wants every single threat removed.

And Duryodhana knows that he has cheated. Somebody asked him, “Why are you like this? Why do you behave like this?” He said, “I know what is right and wrong, but I cannot stop doing what is wrong. It’s as if there is some god seated in my heart that forces me to behave this way.” He’s a prisoner of what? His ignorance, his subconscious. We like to paint Duryodhana as a demon but there is that Duryodhana part inside all of us that drives us to do actions that are self-insulting. Self-insulting actions cause us to feel guilt, shame, remorse and so forth and so on. Everybody has that in them. So Duryodhana exiles Arjuna and his clan.

They realize they’ve been cheated after a while. And they think, “Hey, this situation has got to be sorted because you cheated us. It wasn’t a fair game here.” So they sent emissaries to talk to Duryodhana to try and get him to be reasonable. They said, “We just need a little bit. We want to live in this kingdom. We belong here.” And he just says, “No!” So eventually they said, “Okay. Enough is enough. We’re going to bring this guy Duryodhana to book. We’ll just have to go for it because what he’s done is not right.” Arjuna and his clan are righteous people so they naturally want to see that the situation is corrected. They get their army together and they challenge Duryodhana.

The armies of both sides showed up at this field, Kurukshetra. The first verse of the Bhagavad Gita says: dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre yuyutsavaḥ. “That field of battle, Kurukshetra, is a field of dharma.” They are telling you right in the beginning it’s a war about what is right, a war about establishing dharma. We’ll get more into the subject of dharma as we go. It’s a beautiful topic. It’s a very nuanced, subtle and important topic.

So they show up for battle and they are getting everything prepared. And in those days war was like a sporting match—they had sleeping tents, medical tents, food tents, everything. Everybody who could, came to watch the war because it was a big deal. It was a fight to the death. And those guys were very tough guys. There was going to be a big, bloody, gory mess. People just loved it. It was the biggest happening of the day so everybody showed up to see how it was going to turn out.

It turns out at that time there was another significant character, a great king named Krishna. He lived near the battlefield in a place called Dwaraka. Dwaraka is on the western coast of India near Gujarat. They actually found the city but it’s under the sea now. Krishna was the most powerful king in India. He had the most powerful army and he was highly respected. Nobody really knew exactly who Krishna was. Some people said he was an incarnation of Vishnu. Some people said he was just a very powerful, amazing person. Nobody really understood who this guy was.

And Krishna knew both Duryodhana and Arjuna. He did not particularly associate with Duryodhana because Duryodhana wasn’t a nice person. But he was a friend of Arjuna’s. He knew Arjuna and Arjuna knew him. But Arjuna really did not know who he was. He just saw him as a friend. Both Arjuna and Duryodhana wanted Krishna and Krishna’s army to fight on their side. That would tip the scales of battle because the armies were equally matched.

It so happened that Duryodhana's commander-and-chief was a great warrior named Bhishma. Bhishma and Drona, another great warrior, were both great archers. And in fact Bhishma had been Arjuna's guru and taught him the art of war. So Arjuna was going up against these heavyweights. Bhishma loved Arjuna and had taught him everything. But unlike Arjuna, Bhishma was not sentimental. Bhishma did not want to fight on Duryodhana's side and neither did Drona but they owed a duty to Duryodhana's father. It was their dharma, their karma that put them there. They were just going to do their job. So they had to fight Arjuna. So what? So Arjuna was the greatest warrior. So what?

So there is this relative equality between the forces of dharma and the forces of *adharma*. There are good guys on the bad side and bad guys on the good side. Understand, it's not like the idea that evil's evil and good's good. On the good side there are bad guys and on the bad side there are good guys. Everybody has this good and bad part of their nature, this positive and negative side of their nature. That is how reality is set up because reality, when ignorance is operating, is a duality. Normally it's a non-duality but when you have *Maya* or ignorance then you get both of these factors: dharma and *adharma*, right and wrong, good and bad, and all of the dualities.

So both Arjuna and Duryodhana want Krishna fighting for them. They went to Krishna and both said, "*Bhagavan*, please fight with me. Please fight on my side." And Krishna, he says an interesting thing. He does a very interesting thing. He says, "I'll tell you what. One of you can have my army. And one of you can have me." What a choice, eh? One gets Krishna and the other gets his army. And he says, "Come tomorrow afternoon at four o'clock after my nap and tell me what your decision is, what you want."

So the next day Krishna's sleeping on his side and he's got his eyes closed. At four o'clock Arjuna and Duryodhana appear. Duryodhana went to Krishna's head and Arjuna went to Krishna's feet. See the symbolism? "Feet" means what? Devotion. It means love. It means surrender. "Head" means thoughts. Calculation. It means thinking. What did Duryodhana want? What was he going to choose? The army! With all those warriors it would be the most powerful army and he would easily defeat Arjuna.

So Krishna's sleeping and he opens his eyes and he sees Arjuna standing there. Now Duryodhana is standing at his head so Krishna does not see him. So Krishna says, "Since I saw Arjuna first, he can have first choice. He can choose." Now, what do you think Duryodhana's thinking? "Oh no, my goose is cooked." He thinks Arjuna has his head screwed on straight and he is going to choose the army. Anybody that has any brain at all is going to take a whole army against one guy! So Duryodhana feels that all is lost. His heart sinks.

Krishna says, "Okay, Arjuna, what do you want?" And Arjuna says, "I choose you, Lord." Hey what is wrong with this man? He takes one little guy against a whole army? And there is a big war coming. Arjuna chooses what? Krishna. Krishna says, "And one more thing. I won't fight. You get me, but I won't fight." And Krishna was a real warrior, make no mistake. But he wasn't going to fight. Krishna is what? The self.

Krishna's a symbol of the self. He's not going to get involved in this. Krishna is going to be there, as what? As a presence. What do we call that presence? We call it *daivam*. *Daivam* means in every situation there are known facts and in every situation there are unknown facts. The known forces, the observable forces we call them *adrishta pala*. And then there is some other factor. You could call it luck—worldly people call it luck—that influences the outcome of all the actions. And Krishna represents that other factor and we call it *daivam*.

Daivam means, "gods." It means some higher force, some higher factor that is operating. It's not seen. It's *adrishta*. *Drishta* means "seen." *Adrishta* means "unseen." But make no mistake, it's there. It's working. It's always present. It has an impact on everything. And that force, that power is beyond dharma and *adharm*a. It's beyond duality. So by choosing Krishna what Arjuna is saying is, "I want to know what is beyond dharma and *adharm*a." He does not want to get caught up in this war. Arjuna wants to understand what is beyond, because he's suddenly become mature. He's starting to grow up.

So Krishna asks, "What do you want me to do?" And Arjuna says, "I want you to drive my chariot." How cool is that? "Chariot" means your body, your life. I want you to direct my life. This body is a vehicle. It has five senses. In the pictures you'll see these five horses and Krishna is holding the reins of the horses. Krishna has a big impact.

In those days the warrior, the archer, sat behind and the driver was in front. Arjuna has to tell Krishna to go here and go there so Arjuna has to sit up high. In those days the seats in those chariots were up high and the driver was down like this following instructions. Which means that Krishna is always in Arjuna's field of vision. It's a symbol. Arjuna is a person who wants the self, wants the Lord, wants this higher power, this unseen force or factor in his understanding, in his field of vision. And that force is not going to fight because it's non-dual and it's just present. That is why Krishna says he won't fight. Get it clear what Krishna represents. He represents the self.

Okay, so here we go. We've got Duryodhana and his army on one side. We've got the Pandavas and Arjuna on the other side. And in the first chapter—as you can see we start with the second chapter—it tells about all the preparations: who was there, what their flags were, how the battlefield was set up, that they were all rattling their drums and blowing their conches and all this sort of thing. All the troops were lined up on both sides. Everybody was really getting ready to go for it. The big moment had come.

And Arjuna says to Krishna, "Drive me out into the middle of this field so I can have a look at these guys. I want to see how they are set up, who's running the show and who's doing what." Arjuna has to calculate. He has to send in his troops so Arjuna needs to be organized and prepared. He's got to know who to attack. Arjuna was a general, the top guy in the kingdom at the time. He was a very excellent warrior and that is why he ended up running the war. So Arjuna has to get himself organized and prepared.

Krishna drives Arjuna out into the center of the battlefield between the two armies. And Arjuna's scanning around. What does he see? Standing right in front of him, but some distance away is his guru, this dignified old man, Bhishma. And it suddenly hits Arjuna. "I've got to kill him or the whole thing is lost. I've got to kill this guy. This guy taught me everything I know. He was like a father to me.

He was the most kind man. He gave me all of these skills and taught me everything I know. And now I have to kill this guy?"

There are other men that Arjuna has certain issues with so he was happy to kill them, like Karna, for example. Karna had a grudge against Arjuna. It was a class thing. Karna was a heavy-duty, bad-ass warrior who had it in for Arjuna. And Arjuna was happy to fight Karna even though it was very dangerous because Karna could kill Arjuna.

But Arjuna is seeing these men that he loves. Arjuna sees all kinds of other people that he grew up with who are cousins and relatives and acquaintances and so forth. And all these other people are part of the opposing army. People who he had no beef with at all, innocent people really. Just because of their allegiance to Duryodhana, they found themselves in this situation as part of the army that is about to fight Arjuna.

And Arjuna gets sentimental. It's natural. I mean we think, "What a lovely man. Arjuna does not want to kill his guru. That is good. He shouldn't be killing his guru. Arjuna's a kind and compassionate person." And Arjuna gets terribly emotional realizing what he's going to have to do. Arjuna sees the violence and the blood that is going to have to be spilled. And Arjuna says, "I cannot do it. I won't do it." And he sits down and throws his bow aside. And he says, "That is it! I won't fight."

Arjuna's situation is a situation that we all find ourselves in from time to time. We find ourselves in life crises, uncertain of how to act and what to do. It's a set up for us to investigate ourselves, to show the value of self-knowledge and to show how self-knowledge and action can solve these problems.

CHAPTER TWO: SUFFERING

Suffering. The whole business here is to relieve suffering.

Verse 1 - To Arjuna who was overwhelmed by compassion, distressed and tearful, Krishna spoke these words, "To behave like this is not becoming for a righteous man. It does not enhance your reputation, nor does it lead to heaven. A successful warrior does not give in to unmanliness. It does not benefit you. Overcome this emotional state, get up and fight!"

Arjuna has a job to do. He's been put in this position by life and he's required to respond but his response is less than appropriate. One meaning of dharma is to respond appropriately to what life asks of you. Life is not just about me getting what I want. I have a duty, a dharma, a responsibility. Responsibility means the ability to respond. I have the ability to respond appropriately or inappropriately in a given situation. And when I am excessively emotional, it's unlikely that I will respond appropriately.

Krishna is surprised. "What is with this guy? He's the greatest warrior in the last fifty years. He's got a job to do. He's a real man. And he gets sentimental?" This wouldn't fly today, would it? People would say, "Oh my God. That Arjuna. He's a sweetie. He's so lovely. He's doing the right thing. He's a pacifist. He shouldn't be killing anybody."

Generally, you shouldn't be killing anybody unless you are a warrior. Then it's your job and you are meant to do that. Throughout his whole life Arjuna was trained to protect society. He was a *kshatriya*. *Kshatriya* is a caste in India and *kshatriyas* are meant to protect the dharma. The *brahmins* are meant to teach the dharma. And the *kshatriya* are meant to uphold the dharma, to see that the right things are done. They are your police and your military. They ensure that things are done properly and if there are violations, they correct those violations. Dharma is only as good as the actions you do to protect it. So Arjuna gets emotional and says he does not want to fight. Krishna says, "Hey you wuss, get up! You've got a job to do! It's not becoming for a righteous man. It does not enhance your reputation. Nor does it lead to heaven."

There is a suggestion that if Arjuna stays here and fights he'll be famous if he wins. But if he stays here and doesn't fight then what? When he dies he won't go to heaven because he did not do his duty. That means that Arjuna's going to feel guilty. If you don't do your duty, that is hell because when you don't do what you are supposed to do, you feel bad. Your conscience, your dharma, is built into you and so you don't feel good when you don't do your duty. We call that hell.

There is no actual hell. The Pope said that the other day. He said hell is not an actual physical location, it's a psychological state. It's very interesting now what is going to happen to the Catholic Church. Somebody's come along who is rattling the cage of these people and shaking up these weird doctrines.

Arjuna replies. He's got something to say.

Verse 4 - Arjuna replied, "Oh Destroyer of Demons, how can I fight against these men who are worthy of worship? It would be better to beg for food than to kill these exalted men who taught me everything I know. Whatever wealth and pleasure I will gain from this war would be stained with blood. It is impossible to tell whether it is better if we should conquer them or they should conquer us. How can we continue to live once we have slain these brave men facing us? Even if I were to obtain an unrivaled and prosperous kingdom by winning this war I do not see anything that will take away this pain that disturbs my senses. You are right. I am emotional and confused. I am your student. I take refuge in you. Tell me what I should do."

"Oh Destroyer of Demons..."

Krishna is referred to as Madhusudana. *Madhu* means "honey." *Sudana* means, "the one who kills." So Madhusudana is the one who kills the honey or sweetness. Now what does that mean? What is the dearest thing to you? Your ego is the sweetest thing, isn't it? "That little ego, I really look after it. I feed it whatever it wants." Krishna's the one who destroys that *madhu*, that ego.

If you really get into this story you'll see the nuanced meanings of the words they use, particularly the names. For example, when Krishna talks to Arjuna he calls him *mahabaho*. Krishna uses different words that have tremendous meaning to show the nature of the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna and reveal the science of Vedanta, of non-duality.

"...how can I fight against these men who are worthy of worship?"

These are good men. How can I do that?

“It would be better to beg for food than to kill these exalted men who taught me everything I know. Whatever wealth and pleasure I will gain from this war would be stained with blood. It is impossible to tell whether it is better if we should conquer them or they should conquer us. How can we continue to live once we have slain these brave men facing us?”

He makes a good point. He’s not afraid to talk to his guru. It’s a very interesting relationship between the guru and the disciple. It’s called *sakhibhava*. In the Vedanta tradition, the relationship between the teacher and the student is one of *sakhi*. *Sakhi* means “friendship.” Friends treat each other equally and they are honest and straightforward with each other. It’s not like the guru is sitting on a big pedestal up there and you are this poor, suffering, little devotee. And you say, “Oh, Swamiji, what should I do with my life? Tell me what to do” like you are a baby or a child. The idea that is promoted throughout the world is that you are small, incomplete, stupid, and inadequate and that you don’t know anything. And the big guru knows everything and he’ll tell you what to do. And if you’ve got an ego, he’ll bust it for you.” And on and on.

But Arjuna says, “Well, this is how I feel.” He’s explaining how he thinks. And in Vedanta, we do that. If you have an argument, that is good. We want to engage you because this is a dialogue. This inquiry is like a communication and Arjuna’s expressing himself very nicely.

“Even if I were to obtain an unrivaled and prosperous kingdom by winning this war I do not see anything that will take away this pain that disturbs my senses.”

This means there is no external solution to the problem of existential pain. Existential pain is not solved by winning or losing, by gaining something in this world or by losing something in this world. There is no external solution to this. The solution is subjective.

“You are right.”

See, Arjuna is not in denial. He’s not saying, “What do you mean I am emotional? I am not emotional!” Have you ever been with somebody like that? You say, “It seems to me you are angry” and they say, “No, I am not angry!” It’s called denial. There is no denial here. Arjuna says, “You are right.” See the state of mind? Even though he’s suffering, he’s self-aware and he realizes this is the time for being honest and straightforward.

“I am emotional and confused. I am your student. I take refuge in you. Tell me what I should do.”

Krishna has already told Arjuna what he should do. So Arjuna obviously wants a little more than just being told what to do. So what he’s asking here is, “Who Am I?” Arjuna wants an explanation for the statement that he should get up and do this job which does not seem like a very good job. It’s a beautiful moment, isn’t it? Arjuna surrenders. He realizes that his little bit of knowledge is not up to the mark.

I know. This happened to me. I had all these big epiphanies. I went to India, met the yogis, had all these experiences and I read the scriptures. But at the end of the day, I just realized, "I don't know anything. I am an idiot. I've got to quit this spiritual stuff. I cannot do it." I'd left the University of California a few years before to go on a big spiritual quest. And I thought, "I cannot do this anymore. I'll go back to university and find out what it takes to get my degree and become a regular person." I did not know what to do. I had tried everything. So Arjuna is asking what he should do. He realizes that his understanding of life is very limited. And he asks, "Please help me to understand it from a greater perspective."

Then the great warrior said, "I shall not fight" and fell silent. Standing between the two armies, Krishna, as if smiling, replied..."

Now that is an interesting statement isn't it? In other words, Krishna's not laughing exactly, although Swami Dayananda translates it as laughing. "As if smiling" means what? Krishna does not want to ridicule Arjuna. He does not want Arjuna to think he is looking down on him in any way. But a smile comes on his face because he understands the irony of the situation. It's a beautiful irony here, isn't it? That this great man should come ostensibly to have a war—he's right there on the battlefield—and then he says, "I don't know what is going on. Please teach me."

Krishna's taught many people before and he had many enlightened disciples. He was a great guru, *jagat guru*. But Arjuna did not understand because he did not really know about that part of Krishna. He had a general knowledge of what the *sannyasis* were and what the gurus were because remember, Arjuna had spent thirteen years in exile in the forest and that is where all the yogis and the fakirs and all of the teachers lived. So he saw *sannyasis* and he knew about them but he did not really understand. Arjuna was nursing a grudge against Duryodhana and he was just trying to survive in the forest. Now Arjuna finds himself in a completely different role. Instead of being the general of an army, now Arjuna's saying, "Teach me. I need help."

Vedanta says you have to come to this point of realizing that you don't know anything. Only then will Vedanta work. You have to throw out all the stuff you've picked up here and there and everywhere and start at ground zero.

The very day that I decided to go back to university a whole series of miraculous things happened. I ended up in a little yoga center in San Francisco listening to a talk by Swami ChinMayananda. I realized at that moment that he was my guru. And I realized from hearing him talk, looking at him and seeing his presence that he was the first person I had ever seen who was a free being. I mean he was really free. And I realized I did not know anything.

I was so happy. I just felt like a little kid. I can remember walking out after the talk into the night. It was a beautiful evening in San Francisco with fog coming off the ocean. Everything was crystal clear and had this radiance to it. The next day I called up my girlfriend and I said, "I love you, but I am on my way." I called up my parents and told them, "I am off to India." My mother said, "Oh, not again!" I sold my car and grabbed my money and off I went. I thought I knew everything. I was a clever guy. I could even put people into high states talking about my experience and knowledge. But I really did not know anything.

So Krishna replied:

Verse 11 – “The wise grieve neither for the dead, nor the living. There was never a time that I did not exist, nor you nor these kings. Nor will any of us cease to exist in the future. Because those who live in a body experience birth, childhood, youth, old age and the gaining of another body, it is foolish to grieve. Sense contacts give rise to ever-changing sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain. You have no choice but to experience them. Only a respectable person unaffected by pleasure and pain is fit for liberation.”

“The wise grieve neither for the dead, nor the living.”

Now what else is there to grieve about? There are only two categories in existence: living things and dead things. That is it. In other words, matter and living beings: plants, animals and humans. So there are all these living beings and then there is all of the dead stuff. And Krishna says if you are a wise person there is no cause for grief whatsoever on either account, which means there is no cause for grief at all.

Then Krishna explains why. In Vedanta we tell you why. We just don't tell you, “Well this is how it is.” Or in this case, “Just stop grieving. There is no cause to grieve.” That is not very helpful, is it? Arjuna's a thinking person. And people who come to Vedanta are intelligent, thinking people. You cannot just tell them what to do. Arjuna asks Krishna what to do but Krishna does not tell him what to do. Krishna has already told Arjuna what to do but now he's going to explain why. Let's put it that way. You have to know why. You won't do the right thing until you understand why.

That is the whole point here. We don't want to tell you what to do. We don't want to fix you. We want to give you the understanding so that you can tell yourself the reasons why you should do what you should do. And if you know the reasons and those reasons are compelling, then you will do the right thing. So behind these actions is always knowledge.

Krishna is going to give Arjuna self-knowledge. Krishna is going to explain to him what the self is because only self-knowledge makes sense out of the statement that, “The wise grieve neither for the dead, nor the living.” There is no knowledge in this world that makes sense out of this statement, is there? In this world, everybody grieves for the dead and for the living. People grieve when they lose material objects. They grieve when they lose their family. They grieve when they lose a friend. In this world, that is all people have. So the presence or absence of things is important to people. We call them *samsaris*, people who live in *samsara*, in a particular *samsaric* state of mind.

So the reason Krishna gives is: “There was never a time that I did not exist, nor you nor these kings.” Can you imagine what Arjuna's thinking? “What is this man going on about here?”

“There was never a time that I did not exist, nor you nor these kings.”

Obviously, the “I” that Krishna's talking about isn't the same “I” that Arjuna has in mind. The “I” that Arjuna has in mind is living and dying on him and Arjuna's totally concerned with living and dying. Now don't get too excited about the word “death” or about the idea of death. It's just a metaphor.

The text is poetry, a story. Death is a metaphor for something very simple: change. Death is just the biggest, most important change that is going to happen to us, isn't it? But in fact, death is not really a problem. When you are dying, it's not a big deal at all. One minute you are in a body and the next minute, you are not.

But the fear of death, of change, is the fear of what? It's the fear of losing what is familiar and entering into a place where you have no knowledge. And that is scary. So we're talking here about the fear of change, not physical death. It's true for physical death as well, but we are actually just talking about change. That is our big worry, our insecurity. All around us things are in a constant state of flux. We depend upon those things for our happiness. When those things change, then all these fears come up we think, "Oh my God. How will I survive this? How can I handle this situation when something I've counted on is now gone?" In this reality, everything that comes, goes. So death or change is this reality. And how do I handle change? How do I handle this problem?

"Nor will any of us cease to exist in the future. Because those who live in a body..."

The implied meaning here is that there must be people who don't live in the body. It means enlightened people don't live in the body, they see the body living in them. To me, awareness, a body appears in me. I don't appear in the body. The body is an object known to me. But for a worldly person, he or she thinks, "I am stuck inside this little body. Looking out through these little eyes. Hearing through these little ears. Smelling through this little nose. Tasting through this little tongue. Feeling through this little skin. I am encapsulated in this little body!" That is how people feel.

But for enlightened people it's different. They see the body as an object. For an unenlightened person, the body is me. Big problem. If you accept the body as me, then you suffer the limitations of the body. But for a person who knows who they are, the body does not limit them at all. Why? Because it's just an object known to them. And no object known to you actually modifies you or changes you at all. We believe that it does. We think that what happens changes us and therefore we are growing old and we are going to die. But in reality, when you actually start examining your own experience, you'll see what? That no experience changes you at all. Because why? You are prior to the body.

You are beyond the body. 'Beyond' means what? Beyond means you are something other than the body or the body is something other than you. There is a gap, a space, a distance between you and the body and the body's out there, known to you. You are not in the body even though it sure feels like it. You feel like you are in the body and it's not a fun thing. But actually, you are beyond the body.

"Because those who live in a body experience birth, childhood, youth, old age and the gaining of another body, it is foolish to grieve."

Why is it foolish to grieve? Because you don't have any choice about it. If you are stuck in the body you have no choice about it. There is just this endless process going on. It's not up to you, so why are you grieving? It's like this for everyone who is in a body. It's just the human condition.

So grieve over something you have some control over. If it's up to you, if you are making the decisions and doing actions consciously, then you can feel bad when you make a mistake or you do something

wrong. But you cannot feel bad because it's not up to you. It's just going on and it's the same for everybody. It's just a universal life process that is endlessly repeating itself over and over and over again. Also, feeling wonderful about it isn't legitimate either because it's not up to you. You cannot take credit for this. You cannot blame yourself for it, nor can you take credit for it. It's just an ongoing life process.

“Sense contacts give rise to ever-changing sensations of heat and cold, pleasure and pain. You have no choice but to experience them.”

You have no choice if you are in a body. You did not create the body, did you? This is a setup. You appeared here one fine day apparently in a body. If you had actually paid attention to what you were experiencing you would have seen that the body was in you. But everyone around you pointed to your body and touched your body and said, “That is you.” And they hugged your body and so you thought it was you. But it wasn't. You just bought into the fiction that you were the body. And once that happened, you had no choice but to experience what the body experienced.

“Only a respectable person unaffected by pleasure and pain is fit for liberation.”

“Pleasure and pain” just refers to duality, any conflict between two opposites. But what else is being said here? By the statement, “Fit for liberation” Krishna is saying right at the beginning that there are some qualifications for enlightenment. That is not good news, is it? Someone showed me one of Mooji's books called, *Breath of the Absolute*. It's a big, fat book. And on the very first page, second to the last paragraph, it says, “There are no qualifications for enlightenment.” I guess you just have to show up at Mooji's place and get a hug and something happens. I don't know. But Vedanta is different. Right at the beginning of these teachings Krishna says that you have to be fit for liberation.

And what qualification would he be referring to here? Dispassion. Obviously, Arjuna is not that dispassionate, is he? If Arjuna was dispassionate he wouldn't be tearful and emotional. Dispassionate means, “with-out passion.” If Arjuna was dispassionate he would just see things clearly as they are. So a respectable person here is a dispassionate person. Now that does not mean that you don't care. It just means that you are not identified with or attached to what happens because you realize, “Hey, it's not up to me.”

We define dispassion in Vedanta as indifference to the results of your actions. Now that is a weird definition, isn't it? When a person does something, naturally you think they should care about the result. But a dispassionate person is indifferent to the results of his actions.

Isn't that weird? “We're passionate! We care!” We care about getting the results of our actions. It's important to us. If we don't get what we want we get upset, don't we? Yes, because it's important for our sense of wholeness, completeness and happiness. We need to get this object or this relationship or this job. That is how we feel. And if that relationship, or situation or job does not come our way, then what happens? Either anger or depression or both. We are angry as long as we can maintain being angry and then we get depressed.

Now, why would you be dispassionate with reference to the results of your actions? Because the results of your actions are not up to you. When you know that once you have done the action that the

result is out of your hands, then there is no point in getting yourself excited about getting it or losing it, whatever it is. When you're dispassionate you're like, "Well, cool. Whatever happens, happens. Que sera, sera. It'll be what it'll be. I do what I do and that is what it is."

This attitude makes a dispassionate person's mind steady when they act. And if your mind is steady when you act, then you are fit for liberation. Why are you fit for liberation when your mind is steady? Because you are capable of hearing these teachings and understanding them. You are capable because your mind is not roiled by emotions. This knowledge is taking place in the Subtle Body, in your mind. And that mind needs to be fit and it needs to be prepared, meaning qualified. And dispassion is the number one or number two qualification for liberation.

I received an email this week from a young man. He's a very lovely man, a student from a wealthy family who recently graduated from university. He's in his twenties. Somehow he came across Vedanta and the website and he just loves it. But the other day he wrote me and said, "I got no love. This Vedanta's killing me. I am just as dry as a stick. You tell me that I am love. But I don't feel that I am love. And when I think about girls, then I feel love. So should I go out and chat up the girls and fall in love with them? Then I would at least get the love going and then I could continue to inquire."

It was very, very charming. So what did I write? "No! Don't go chasing the girls. That is not spiritual!" No. I said, "Go for it!" You don't get dispassionate by reading a book or by some guru telling you something. You get dispassionate by living! You have to go out and involve yourself with these objects and discover that they just cannot do the trick. Then you become dispassionate, understand? You've got to live!

People in the spiritual world want to run away from their lives, they want to transcend. They want to jump over it. They think, "Oh, there is a higher state. Maybe if I go to a *shaktipat* guru he'll put me in a higher state. Or he'll wiggle my kundalini and it will blast me out of this body and I'll go to that higher state so I won't have to learn or experience anything here. I'll just be sitting above in this transcendental state, in nirvana, in the spiritual sky, blissful and happy all of the time. Always beyond it." But that does not work, not at all.

You gain dispassion by being alert as you live, as you work out your karma, as you work out your dharma and as you pay attention to what you are doing and the results of your actions. You mature this way. All this about, "Well, I'll go to India and shave my head and live in a cave and be a *sannyasi* and that will solve my problem." No, that won't solve your problem.

So we could really get into the qualifications here because this is just a little teaser. There are a number of other qualifications: *viveka* (discrimination), *shama* (control of the mind) *dama* (control of the senses), *svadharma* (taking care of your own stuff, not trying to live up to an ideal), *mumukshutva* (a burning desire for liberation), *titiksha* (forbearance), *shraddha* (faith in the scripture and the words of the teaching) and so on. There is a whole raft of qualifications that are required.

Why do we tell you about these qualifications? Because if you are not getting Vedanta, it's not because there is anything wrong with the teaching. Rather, there is something your mind needs to develop before you can actually hear the teaching. That is all. We make it clear what these are and

then you can work on your own qualifications. Once you find out where the problem is, then you correct it and the knowledge starts working and you grow.

There are always these blocks and obstacles on the spiritual path. There is no contradiction between doing action to work on yourself and gaining knowledge or enlightenment. It's not like, "Oh, I just have to do all this spiritual work and then I'll go and get some knowledge." No. You can do action and gain knowledge at the same time.

Verse 16 – “What is unreal does not exist. What is real never ceases to exist. This knowledge will set you free. Know That, to be indestructible, which pervades this entire universe. No one can bring about the destruction of That which never changes. The self...which is not an object of knowledge...is indestructible even though it lives in dying bodies. Anyone who thinks that the self kills or that it can be killed, does not know the truth. It is not born so how can it die? It is ever present and not subject to time. When the body dies, it does not die. How can you say that you are a killer if you know the self as it is? Just as a person changes old clothes for new the Indweller gives up its old body for a new one.”

“What is unreal does not exist.”

Now this is really interesting. The translation says “does not exist” but the original word in Sanskrit is *asat*. *Sat* means “exist” or “is” and *a* means “not.” But this isn't meant to be taken literally as “non-existence.” It's true that this world, this body, mind and so forth, are always changing. And anything that changes cannot be real. But just because something isn't real, doesn't mean it is non-existent. Why? Because you cannot experience something that does not exist. And the fact is that we experience this world. We experience the body and mind and the sun, the moon and the stars and all that sort of thing. So to say that the world does not exist—this is an important issue here—is not correct.

You see this in the modern teachings, in the Neo-Advaita teachings. They tell you that the world does not exist. It's a totally unskillful teaching. Why? Because if it does not exist then you have to figure out a way not to see it. You've got to go to some place where it does not exist, because it obviously exists. So the world is not non-existent. It's just apparent, meaning it is not actually what it seems to be.

“What is real never ceases to exist.”

What is real? You, awareness. What is it about you that does not change? What part—we will call it a part for right now—what part of you never changes? Awareness. And everybody knows about that part of themselves. It's just a fact. That part never ceases to exist.

Obviously Krishna is talking to which part of Arjuna? He's talking to Arjuna as that part of himself that does not change. But Arjuna isn't thinking about that part. He is worried about the people who are going to have to fight and die. He is worried about them not existing. But as Krishna said earlier, from the point of view of awareness, the self, there is no cause for grief. As awareness you always exist, you are always here. Or in other words, you are never not here.

Can you say that there is ever a time when you are not here? You can't, can you? Because to say that you are not here, you would have to have the knowledge that you are not here, wouldn't you? And you cannot have the knowledge that you are not here unless you are here. So there is never a time when you don't exist. If that is true, then the whole death issue, the whole change issue is solved.

And what is real, what is reality? We call reality that which does not change. And Vedanta say that that reality is you. There is a part of you that *does* change. And if you are suffering it's because you've identified with that part. If you identify yourself as that part that does not change, then suffering is solved. But when you don't know about the part that never changes or you cannot discriminate it from the part that does change, then you suffer. Krishna is talking about how the discrimination between what is real and what is apparently real—"real" means awareness and "apparently real" means the body, mind and world will set you free. Freedom is simply the knowledge of these two factors and the relationship between them, meaning the relationship between the awareness that you are and the objects appearing in you.

An object can be a situation, a person, a place, a thing, a feeling, a thought, your body, your body, anything other than yourself. You are aware and what are you aware of? Objects. So you are always present and aware of objects. And what do objects do? They appear and disappear. That is how you experience life and it's true for everybody. No one is exempt from this fact. That is how reality is: you, awareness and the objects appearing and disappearing in you.

Now, when an object appears do you appear? No. When an object disappears, do you disappear? No. This shows that you are impervious to change. Isn't that your own experience? You are present and then an object, a thought or feeling or circumstance, appears. You observe that feeling, thought or circumstance for as long as it's there. Then it disappears and you remain. That is a fact. That is just how it is.

So Krishna's saying that liberation or self-knowledge is simply knowing the difference between what is real and what is apparently real. What appears and is apparently real, we call that *mithya*. The word *mithya* in Sanskrit means "apparent" and it describes objects. They just appear and disappear like a magic trick. A thought for instance just pops into your head and then it disappears. Where does it come from and where does it go? You don't appear when it appears and you don't disappear when it disappears. Which means what that you are unaffected by appearances, by time, by change. The objects—*mithya*—change but you don't change.

So *moksha* is very simple. It's very straightforward. It's simply knowing the difference between what changes, *mithya*, and what does not change, awareness, *satya*. You cannot do anything about either one. That is a given. You have no choice about what changes and what does not change. That is reality. Reality is these two factors: the changeless, immutable basis of change—awareness—and the objects that are changing in that awareness.

A beautiful word for awareness as the immutable basis of change is *adhishtana*. It means "anvil." An anvil is a piece of metal on which the blacksmith shapes all of his tools, his creations. The anvil does not change. But on that hard anvil the blacksmith changes the heated, soft metal into various forms. So it's a beautiful symbol for the relationship between yourself and the objects that appear in you.

Remember your body is an object, your feelings are objects, your thought are objects, the people and everything else around you are all just objects. They are apparently real, which means they are not real. They are not non-existent. They do exist. But they don't last so by our definition, they are not real.

You can see what our problem is. It's hanging onto and identifying with things that don't last, chasing things that don't last and that are not real, while thinking that they are real. You don't fall in love because you think falling in love is unreal. You fall in love because you think that it's real. But the sad fact is that it's not. Anything that you can fall into you can fall out of because it's in the world of change, in the world of time.

So Arjuna is confused about the difference between *satya* and *mithya*, the real and the apparently real. He's getting all emotional and excited and Krishna's explaining to him why there is no reason to get emotional and excited. Krishna says that what is real never ceases to exist and what is apparently real has no actual existence in the first place. And he says that *moksha* or liberation is simply knowing the difference between what is real and what is apparently real.

To make this practical for you in a way that does not sound Vedantic, mystical or far away, "real" just means you, awareness. You are simple, ordinary, ever-present awareness. In other words, awareness is the part of you that never changes. And that is what we define as reality. Get this very clear. It should be a very simple thing. People make a big story about enlightenment and about awareness being 'beyond' and being experiential and all this sort of stuff. What we are looking for is what we are. The seeker is the sought. You are what you are seeking. There is nothing anywhere else. You are not to be found anywhere but right here. You are always present. You are always aware. You always exist. This is not something we really have to teach you, is it? This is something that is obvious. Do I have to tell you that you exist? No. Nobody wants to know if they exist because everybody knows, "I exist."

So what we are talking about is these two parts of yourself, not that there are actually any parts to the self. If reality is non-dual, there are no parts to the self. But if you don't know who you are, then it does seem like there is a separate part of yourself that does not change, that has always been the same and is always aware, and then a different part of yourself that does change. This could be called 'un-enlightenment' but Vedanta calls it ignorance, *avidya*. Enlightenment and un-enlightenment are not the best terms. Why? Because the word enlightenment implies some sort of action, experience or event. So we prefer the term ignorance. We only have to deal with two things: ignorance and knowledge. *Moksha* or freedom is knowing what ignorance is and knowing what knowledge is and not confusing the two. *Moksha* is not confusing that part of yourself that knows and does not change and is always present—awareness—with that part of yourself that does change and is not always present, the body and mind. The whole issue here is a very simple issue called mutual superimposition. It means confusing what does change and is not real with what does not change and is real.

And we said there is not anything you can do about either one. You have no control over awareness. You cannot become unaware. And you have no control over the apparent reality either. Did you create your body, your mind, or the world? No. *Isvara* plus *Maya* produces the apparent reality. So there is nothing you can do about either one of them, either as a *jiva* or as awareness.

So you really only have one problem: Failing to distinguish that part of yourself that is changing from that part of yourself does not change. That is the only problem but it's a big one because ignorance is hardwired. It's here to stay unless you work hard to stay alert and continue to discriminate yourself from the not-self.

Mithya, objects or the apparent reality is the not-self. Now obviously, if reality is non-dual, the not-self has to be the self. But you, the self, are not the not-self. So until you understand what the self is and that you are the self, you have to remove your identification with and attachment to what changes. You do this until you discover that you don't actually change. And then you see that what does change is actually you, but you are not what changes. This is a difficult topic but it will be explained as the text goes on.

“This knowledge will set you free.”

If anyone says enlightenment is anything other than knowledge, then Vedanta disagrees. All the experiential notions of enlightenment are based upon the idea that reality is a duality. And because of this idea it's understandable why people think that there is some experience waiting for them that will set them free. They take the experience of their senses and their mind to be real because but their senses and the mind are under the spell of *Maya*. And because of that they believe that they can get free by having some experience or going to some higher state and so forth and so on.

“Know That, to be indestructible, which pervades this entire universe.”

What does this mean? It means the part of you that knows or sees is always present everywhere. But say you think, “Sometimes I am not present.” The question would then be, “How do you know that you are not present?” To prove that you are not present at a particular place or time you would have to be present. So there is no place or time where you are not. If this is true, then there is no change for you. Change is what Arjuna is worried about. He's worried about people dying. What he doesn't know is that the change that takes place in the apparent reality doesn't have any effect on who he or anyone else actually is. Everyone and everything is awareness, and awareness does not change.

“No one can bring about the destruction of That which never changes.”

It means you, the self, are ever-present and you are everywhere. There is never any place or time where you don't exist as awareness. So why worry about dying? Arjuna is worried only because he has confused himself and his guru with the body. That is all. There is a confusion.

This is power packed. With Vedanta we like to hit you with the whole thing right at the beginning. It's not like, “You are not ready yet. Only after you've studied 10, 15, or 20 years will you get the final teaching.” In Vedanta we start out with the final teaching. And then, if the final teaching does not work, then we will give you some other way to understand it.

“The self...which is not an object of knowledge...”

Again we have to examine the idea that the self is some kind of experience. As long as you are longing for some kind of experience other than what you are experiencing right now, you are not qualified for

Vedanta. Vedanta says reality is non-dual, and if that is true, then what you are experiencing right now is none other than yourself. But people think, "I want to connect to the self, or experience the self as oneness, wholeness, completeness, transcendental bliss etc." Because of this misunderstanding, the issue of experience and knowledge must be clearly understood.

Knowledge and experience take in the Subtle Body. You can say the Subtle Body is the instrument of knowledge and experience. But the Subtle Body needs an object of knowledge just like your senses need sense objects. The senses objectify. In other words, they make you know what the physical objects are, including sights, smells and so forth. The mind or the heart needs an object too. To feel something, there has to be something to feel, an object to feel. If I am angry, how are you going to feel it? Well, with your heart. But the anger needs to be there or the heart cannot feel it. Because the heart needs an object of knowledge. Your intellect also needs an idea, an object. There is a limitless pool of ideas available for the intellect. Wikipedia. Google. The intellect is the instrument that you need to know an object, a thought or an idea.

But what about the self? What instrument is there to know the self? Looks like God made a mistake, doesn't it? There is this amazing thing, this indestructible, limitless, non-dual, action-less, ordinary, ever-present awareness that you are but you have no instrument, no means of knowledge for yourself.

Knowledge and experience are the same. When you see me, you know me. Seeing and knowing are one. The experience and the knowledge come together. It's a non-dual reality. So for any experience I need three things: a subject or experienter, an object to experience and the experience itself. So experience is the transaction between the subject and the object. But the self does not fit into that paradigm. It does not work. So it looks like you are out of luck if you want to know yourself right?

Wrong! *Bhagavan*, meaning the creator, understood that he made a 'mistake.' You know how the Lord created the creation in six days and then the seventh day he took the day off? Well, probably he was rushing to get it done. He had everything together and then he put us in at the end. Man is, "The roof and crown of things. He hath dominion over fish and fowl." That is man. And probably the Lord was working late on Saturday night to get the humans all fixed up. He had an assembly line of bodies. And he had the experiencing entity, the brain or the mind and he had them all stacked up. And as the bodies went by, he stuck in the brain. But he was so tired, he put them in backwards. So the brains could only see objects. They couldn't see the subject. They couldn't see the self. So they were all born ignorant. But the Lord was tired so he didn't notice. He thought, "Okay, everything's done here" and went to sleep. But when he woke up he thought, "Oh my God. I think I put the brains in backwards. Those poor beings. They'll never get to know me." So what did he do? He invented and revealed Vedanta.

Vedanta is the means of knowledge for the self. It is the 'third eye.' You have two eyes for seeing objects and forms. And you have a 'third eye' for seeing—meaning understanding—the self. It's not that you go to Tibet and have an operation to peel back the skin on your forehead and reveal an eye between your other two eyes, Lobsang Rampa claimed. Did you ever read Lobsang Rampa? He was a merchant seaman, an English guy who travelled the world and he had a spiritual *vasana*. And he made millions writing these books about Shangri-La and all the mystical stuff. He became a millionaire back in the '30s and '40s. He said, "You have a third eye but to get it working you got to go to Tibet. And in Tibet they have these doctors who will open it up. And then you can see the self and you are

enlightened.” But of course this was nonsense. Vedanta is the real ‘third eye’ to know the self because it is not an object that can be known by the mind, senses or intellect.

So how does Vedanta work? Does it give you an experience of yourself? No. Does it prove that you exist? No. It just takes away your ignorance about yourself. You are already the self so you don’t need to get yourself or experience yourself.

The problem is that you have funny, erroneous notions about who you are. And those ideas or notions need to be removed. Vedanta removes these erroneous notions by revealing to you the unexamined logic of your own experience. In other words, the self is something that you already know but for some reason it is hidden or obscured from you by ignorance.

Because of that, Vedanta asks you to surrender your mind and to listen to the teaching. Now this is a very difficult thing to do but it’s very important because you are not the arbiter of truth. If you were, then you would already know what enlightenment is and you could teach yourself. But you don’t so you can’t. You need to be taught. You need to come to the same position that Arjuna did when he realized that he didn’t know anything and when he understood that he needed to be taught. When you come to that point of view, you are ready to listen.

It’s very difficult to hear what is actually being taught because usually when you are listening to someone, you start formulating a reply before they have even finished talking. You may interrupt them and start to tell them what you have to say. Even before they have finished you have come up with some sort of reaction or response to what they have said. In other words, when you listen you tend to interpret what you hear. And you tend to think that what you interpreted is in fact what was said. But it wasn’t what was said. What you heard was your interpretation of their words. And you are not the one to interpret these words. This is why you cannot read your way to enlightenment. You can read all the holy books in the world but it’s highly unlikely that you will get enlightened because your ignorance will be there causing you to misunderstand or misinterpret the words.

So to get around this problem of interpretation, you need to learn how to temporarily set your thinking process aside. While you’re listening to the teaching, you can’t be deciding that you like it or you don’t like it or that it is right or wrong and so forth. In the next stage of the teaching you can do that. You can bring back all of your ideas and you can examine them in light of what you have heard. This is the duty, the dharma, of an inquirer, a Vedanta person. And when you do this you discard those notions of yours which are not in harmony with what you have heard, and not the other way around.

A fellow wrote me about a month ago. He must have been a new age kind of guru because he had quite a funny name. You know how these spiritual people give themselves funny names so they can seem special. Anyhow, he was really mad and wanted to pick a fight. I think he read the chapter of my book, “How to Attain Enlightenment” about enlightenment myths. He said I was a fraud and a phony and on and on. Why? Because he thought enlightenment was an experience and he didn’t like it when Vedanta said it wasn’t. He was one hundred percent convinced that he needed *nirvikalpa samdhi* to get enlightened and he couldn’t bring himself to investigate that belief. So when Vedanta said something he didn’t like he just threw it out. But that is not how it works. It is you who has to throw out your stuff, assuming that stuff is erroneous notions about enlightenment and who you are.

It's not that you just surrender those ideas and get rid of them because Vedanta says to. You will surrender and release them naturally when you understand the implied meaning of the words of Vedanta and when the logic contained in them becomes clear.

"...is indestructible even though it lives in dying bodies."

We said earlier that the self does not live in a body, but here Krishna is saying that it does. This is because he understands that Arjuna is a little thick in the head and in an emotional condition. Even though the body appears in the self and not the other way around, Krishna knows it's a bit of a stretch for Arjuna to suddenly switch his dualistic vision to the vision of non-duality. So Krishna tries to explain the self to him in a way he can understand. He is trying to get Arjuna to notice the indestructible—meaning unchanging—'part' of himself. This is the beauty of Vedanta. It meets you wherever you are, whatever your level of understanding may be.

"Anyone who thinks that the self kills or that it can be killed, does not know the truth."

Obviously, Arjuna does not know the truth because he thinks the self can be killed. Krishna's already said that everything is the self.

"It is not born so how can it die?"

The self is being presented to Arjuna as an 'it' because he thinks it is something other than himself. For Krishna, who knows he is the self, the self is "I". Right in the beginning he says, "There is never a time when I did not exist." But here Krishna is talking about the self indirectly because Arjuna can only understand the self as an object. This is indirect knowledge.

Indirect knowledge is knowing that the self exists without understanding that you are it. That is okay because before you can understand that the self is what you are, you first need to know that there is a self. Later on, through teaching and inquiry you will see that what you formerly thought of as an object is really yourself, the subject. Then your indirect knowledge becomes direct knowledge.

"It is ever present and not subject to time. When the body dies, it does not die."

There is plenty of evidence that the body dies. Vedanta doesn't dispute that. But there is no evidence that you die. For there to be evidence of that you would have to observe your own death, wouldn't you? You would have to be there to say, "I died." But if you are there to say you died, then you did not die. So death is simply a belief you have about yourself. It is not a fact about yourself. You just are superimposing *mithya* onto *satya*. In other words, you are superimposing what changes and dies onto what does not change and does not die.

"Just as a person changes old clothes for new, the Indweller gives up its old body for a new one."

This is where you get your reincarnation idea. Is there reincarnation? Well, yes and no. It's a complex, difficult topic. So what is the Indweller? Is Krishna talking about the self? This is a very tricky, nuanced statement. Does "Indweller" mean the self living in the body? Well, we already determined that the self does not live in the body. From the self's point of view, there is no body.

In order to teach Arjuna, Krishna's got to throw a bone to ignorance and discuss this problem of life and death in terms of what Arjuna knows, such as the body. So Krishna says that this thing that lives inside you, that you call "you", takes up a new body when your current body wears out. He is trying to make it clear to Arjuna that the body is just a vehicle for the self. It's just like an automobile. When you drive an automobile for a long time, what happens? It wears out and it breaks down and you need a new automobile. Now you haven't worn down or broken down, have you? No, the automobile has broken down so you have to go and get a new one.

So this *jiva*, this Indweller is called the imminent self. It's the *jivatman*, the *atman* associated with the subtle body or the *jiva*. And that is what Krishna calls the Indweller. And that Indweller is called the transmigrator because it seems that the Indweller journeys. You hear it in the spiritual literature, like when Ramana died someone asked "What happened?" And one of these sages in South India said, "Well he died. I know because I saw his Subtle Body take off." Actually, the Subtle Body does not go anywhere, it just looks like it does. It looks like it moves from one location to another, just like when your car dies, you go to the dealership, get another car and you drive off. But the self does not change. Only the bodies change.

Now if Arjuna is going to kill anything, he's going to kill the body. He is not going to kill the self, is he? The Indweller gives up its body. Why does the Indweller need a new body? Because it's not finished here. The body is a vehicle for getting what you want, isn't it? How do you know that? Because that is what you do all day. You send your body here and there to get what you want. The body is just a vehicle, an assemblage of matter that puts you in a certain place so you can get what you want, whatever that is. But if you die before your wants are fulfilled or satisfied then what is going to happen? You are going to have to get a new body so you can work out your desires, that is all. So as long as the Indweller has unsatisfied desires, it keeps taking new bodies over and over again. It keeps trying to work out its desires, its karma, in body after body after body. So that is the idea of reincarnation.

There is a certain logic to it. Science says that matter or energy cannot be created or destroyed. So the pool of matter is always constant. There is never any new matter being added or old matter being subtracted. Matter does seem to appear and disappear but it really just changes its state. It goes from being seen to being unseen. This will be talked about shortly when the Causal Body is explained.

So the body isn't always present. It changes state. It appears and disappears. Let's say it's always present, but it's hidden. When this body dies, what happens to it? It goes back to the five elements. It does not disappear out of the universe. It just loses its shape and form and becomes what it always actually was.

Now if there is a Subtle Body, if there is a person, does the same principal apply to subtle matter that applies to physical matter? Yes. So if there is such a thing as a person, that person does not disappear. It just goes unmanifest. It does not go out of the system. It remains hidden in the present in a location called the Causal Body. And when the time is right, that person, owing to its karma, its *vasanas*, takes up a new physical body. It just takes some matter and forms it into a new body so it can act out its karma.

So Krishna's saying, even if you are a person, you don't really die. Even your physical body does not really die. If you are the self, you don't really die either. You obviously do not die if you are the self. But even if you take yourself to be this person, what are you worried about? You will just get a new set of clothes. When your clothing wears out, you go to the tailor and *Bhagavan* gives you a new set of clothing and off you go. So what are you worried about here?

Verse 23 – “Weapons cannot destroy the self. Fire cannot burn it, nor can water wet it. The wind cannot dry it. It is changeless, all pervading, immovable and eternal. Knowing that it is not an object of thought and not subject to change, you should not grieve. Even if you see the self caught in a constant cycle of births and deaths you should not grieve because what is born, dies and what dies, is reborn. It is foolish to worry about what cannot be changed.”

Krishna's just telling Arjuna what reality is and that Arjuna has no power over it. If you are in charge here, creating reality, destroying things and making things happen, then you can worry. You can get emotional, grieve, be happy, or whatever. You can do all those things. But actually, none of this is up to you. So all of the emotions that you have about what is going on in your small, everyday life is completely gratuitous. It's just a waste of time because it is not under your control. That is a tough one, isn't it? Because owing to our fears and desires we feel we need to control reality. But we are not in control. So what's the reason to get upset about all this stuff?

Now Krishna's going to explain this process. It looks like things die and disappear but he's going to explain this process of life.

Verse 28 – “All beings are unmanifest in the beginning, become manifest in the middle of their life cycles and return to the unmanifest condition in the end. What is there to grieve about, Arjuna?”

“All beings are unmanifest in the beginning...”

“Unmanifest” does not mean that they don't exist, it means they cannot be seen. They are *in potentia*. They are there, but you cannot see them. They are not manifest for experience or knowledge but they are there in a seed state. This unmanifest is called the Causal Body or the seed state.

“...(they) become manifest in the middle of their life cycles...”

They become seen and then what?

“...(they) return to the unmanifest condition in the end. What is there to grieve about...?”

What is there to worry about? It's always here. You just do not see it sometimes and sometimes you do see it. That is all. So nothing is actually lost. It's not a problem. We want to gain things here but this reality that Krishna's talking about, this apparent reality is a zero-sum game. For every gain there is a loss. The loss has not even happened for Arjuna yet, has it? Arjuna has just looked out over the battlefield and gotten himself all emotional and concerned about what is going to be lost. But Krishna's saying nothing is lost. If you understand what reality is, you will see that nothing is actually lost.

I feel I have as much a living relationship to my parents now as I did when I was young. You might say, "But they are gone, *James*. They are dead. Your Dad died forty years ago. Your Mom died thirty years ago. They are gone." They are not gone. They are unmanifest in me. What is my mother or my father but the idea of mother and father? You never actually experience your mother and father, or any person for that matter. Did you know that? You are not actually experiencing them. You are only experiencing your thought of them. You never go outside and get inside them to experience their thoughts. They appear in your consciousness as mother and father and those images invoke certain qualities that are already in you and your relationship is to that, the idea of who they are. So they are always present in you. And simply by the thought of who they are you invoke the qualities that they invoked in you. And so you have your mom and pop right there with you all the time.

You just don't have their physical body. You never had their physical body anyway. Even when they touched you, what did you feel? You experienced in your mind the feeling or the sensation of what? Touch. But you did not experience them inside your mind. They invoked that feeling of touch, that feeling of love or whatever it was in you. And when you think about them, that same feeling of love—or anger if they were that kind of person—would invoke the love or anger that was already in you. So, when you think about your father, you get angry. Or, when you think about your mother, you feel love or whatever it is. You are never actually experiencing anybody out there. You are always only experiencing the idea of who they are, what they are and what they mean to you.

Krishna is saying that everything is coming from the Causal Body, the unmanifest condition. Vedanta calls this unmanifest condition *Isvara* or God or the creator. That is where everything is coming from. Understanding *Isvara* is the key to the *moksha* problem, to the liberation problem. It's why people have a really hard time gaining freedom or *moksha*. They don't understand this factor that is creating all these things and making all this stuff happen.

Nobody really has a problem understanding themselves as a person, do they? I mean that I am a person, that I live here, that I have a name, that I do things, that I have issues and problems and relationships and all that is well known to me. I know all about Jim. Jim has been hanging around me for over 70 years so I am very familiar with him. I know all of his thoughts and feelings and experiences. I can tell you lots of stories about Jim. So that part we know about.

And the self? Now, that is not so hard to figure out, is it? You are simple, ordinary, ever-present awareness. That because of which you know what you know. You cannot know anything without awareness can you? You need awareness to have knowledge. So working back, you have objects of knowledge, then you have knowledge and then you have awareness. So awareness is the substrate, it is the basis. It is prior to the knowledge and the knowledge is prior to the objects. So, that I am aware and conscious is not really hard to see.

And that awareness is what? It is unborn and non-dual. There are not two awareness's. You cannot split it up. Try to split up your awareness. Close your eyes. You are aware, correct? Okay, try to cut your awareness in half. Put one-half here and one-half there. You cannot do it. You cannot snip it and separate it. No action will work on it anyway because actions are gross and awareness is too subtle. And if you just sit and think about your awareness and you journey forward in time a billion light years will you ever get out of awareness? Will you ever journey outside of awareness? Or if you go all the

way back to the big bang and beyond, can you get outside of awareness? You cannot. In fact, that is what non-dual means. That is what awareness means. It isn't born. It does not change. It has no limits. There is only awareness.

Reality is non-dual. If reality is non-dual, then where are the objects? For you, awareness, there are no objects. You are always free of objects. You might say, "Excuse me sir, but I do experience objects! I experience thoughts and feelings and bodies and so forth and so on. If awareness isn't creating these objects and I know very well that I am not creating these objects, then where are they coming from?" Vedanta says that the apparent reality of objects is created by *Isvara*, or the unmanifest, or the unconscious, the *jagat karanam*. *Jagat* means "world." *Karana* means "cause." So *jagat karanam* means "the one who creates or causes the world."

So there is you, the apparent person, and you as simple, ordinary, action-less, non-dual awareness. Neither of them create. So there is another factor called *Isvara* or *Maya* which is producing all of the objects. But how is *Isvara*, *Maya*, going to create without awareness? Can any action take place without awareness? No. You cannot have an action without awareness. So awareness plus *Maya* or ignorance—it is also called ignorance—creates the world of objects.

Other Vedantic texts such as Panchadasi get into more detail about the nature of *Isvara* and how *Isvara* creates. It is an interesting topic but the whole point of this teaching is what? That Arjuna—who represents you as the apparent person—does not need to take responsibility for all of this stuff and get emotional. Why? Because it is all generated by some factor other than you, whether "you" is referring to yourself as awareness or as the apparent person. You see? The problem is that you own this stuff and think it belongs to you. But you are going to see here as we analyze action and the constituents of action, that none of this stuff belongs to you.

It all belongs to *Isvara*. It does not belong to awareness so you are free of it as awareness. And it does not belong to you as a *jiva* either, because the *jiva* is just awareness associated with the Subtle Body. Awareness associated with *Maya* is the Causal Body and it creates the whole universe. Awareness plus the Subtle Body is a *jiva*. And that *jiva* does create something. It adds a little value. It takes *Isvara's* creation to be its own and projects 'my-ness' and 'I-ness' onto what it experiences. It is not actually creating anything but it assumes that what *Isvara* has created is its own when it actually belongs to *Isvara*. And so the *jiva* creates its own imaginary world. It's called *jiva shristi*, the "creation of the *jiva*."

Isvara creates the whole field and the *jivas*. And *Isvara* is not personal. It is the same for everybody. We all have the same body. We all have the same mind. We all have the same intellect. We all function the same way. The environment we find ourselves in is the same for everybody. That is all created by *Isvara*.

Isvara has no sense of 'I-ness' or 'my-ness' with reference to the self. *Isvara* is not some big god sitting up in the sky manipulating things and saying "I want you to do this and not that. And I don't like this and I'll do that. And I'll punish you if you do this." It looks like that. But actually *Isvara* is just awareness plus an impersonal principle called *Maya* that is creating all of these objects. And because all *jivas* are manifestations of *Isvara*, part and parcel of *Isvara*, the *jivas*, owing to their ignorance of their true nature as awareness, own what belongs to *Isvara* and suffer and enjoy their own creation.

So if you are going to have to do any work, you are going to have to do work on our own creation or projection. But once you understand this teaching, you don't really have to do any work because none of this stuff belongs to you. This is what a wise person, a *jnani* knows.

People ask me, "What *sadhana* are you doing *James*?" I say, "Well, I don't do *sadhana*." I haven't done *sadhana* for 45 years because there is nothing to do *sadhana* for. I don't own anything. Nothing belongs to me. It all belongs to *Ishvara*. So what can I do about it? All I can do is be okay with whatever *Ishvara* is handing out because it's not up to me. If it were up to me then I could care and get all upset.

Like this body. I am sitting here because of *Ishvara*. I am not sitting here because of me. In this case, *Ishvara* means what? The whole medical system. *Ishvara* is the knowledge that creates everything. So there is enough knowledge in *Ishvara* to keep you going. Not to keep you immortal because *Ishvara* cannot manage immortality for you as the *jiva*. But *Ishvara* can change the situation so the *jiva* gets a little more time or gets different kinds of circumstances. I was given a little more time before I croak. I have a heart that works pretty well now and by the grace of *Ishvara* I'm still here. "How do you feel about that *James*?" I don't feel about it. There is no point in feeling about it because I had nothing to do with it. All I did was walk to the doctor who put me on some machines and said, "You are going under the knife, boy." What else could I do? I wanted to live so I said "Okay." They laid me down, shot me up with something and I was out. When I came back, *Ishvara* had had his way with me and I had a new heart.

It's had nothing to do with me. The situation was totally independent of me. I was just sitting there observing it: all these awful feelings, the pain, the drugs and all those machines. All those machines were *Ishvara* too, as well as the people running in and out. If you have ever gone to a hospital in America, it's like a city. It's like a whole world, a universe with all these layers of people from the top to the bottom. They are all doing their own little functions. Everybody is just doing their duty. And the big boys at the top are determining what everybody does. Each little unit comes and does his or her thing. And you can see, there is nothing personal about it at all. Machines are impersonal. The people are impersonal. The people try to be personable. They make you feel good while you are there, but it's all just *Ishvara*. It has nothing to do with you whatsoever. What Arjuna has done is take things personally when there is nothing personal about it.

Duryodhana follows his nature. He is that part of yourself that is insecure. And because he is insecure, what does he do? He wants to cut corners and to break the rules to get what he wants. This is a conflict that you have inside yourself sometimes. And the more empty or incomplete you are, the more you will tend to break the rules and go against dharma to get what you want. But when you go against the rules, you are going against *Ishvara* because *Ishvara* is the rules. *Ishvara* is just the knowledge that creates everything here. So, as soon as you go against that knowledge, then this guy is no longer your friend. *Ishvara* rubs back against you and there is a war going on. That is called dharma. A wise person follows his nature and worships *Ishvara*. In other words, he acts in harmony with the nature of the laws that are operating here in the dharma field. So there is no conflict for *janis*, for wise people. But for *samsaris* who don't know, who don't understand *Ishvara*, there is always this potential for conflict.

Arjuna is one of those people. He is in a state of conflict. He does not know what to do. When Krishna is talking, Arjuna is thinking, "I'm going to drop out and go to India. I'll get spiritual. I'll go to Rishikesh and get a cave and meditate." He knew about the spiritual world from being in exile and living in the forest for 13 years. So when suddenly he gets in a big crisis, where does his mind go? "Oh, I've got to escape." He thinks the way out of it is to become spiritual. But that is not the way out. Do not become spiritual. If you become spiritual you will have to become unspiritual. I know, I did it myself. I became spiritual and it took me a while to undo my spirituality. I tried to run away, to escape, rather than face reality.

So Krishna is saying here that the factor you are not taking into account is *Ishvara*. He calls it the unmanifest. I have translated it in such a way that people don't get too scared by these words like *Ishvara*. It just means the cause of the world, what causes all the objects to appear in awareness.

There really are only four factors that you have to understand for *moksha*. You have to understand the material factor. That is called the *jagat*, the material world. You have to understand awareness. You have to understand the *jiva's* psychology, meaning why it does what it does and what it hopes to gain. And you need to understand *Ishvara*. Awareness (*paramatma*), *Ishvara*, *jiva* and *jagat*. Those are the four factors that need to be understood and they will be carefully unfolded throughout this text.

Verse 29 – "Some people see the self as a wonder. Others speak of it as a wonder and some hear of it as a wonder. Yet, even after hearing about it people do not understand it at all. The self, the one who dwells in the bodies of all beings, is always indestructible. Therefore you ought not to grieve for these people."

"Some people see the self as a wonder. Others speak of it as a wonder and some hear of it as a wonder."

You know out in the spiritual world you hear, "Oh, I heard about this thing called the self. It's incredible. If I could get that I would be so wonderful." Now that we have the internet, there are all kinds of people talking about the self. Yet, even after hearing about it, people do not understand it at all. The first time you hear about it you are saying, "What?" Many people come to me and say "Jeez, the first time I heard this *James*, I thought 'What the hell is he talking about? This is weird.'" But they hung in there. They knew there was something there and then later on it started to make sense to them. It started to click for them.

"Yet, even after hearing about it people do not understand it at all. The self, the one who dwells in the bodies of all beings..."

We know very well that the self does not dwell in the bodies. The bodies dwell in the self. But Krishna is just talking this way for Arjuna, because that is how Arjuna sees it.

"...is always indestructible. Therefore, you ought not to grieve for these people."

Krishna is looking at Arjuna and he realizes Arjuna is not getting it. It is not clicking. So he says, "Let's try a different line of reasoning, okay?" He sees that this is just over Arjuna's head. Later on, Arjuna is

going to get it, thank God. But right now he is not getting it so Krishna switches arguments here. He takes a different approach.

Verse 31 – “Also, if you consider this situation from the standpoint of your duty, you should not waver. Nothing is more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war. Only lucky warriors are given the opportunity to fight an unsolicited war. It is an open gate to heaven. But if you forfeit your honor and refuse to do your duty you will incur sin. People will speak of your unending infamy. For the honorable person, dishonor is worse than death. Your peers, the great warriors, who esteem you now, will see you as a coward. They will mock and ridicule you. They will belittle your talents and say unforgettable things. What could be more painful? Consider this: if you die you will gain heaven. If you win you will enjoy the world. Therefore, stand up and fight! See pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat in the same light and prepare for battle. You will incur no sin.”

“Also, if you consider this situation from the standpoint of your duty, you should not waver.”

In other words, your conclusion is wrong if you look at it from the point of view of who you are as a person. You should not abdicate your role as a warrior, as the general of this army. You should not waiver. You shouldn't get emotional about this job that you have to do. Krishna is going to try and appeal to Arjuna as he thinks of himself, as a warrior.

You have these two identities. You have a limited identity as a *jiva* and you have a limitless identity as awareness. Krishna is trying to explain to Arjuna about his limitless identity but Arjuna does not get it. So he says “Okay, here is your limited identity so let's look at it from this point of view.” The *jiva* is your limited identity. Vedanta does not try to destroy it or say that it's non-existent. It just says that it's only a secondary identity, not your primary identity. Unfortunately, Arjuna thinks it's his only identity. He does not think there is another option. Arjuna assumes that he is a person so Krishna is going to speak to him as the conditioned person that he thinks he is.

“Nothing is more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war. Only lucky warriors are given the opportunity to fight an unsolicited war.”

Why? Because the karma does not come back to the warrior when the war is unsolicited. If you live in a country and the country goes to war and you get drafted, the karma from the actions you do does not go to you. They go to the country because it wasn't up to you. You did not choose to fight. If you chose to go to war and you chose to act on your own and you think you are a doer, then the actions you do will come back to you. But if you do your actions as a service to your country, then the karma goes to the country and not to you. “Solicited war” means what? “I want to fight.” There is an “I” and a “want” and therefore the karma comes to the “I” that wants.

“It is an open gate to heaven.”

You will feel good by doing what you are supposed to do. You may not be a warrior or a general but you have your own little everyday dharmas. And if you act out your little everyday dharmas as *Isvara* has programmed you to do then you are going to heaven, meaning you are going to feel good about yourself. You will be acting in harmony with your *svadharma*. Here is another term. Arjuna's *svadharma* is what? To be a warrior. That is the duty that he has been assigned by *Isvara*. Everybody

here is here for a purpose, for a reason. You did not come here on your own. Somebody sent you here. That somebody or something is called *Isvara* and *Isvara* has you here for a reason. And that reason is for you to make a contribution. You have to add something to the creation here. You are required to respond. Dharma is appropriate response. You are required to respond and to respond according to your nature, to your conditioning.

My *svadharma* now is to be a teacher. I did not try to be a teacher, believe me. My idea when I started out was not to be a teacher at all. My mother was a teacher. My brother was a teacher. I went into business. I wanted money. I did not think I'd end up being a teacher. But somehow *Isvara* put me here teaching Vedanta. So in this particular situation, it's my dharma to teach. And if I do that and teach well then I am going to feel good. And I do feel good when I teach. Why? Because I am acting in harmony with my dharma. I am doing what I am supposed to do for *Isvara*. It's not up to me. I have been given these talents and this knowledge. I did learn how to teach but I had it in me to start out with. I did not even know that. But as I kept involving myself more and more with this and my love for this knowledge grew, then that teaching power started to come into me. And that teaching power is coming from *Isvara*. I did not create that. *Isvara* supplied me with the knowledge about how to do that. So, that is what I do. That is why I feel good.

So *svadharma* is acting in harmony with your nature. If you are a business man and you have the nature of a business person, then you should act in harmony with that. If you are a scientific type, you should act in harmony with the scientific mentality. If you are an artist, you should be an artist. You should find out what that inner thing is that is tickling you, that really turns you on. That thing that is deep inside you, that is driving you, that is *Isvara*. That is your *svadharma* and you should act in harmony with that.

Arjuna's *svadharma* is what? To command men and to make war in order to protect the dharma. You have to have those people. You have your warriors, your generals, your thinkers, your politicians, your working class people and so on. Now we have all these specialized dharmas that are amazing because the society is so complex that *Isvara* keeps having to cook up new occupations for people. It's amazing what is out there.

So, Krishna is here that doing what you are supposed to do is an open gate to heaven. It's honorable to do what is natural to you, to follow your *svadharma*.

"But if you forfeit your honor..."

He says the respectable or honorable person is somebody who follows their dharma. Why is it honorable to follow your dharma? Because you have the option not to follow it. And you dishonor yourself when you do that because you put yourself in conflict with *Isvara*. You have the option not to follow your dharma. You can do something else and people do it all the time. They go against what they really feel inside themselves. They do things according to gratuitous kinds of needs and desires and they suffer a lot of conflict. And they dishonor themselves. They don't honor themselves or worship themselves by doing that and this is what Krishna says here.

"...and refuse to do your duty..."

In other words, if you don't perform those actions that are in harmony with your nature as a warrior...

"...you will incur sin."

Sin means guilt. You will feel guilty. You won't feel good about yourself. It's all these self-esteem problems that we see in society. People are not doing what they are supposed to do for themselves. They don't know. God bless them, they do not understand what their dharma is and they just flounder around. And so they have this low self-esteem and feel guilty all the time because they are not doing what is right.

Arjuna is an extrovert. He is *rajasic*. *Rajas* is a kind of energy that makes you compare yourself to everything else. Its result we know as jealousy and it is called *matsarya bhava* in Sanskrit. It's an energy that causes you to evaluate yourself with reference to something else, to be continually comparing. Now, a *rajasic* person, an extroverted person, cares what people think, don't they? *Sannyasis* and introverted people, they don't care. They will think what they want. But to extroverted people, it is very important what people think. So Krishna is hitting the bottom of the barrel here as far as arguments go. He says...

"People will speak of your unending infamy."

The only reason he would say that is because he knows that Arjuna cares what people think. So he is trying to put the pressure on him to do his duty.

"For the honorable person, dishonor is worse than death."

So Krishna is asking Arjuna if he is a dishonorable person or an honorable person. He's telling him that by not doing his duty he is dishonoring himself. Do you know what hara-kiri is? In ancient Japan, in order to preserve your honor you would fall on your sword. You made a mistake, you screwed up and what? Well, there are consequences. You are willing to keep your honor, your dignity, your respectability, by putting an end to your life. It's kind of a dramatic symbol but it shows that living with the guilt of not doing what is right is worse than dying.

I know because it happened to me. When I was quite young, I did not follow dharma. I was always cheating, lying and stealing in various ways. Not necessarily in obvious ways, but I was lying, cheating and stealing to get more for me because I wanted more, more, more. More money. More sex. More power. More everything. That was my view. And I started feeling rotten.

I did not know how rotten I felt until one day I was sitting by the ocean and I got out a piece of paper and started writing a poem. And when I finished writing the poem, somehow I had a kind of clarity and vision. I read that poem and I realized, "My God, you are a mess. You are really miserable. You are totally depressed. You are suicidal." It was very weird. I was so *rajasic* and extroverted that even though I had those feelings my mind was too busy to really process them. And somehow *Isvara* made me sit down and write this poem. And when I read it in kind of a detached moment I saw that I was completely depressed, completely guilty. I felt rotten. I almost did not feel like living. I thought, "This is really painful." People were all patting me on the back and saying that I was incredible and that I did

this and that. But inside, I felt rotten because all of that success was not built on honor. It was built on dishonor and that was painful.

“Consider this: if you die you will gain heaven. If you win you will enjoy the world.”

Okay, now Krishna is trying to give a win-win here. Not a win-loss, a win-win because there are no bad outcomes from doing your duty. If you die you will get to go to heaven because you did what? You did your duty and it's an unsolicited war. So you are going to get what? You are going to get good karma for your next birth and it's called *punya* karma. You are going to get good karma, you will be reborn in a really good situation and you will be a happy person. And if you win? Hey! You get it all baby! M.S.P.—Money, Sex and Power. It's going to be all yours. Not that Arjuna was into money, sex and power. But all the what? All the benefits of protecting the dharma and preserving the righteous people in the society. Everybody is going to look up to him and they are going to take care of him and he is going to be looked after until the day he dies. Life is going to be good. So either way, it's a win-win. Therefore, what is the conclusion?

“Stand up and fight!”

Therefore, do what you have to do.

“See pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat in the same light and prepare for battle.”

In other words, look at it from the self's point of view. Gird your loins. Prepare for battle. You will incur no sin. At this point Krishna has done his best to explain things but Arjuna just isn't getting it. He's thinking, “I've tried to enlighten this knucklehead, but he's not enlightenable. So I better try something else here.” See how Vedanta is so beautiful? If you don't get it, that is fine. Don't worry, we love you. You are the self. You are fine. If you don't get it, that is okay. We've got just the deal for you! And what is just the deal for you? Karma yoga.

So Krishna hits Arjuna with the final teaching, the big teaching. Krishna tells Arjuna not to worry, to get off his butt and go to work. “You are the self. Everything is fine. It's all non-dual, action-less, ordinary aware-ness.” But Arjuna does not get it. Then Krishna—I love this, he is just such a cool teacher—does not get annoyed.

Some teachers get upset when you don't get it. Jiddu Krishnamurti was like that. He thought he had a real teaching and he thought he was a real teacher. I saw him once in India and once in San Francisco. And both times after about twenty minutes, he started attacking the audience. He was apoplectic. He was so angry. “Why are you not getting this?” Well, first of all he was a lousy teacher. And second, he did not have a teaching. So that was why nobody was getting it. It was all just Jiddu Krishnamurti's stuff, a hodge-podge that had some truth to it but also had ignorance all mixed in. There was just no way that you could leave with any hard and fast knowledge about who you are or with knowledge about karma yoga.

I tell you, even if you are not going for *moksha*, if you understand karma yoga, you will have a successful life. Karma yoga is just downright practical everyday nuts-and-bolts living. Karma yoga is not just a practice. Karma yoga is knowledge too. And when you understand the logic of the teaching,

you will have no choice but to practice karma yoga. Karma yoga will just be the natural way that you operate and act.

So, Krishna does not want to insult Arjuna. Krishna's always got a smile on his face. He is one of these guys that is always inwardly happy because this whole thing is very funny to a *jnani*. Why is it funny? Because of the juxtaposition of awareness plus *Maya*. When you've got these two principles here there is always a joke, always something to laugh about. Life is really funny. How, when you know this, can you explain this weird body and these weird thoughts and all these weird people and all this strange stuff that is going on? How can you explain it when you know this? It just does not add up.

Maya makes the impossible possible. It is impossible that this whole crazy world of karma exists, but it does. In this luminous, radiant, most beautiful fullness of your own nature, it exists. So a person who knows their own nature and knows their fullness, is constantly amused. You see everybody as the self and then they come up and tell you, "I want this. I don't want that." Excuse me? "I am limited. Life is really tough." That is all there is. You see the self and the self is saying "Life is tough. I feel very unhappy." And I don't want to embarrass or ridicule anybody, but that is funny because how could the self be talking like this? So Krishna's always got this sense of irony or this smile about him.

My guru was really good with that. He was a Krishna. He was just like Krishna and there was always this incipient humor ready to break out because of the juxtaposition of these two things. Krishna is a good teacher and he loves Arjuna. He is not going to make trouble for him. He's not going to make him feel bad because he did not get it. Instead of saying "You did not get it!" he says:

Verse 39 - "So far I have told you the wisdom of self knowledge. Now listen to the wisdom of yoga which will free you from bondage to action. In this yoga, no effort is wasted, nor are any unsuitable results produced. Even very little karma yoga protects one from great fear."

"So far I have told you the wisdom of self knowledge."

In other words, "I have told you who you are."

"Now listen to the wisdom of yoga..."

Why should he listen to the wisdom of yoga? What is the purpose of yoga? Well, Krishna is going to tell him what the purpose is. What will yoga do?

"...which will free you from bondage to action."

The problem is what? That you feel compelled to act, to do certain things. Actually, you don't have to do anything, but you feel like you do. There is a very simple psychology behind this process but it is extremely elegant, extremely powerful and it works in every human being. This is just the universal psychology of human beings. Human beings feel incomplete, inadequate and limited. That is our basic, fundamental problem.

A dog or a cat does not feel incomplete, do they? A dog does not think, "Oh let's see. I am a dog. I don't know whether I want to be a dog or not. Oh, there is the cat. I would like to be a cat instead."

Animals do not feel incomplete and neither do plants. They are living beings, but none of them feel incomplete. Only human beings feel incomplete and inadequate. They don't feel up to the task, up to responding to reality in a confident, self-assured way.

That feeling of incompleteness is the result of ignorance of their wholeness and completeness. Your self is full, complete and whole. But when you do not know this fact about yourself, you take yourself to be incomplete and inadequate and therefore you want objects. And what do you want objects for? To complete yourself. Get this very clear. You think that if you get security or money or a relationship or a good job or education or whatever it is, that you will be okay. You are always working to get rid of the sense of incompleteness and limitation.

And because of this sense of incompleteness you find yourself in a world of objects. You don't just look at the objects as they are, as value-neutral. The whole creation is value-neutral. None of it is good and none of it is bad. It just is what it is. It's just reality and it just functions a certain way. It is not a nice reality. It is not a bad reality. It is just the way things are. But, because of this in-built ignorance of yourself, you add value to objects. And you pursue whatever objects you think are important for you to have. And when you get that object what happens? That sense of incompleteness goes away, for a while. You feel justified. You feel great. "Oh, I got what I wanted. I feel secure. I am secure financially. I am secure emotionally. I am secure knowledge-wise" or whatever.

Now the inquiry is, does that feeling of insecurity or incompleteness disappear for good? It does disappear, but does it disappear for good when you get what you want? It does not. That is the fly in the ointment of object happiness. The first lesson of Vedanta is that the joy is not in the object. Objects do work to make you feel good or feel bad, temporarily. If you get an object you do not want, then you feel bad. You want to avoid that object. Human beings are either going towards things that they want or running away from things that they don't want. They are trying to avoid, *nivritti*, objects that will produce pain or they are trying to go towards, *pravritti*, objects that will give them pleasure, make them feel whole and complete.

Every time you get what you want or avoid what you do not want, you get a *vasana*. A *vasana* means there is a tendency, an unseen result to that pursuit or action. Every pursuit, every action that you do has a known or seen result, *drishta phala*, and an unseen result, *adrishta phala*. When you meet Mrs. Right, there she is smiling at you. That is the seen result. And the love you feel, that is the seen or the known result. What is the hidden result? Attachment, the belief that that the object is necessary for your peace of mind or happiness. It's called a *vasana*, a tendency to repeat a good action or a tendency to avoid a bad action.

What does that produce? A bondage, an attachment to action. That is a killer and it's painful. It's called the *samsara chakra*. "Chakra" means "wheel". It is a constant rotating wheel of *vasana, kama, karma, vasana, kama, karma*. You have this need, this urge to complete yourself. You know how you've been in that itchy state sometimes? You want something but you don't know what it is and you are trying to figure out what it is. That is your *vasana*. You are experiencing just the *vasana* and it hasn't become *kama*. It hasn't become manifest as a desire or a fear in the Subtle Body.

Let's use ice cream as an example. The ice cream thought comes in my mind, so you have the itch. Now you have the idea and the desire. And then what do you do? You get your tongue locked around

a big Häagen-Dazs ice cream scoop and eat the whole bucket. It's so good. But the more you eat, the stronger the *vasana* gets. So whenever you are feeling a little empty, inadequate, incomplete, a little down and un-happy, you go to the fridge and get out the Häagen-Dazs and a big spoon. And you soften it up a little bit in the microwave and eat. And pretty soon there are two flavors of Häagen-Dazs in your fridge. And then three different flavors. Whenever you get the itch, you eat some ice cream and then the itch goes away. But then what? The itch sneaks back. The karma becomes a *vasana* again. So you have a *vasana* and you are driven by that *vasana*. *Vasana, kama, karma, vasana, kama, karma*. And around and around you go from desire to action, reinforcing the entire cycle each time. We call it a chakra.

I am just using a gross example—food—but the pattern can be in reference to anything. The more you repeat the pattern, the more you are bound by it. When you become compelled to act you are bound by action. And this bondage to action, keeps your attention completely outside on objects.

Remember there are only two things: you and the objects appearing in you. Instead of you looking at yourself for a solution to the problem, you are looking outside at objects. Vedanta says, "You are the problem and you are the solution." If you know who you are, then you are the solution. If you do not know who you are, then you are the problem.

So when you have a *vasana*, you could choose to look to yourself. You could see that you are whole and complete and that you don't need that object to complete you and therefore, you could forego the pursuit of that object. You could break your connection with the karma. How? Simply through knowledge, through self-knowledge.

But if you cannot do that, then what happens? You get more and more locked into these repetitive actions. You can end up addicted and compulsive. Addicts are just people with *vasanas* that are just driving them completely, seeming to control them. I was like that. By the time I was twenty-five I was nothing but a bundle of *vasanas*. I was completely unconscious, driven by things. I couldn't stop. It was unbelievable. It so painful.

In Arjuna's case what is Krishna trying to get Arjuna to do? Krishna is trying to get Arjuna to have a look at himself and understand who he is. But Arjuna isn't able to do that. Why? Because Arjuna has this problem he is trying to avoid. He does not want to fight this war. He wants to avoid this war. Arjuna has an aversion *vasana* to this situation. He knows this is a painful situation and he does not want any part of it because there just isn't any good that is going to come out of it. So Arjuna wants to avoid this situation.

Krishna wants Arjuna to look himself, the self, to solve the problem. And he cannot do that because he is stuck in bondage to action. What does Arjuna do immediately? He reacts to the situation. He sits down, throws his bow away and says "I am not going to fight." So he is bound by action. He is attached.

That is our problem. We are all extroverted and attached to doing things to get results. And because of that, we don't see the glory of our own fullness, our own beauty, our own happiness, our own innate, built-in satisfaction and joy. It isn't known to us.

Did you know that the joy you experience when you get an object does not come from the object? When you get the object you think the joy comes from the object and it's reasonable to assume that it did. Why? Because when the object appeared, the joy appeared. So you think the joy is connected to the object. But the joy is not connected to the object. It only seems to be. What is the joy connected to? Where does the joy, the happiness come from? It comes from the absence of the desire for the object. As we discussed before, you don't want security. You want freedom from insecurity. You don't want love. You want free-dom from loneliness.

There you are, wanting an object. Then the object appears. Your desire for the object disappears and happiness, fullness comes. It cannot come from the object. Why not? Because if it came from the object, the same object would give everybody happiness, but it does not. So the objects have no happiness in them. The happiness comes from you. The experience of joy or pleasure of your own self, which is going on all the time in you, is just blocked by desire or fear. When the desire or fear is removed, the bliss of your nature is experienced in your mind and you start experiencing yourself. You go to the Causal Body and experience yourself free of objects. But in your mind you associate that sense of freedom with the object. And you think the object is necessary to make this sense of happiness, fullness and completeness. So karma yoga is all about correcting this situation.

Maybe you think, "Oh yeah, I've been doing karma yoga for a long time. Every time I go to my guru's ashram and I scrub the dishes and I wash the floor, I am doing selfless service. I'm giving away my ego. That is my karma yoga." It's their idea. Karma yoga has nothing to do with selfless service. Why not? Because there is only one self so if anything is being done, it's being done by that self. There is nobody else anyway. There is only you because reality is non-dual. So karma yoga has nothing to do with selfless service.

You can do selfless service and get what? A huge *vasana* for thinking you are virtuous and that you are getting somewhere spiritually. I stayed in that Muktananda ashram years ago when it was growing and siddha yoga was a big deal. I never met so many vain, conceited people in my life who thought they were burning up their karma. And they were so holy but they treated us as schmucks, like we were pieces of filth because we couldn't do selfless service. "I am serving the guru" they said. All those people got was this huge, bloated idea of themselves as being virtuous people doing selfless service. That is not karma yoga. We are going to see what karma yoga is. Karma yoga is an attitude you take with respect to action and its results. Everything you do is for yourself.

And if you do selfless service, do you know why you do selfless service? Because it pleases you to do it. You would not do it if it did not please you. So are you doing it for them or are you doing it for yourself? You are doing it for yourself. Leave out the spiritual argument. The egocentric argument is that it pleases you to do that. You think you are good person when you do selfless service. You think you are getting virtue, *punya* karma points in your karmic bank account. You think you are going to heaven. That is why you do it. It's for you, never the object.

"In this yoga, no effort is wasted..."

That is a win-win situation, isn't it? Because in daily life how much of your effort is thrown away? How much stuff do you do where you get no results?

“...nor are any unsuitable results produced.”

In other words, you cannot lose. There are no losses here. There are only gains. That does not make sense does it? Because our experience is that for every gain, there is a loss. Every time you get something, you can lose it. In fact, in the *samsaric* state of mind, this is a zero-sum game. You gain and you lose. And the gains equal the losses so you don't get anywhere. But in this yoga it's a whole different ballgame. You don't waste any effort so that feeling of just doing nothing with your life is not there. And what? You don't get any bad results.

“Even very little karma yoga protects one from great fear.”

Even a little bit protects you from great fear. Krishna is selling this pretty good. It's a win-win here. Arjuna has to understand what he is going to get by doing these actions, by practicing karma yoga. Arjuna needs to understand this, so Krishna is laying it out.

Verse 41 – “You should have a clear understanding about the nature of liberation. Those who lack discrimination entertain many erroneous notions. Full of desire and believing there is nothing better, non-discriminating people engross themselves in rituals for the purpose of gaining pleasure or power or heaven. They utter flowery words concerning various practices that are meant to make them happy. Because those seeking power and pleasure are easily led astray by the promises of ritual activities, discrimination does not take place.”

“You should have a clear understanding about the nature of liberation.”

Now we are back to the topic of knowledge and experience. And what do we say is a clear understanding about the nature of liberation? Liberation is discrimination of the self from the objects appearing in it. It is knowing the difference between those two. It's not gaining some particular type of state or experience. It is the knowledge that, “I am already whole and complete. I already have what I want. Not only do I have what I want, I am what I want.” Isn't that weird? “I am what I want.” You don't have to want if you know you are what you want. In other words, knowledge of yourself satisfies all your wants.

And all of your fears are about what? Not getting what you want. You are not emotional because your mom and dad abused you or neglected you. You are emotional because you are not getting what you want. That is all. It's not complicated. It does not go way back and you don't have to go to a psychologist and dig up all the reasons for this and that and understand deeply why you are so unhappy and frustrated. No. You are just not getting what you want. When you don't get what you want you get angry and you get depressed. It's *rajas* and *tamas*. So remember, you are what you are looking for, and you are always free.

And freedom means what? Knowing the difference between yourself and objects and not chasing some spiritual object outside. This is what happens to all of us. We get fed up with our worldly lives and then we think, “Oh, there is this thing. We could get spiritual. We could go for it there.” You could chase that object, the nirvana object, the *nirvikalpa samdhi* object, the epiphany object. You could go off to Machu Picchu and drink some *ayahuasca* and get to know your totem and la-de-da-de-

da. If so, you are not clear about liberation. Clarity with reference to liberation is that liberation is knowledge, not experience.

If your mind is disturbed and extroverted can the knowledge stick in that kind of mind? Can you understand and appreciate who you are? Can you live from that platform of fullness and completeness? You cannot. So you need karma yoga. It's a setup, a Vedanta setup. Krishna is setting Arjuna up.

“Those who lack discrimination entertain many erroneous notions.”

Just get on the internet if you want to see erroneous notions about liberation. You will hear them all. In Vedanta, we make it clear right from the beginning what enlightenment is so you have something to work with. If you are not clear about what enlightenment is, if you are told it is some vague, mystical thing that is going to happen when you do certain things or find the right guru, how are you going to know when you get it? People get the self all day long and they don't get it. In fact, you are the self all day long and what? You are still looking for something else. So you have funny ideas about what the self is.

People criticize us, criticize Vedanta people, because we criticize these wrong notions. But we do not criticize the people. We criticize the notions, the ideas. Spiritual people say you cannot do that. They think non-dual means you love everybody and it's all good and all roads lead to Rome. No. All roads do not lead to Rome. Only knowledge leads to Rome.

Only one thing will set you free and that is knowledge. Why? Because you are already free. You cannot be made free. You are not in bondage and you are not going to be set free. You are already free. This is a fact. And this fact you have to discover about yourself. And to discover that fact and appreciate that fact you need to do karma yoga because karma yoga will prepare you for understanding that fact.

“Full of desire and believing there is nothing better, non-discriminating people engross themselves in rituals...”

Here Krishna is talking about the *karmakandis*, the people who are following the *karmakanda* section of the Vedas. But we don't need to worry about that. It just means people who are doing rituals to help them in chasing objects. We have all these modern rituals like the ritual of the cellphone. My God, it's like the happiness is pouring through the phone and into their brain and they cannot let go.

There was this woman in the hotel a couple of days ago. She's got a big stroller and a little baby. It's a huge hotel and she is just walking aimlessly around talking on the phone. That is all she does. I go there and leave and come back twenty minutes later. She is still on the phone pushing her little kid in the stroller. It's unbelievable. So everybody has their little rituals that are making them happy. I have mine too.

“They utter flowery words concerning various practices that are meant to make them happy.”

Everybody talks up their little spiritual path. “What this can do for me, it can do for you! Come and join me here.”

Verse 45 – “The subject matter of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas is related to the three qualities. Realize yourself to be free from the three-fold qualities and from the sorrow that arises from contact with the pairs of opposites. Be ever established in *sattva*, free from the anxiety to acquire and protect. Be a master of yourself. For the one who knows the self, the Vedas are as much use as a small puddle when the land is flooded.”

“The subject matter of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas is related to the three qualities.”

Krishna is talking about the *karmakanda* section of the Vedas. The *karmakanda* section is that part of the Vedas which deals with how to get what you want in this world—*kama*, *artha* and *dharma*. It says that all that stuff is related to the three *gunas* or qualities: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. They are three energies, three qualities of experience that are programmed by *Isvara*. This whole field of objects is nothing but a field of energy. It is all one energetic field of awareness. And that energy is made up of these three qualities.

Sattva is clarity, purity, knowledge, truth, awareness goodness, happiness. The kind of energy when you are really clear, still, beautiful and pure and your mind is steady so you see everything and you feel satisfied in yourself is *sattva*. When that energy is operating, that is how you feel. But because this wheel, this *samsara* chakra is always changing, then your state of mind is going to change.

So *sattva* changes into what? Either *rajas* or *tamas*. And then you have another kind of experience. What kind of experience do you have when you are *rajasic*? Frustration, anger, pain. *Rajas* is called *vikshepa shakti*. It is a projecting power. It disturbs the mind. It is the mode of passion and desire. Passion or desire, by their very nature are suffering.

Don't tell the marketers that. According to them, you are meant to have passion. “Follow your passion! Obey your thirst!” Really wanting stuff is great they say but it's not true. Wanting stuff is painful. The very fact that you want something means you are in pain. You are in *rajas*. You are agitated to get what you want. You are constantly active because you are trying to relieve that pain, that sense of incompleteness. And then you go and go and go, working out your desires and getting, getting, getting.

Then after a while you start getting worn down. You get really tired. That is called *tamas*. You get sleepy and dull and depressed. And you don't feel like doing anything. And then you go and drink some alcohol and eat a big meal and you go to sleep to satisfy that *tamas*. You want to get away from the *rajas*, the painful cravings and all those actions.

Then maybe you wake up in the morning and you are a little *sattvic* again. “Oh, I feel pretty good today. Life's pretty nice.” Until what? Until the *rajas* comes up or the *tamas* comes up. So we are talking our experience now, the quality or texture of our experience. And Krishna says what we are supposed to do.

“Realize yourself to be free from the three-fold qualities...”

It doesn't feel like you are free from those three-fold qualities, does it? I'll tell you I did not feel like I was free from those qualities when I woke up after the open-heart surgery. Well, I was because I know I am the self. But speaking as James, that was the worst day of my life. I really wanted to die. Life wouldn't give me death. I told *Bhagavan*, "Take me now. Jesus Christ this is awful!" Talk about depression. It wasn't even psychological depression. It was like pure, unadulterated nothingness. *Tamas*. Just heavy, heavy, heavy like a huge weight on my soul just pressing down, down, down. It wasn't a psychological feeling. It was this heavy-duty, awful feeling. It lasted about a day and then it lifted off. Then a little *sattva* appeared, then a little *rajas* and gradually the energy improved.

So Krishna is saying what we are going to do. It's just an introduction to this topic of the *gunas*. You will get the whole picture later on. Toward the end, the Gita analyzes almost everything that you do in light of these three qualities. How do you transform these qualities? By practicing karma yoga and dharma yoga. You will see how that works.

So what is it that is free from these qualities? Awareness. That is all. When I was experiencing that intense *tamas*, I was present as awareness observing it. That is why I did not panic. I knew it wasn't me. It was an object and I was the one watching it. I knew it couldn't be me and I just kept my attention on the self. And everything was fine. I knew the feeling would eventually change so I just enjoyed myself sitting there feeling miserable. There was nothing I could do. I did not create that situation. I had no power over it. I just knew it wasn't me. It was an object known to me.

This is a hard one to get, but it is a fundamental idea in Vedanta: If you know an object, you cannot be the object you know. Experience itself is an object so you can't be what you experience. This means that although the *gunas* affect your experience, they don't affect you, awareness. The *gunas* affect everything in *Maya*. *Maya* is nothing but those three energies playing out constantly causing all these different active-ties and actions to happen. But the *gunas* don't touch the self. It is *trigunatitha*, which means "beyond experience." Think about it. Is whatever you are experiencing known to you? Yes, it is. Only because it is known to you can you say, "I am depressed. I am angry. I am sad. I am happy." So if your experience is known to you, can you be your experience? No. You cannot be it. It's an object. You are the one who knows it so you are always free and separate from it. Owing to ignorance, you may identify with that experience and say "I am *tamasic* or I am *sattvic* or I am *rajasic*." But in fact the "I" never joins with the *guna*. It always remains a non-experiencing witness of the *gunas*.

Krishna is telling Arjuna: Realize yourself to be free from your experience. Arjuna is experiencing intense emotional pain. That is *rajas*. Arjuna is *rajasic*. That is why he is the top general and a big warrior. He is like a super-fit athlete. He's designed to make war. It's built into him. He is going to run the whole army and he is going to have to kill a bunch of guys on the other side. But Arjuna is not capable of understanding that he is beyond the whole situation. He is not looking at it from the self's point of view. Arjuna is identified with *rajas* so he is identified with the doer of the action and therefore, he is suffering because it's an action that he does not want to do.

"...and from the sorrow that arises from contact with the pairs of opposites."

Whenever you are enjoying yourself, there is pain because you know it's going to end. Whenever you are having fun and really feeling good, you want to prolong that feeling. But you cannot, so it's painful. "Why am I doing this? It's just going to be over." And then, when it's over, you want it back. That is the pair of opposites. *Maya* has us by the 'you know whats.' And we are constantly suffering and enjoying according to what happens to us. We don't see ourselves as free of what is happening.

"Be a master of yourself. For the one who knows the self, the Vedas are as much use as a small puddle when the land is flooded."

If you have a flood everywhere, what use is one small puddle? It's worth nothing. This means that when you know the self, what use is doing these stupid little rituals? And what does that mean to say you know the self? It is when you really understand that you are whole and complete and full.

Look now and try to find what is missing. Can you find anything that is missing in you? You cannot. There is nothing missing. You are fine. Everything is fine. It's perfect. But owing to lack of discrimination you believe that something is missing and you do all these rituals to try and complete myself. But self-knowledge totally satisfies your thirst. There is an infinite ocean of satisfaction waiting there when you have self-knowledge.

James: How are we doing?

Student: Well, that was about an hour?

James: Well, let's do a little bit more. Is that okay? Is everybody all right?

Everyone: Yes!

James: Well, I don't want to overload you. Everyone seems to be hanging in there so alright. But I have to get out by 8:30. So it's your duty to tell me when it's 8:30 and to stop or you are going to hear from my wife. (Laughter) Well, I will hear from her because I am not looking after myself. Well I am, because you are myself. (Laughter)

Yeah, you are myself. I don't see any difference. And she's just looking after herself through me. There is just one of us here. Some different bodies but that is all. That is why you can hear this. Because there is just one of us. It's not different for each of us. "Oh for you I've got to tell you about yourself. And for you, I've got to tell you about yourself. And for him, I need to tell him about his self." No. There is just one message for everybody. One size fits all here because there is only one self. So when you hear this knowledge of the self, the self awakens and rejoices. It's happy. You resonate with the truth. You feel good. You feel great. You feel satisfied just hearing this knowledge.

This teaching is great. I have been doing this for 45 years and I still love it. I see Krishna and Arjuna talking to each other and I remember when that happened to me with my guru—when I was Arjuna and he was Krishna. I remember that communication, that satisfaction and joy that came from communicating about this most important topic.

What is more important than this? What is more important than you? Nothing. It's for your sake that you do everything and that means what? That you love yourself more than anything. It means that the self, you, are the highest value. There is no value higher than you. You are what gives value to everything. None of this stuff, none of these objects adds to you. None of it validates you. None of it improves you. None of it fixes you.

When you look at *samsara* from this point of view, you make *samsara* beautiful. You are the light reflected on the objects making those objects beautiful. So you are the source of this whole thing.

First, Krishna said that mindlessly doing actions isn't going to solve the problem. Then he said that you cannot lose by doing karma yoga and that there are no bad results. And so now he starts explaining what he meant by those statements.

Verse 47 – “You can choose which actions you wish to perform but you have no control over the results. Don't think of yourself as the author of the results of your actions and don't be attached to inaction. Remain steadfast in yoga and act without attachment to the results. Remain the same in success and failure alike. This steadiness of mind is called yoga.”

“You can choose which actions you wish to perform...”

If you say there is no free will you are right, but only when you are looking at the situation from *Isvara's* point of view. But we are not looking at it from *Isvara's* point of view right now. We are looking at it from the *jiva's* point of view, from Arjuna's point of view.

If there were no free will, we would not have a scripture. What would you have a scripture for if there were no free will? There is no scripture for cats or dogs. Why? Because there is no free will for cats or dogs. Cats and dogs are programs operating out of a set of knowledge contained in the macrocosmic mind, *Isvara*. They don't have any choice. They just blindly follow their program, their instincts.

But human beings have an additional factor aside from the mind. The Subtle Body in humans is rather complex. Animals and plants have a Subtle Body but it is very rudimentary. They have fear and desire but no intellect, although in certain species, it looks like there is intellect evolving. It looks like, by association with humans, that they are developing the ability to think.

But they are still not self-reflective. A human being is self-reflective. In other words, a human being has a faculty of choice. Assuming you want to live, you have to eat. But within the whole world of food you can choose to eat an apple or an orange. You have that choice. And what Krishna is saying here is that because you have this faculty of choice, you can choose to practice karma yoga or not. You can choose to go for *moksha* or not. The availability of *moksha* is there all the time. Even when you tell somebody about it, they can choose to pursue it or not. That is why Krishna says that you can choose which actions you perform. This is the good news. But here comes the bad news. Vedanta is great because it gives you the good news and the bad news side-by-side unemotionally.

“...but you have no control over the results.”

This is the whole point. All of your problems are associated with not getting what you want. You are emotional because you are not getting what you want. If you are not getting love or money or power or whatever it is you are seeking you feel emotional, depressed, or angry. So this leaves you depending on the results of your actions for happiness.

Krishna says there are no wasted efforts in this yoga but in this world there is plenty of wasted effort. I don't know how much effort I've wasted in my life! Why didn't I get what I wanted? Because I did not read *The Secret*. (Laughter) With *The Secret* they are trying to tell you that you can fiddle some tricky little business, some tricky spiritual business—love, attraction, they gussy it all up—and you can actually get what you want. You can magnetize things. You can attract things. You can make things come to you that you want if you know *The Secret*.

But Vedanta says what? Wrong. You are not in control of the results. Why aren't you in control of the results? Because *Ishvara* is in control. What does it mean to say *Ishvara* is in control of the results? *Ishvara* is the whole field of action and results. *Ishvara* or *Maya*, creates the whole field of action. It creates all the rules. It's a lawful universe. There are 25 cosmic principles and they are called *tattvas*. There is the law of karma and the law of dharma. There are psychological laws, physical laws and moral laws. Everything here is a field of laws. It's impersonal.

And here I am. One little *jiva* person, little Ramji. Little Ramji wants this and he wants that. So he does an action. What happens to the action when I do an action? Where does it go? Does the action stay with me or does the action enter the field? It enters the field. When you do an action, you release the action. You put the energy into the field so you have surrendered the result already.

If you knew that from the minute you completed the action that you are no longer in charge, then you would take it easy, wouldn't you? But you don't take it easy. You want to keep fiddling things so that the result you want comes back. But it's too late. You already put the action in motion. And every action you do is going to have a result.

The result of the action that comes to you is what *Ishvara* adds. In other words, what the field adds to the action, is the result. The actions you do bounce through the field of objects, which a lot of the time are people because those are the objects that count for us. Whenever you say something or do something or want something from another person, it goes into that person's mind and interacts with all the factors in that person's mind. It's all considered with their mood and their relationships to other people. And those relationships to those other people are controlled by their relationships to other people and the emotions and feelings that are arising in their minds at the time.

This means that once you release an action you never know how it is going to come back. If you knew how it was going to come back, you would have everything that you ever wanted. You would be rich and famous and good looking. But you are not because you don't know how it's going to come back.

All of the emotional stuff comes from wondering, "Will I get my this and will I get my that?" Right now I am all worried about if I am going to get a marriage visa so I can marry my wife. Now it's up to the federal government. I am writing these big letters and I had to pay \$2,000 to an immigration lawyer. And I've got a whole box full of papers I haven't even filed yet. Once I do the lawyer is going to read them and then send them on. Then some visa person is going to read them and send them on to be

put in some database to be checked out. And then what? One day, for God's sake, maybe I can marry my wife. Or maybe not. How can I know? So am I just going to sit around and be anxious because I cannot bring her to the United States? Or am I just going to have to trust *Isvara* and accept whatever result comes to me? There really is no choice other than offering my actions to the field and seeing what the field—*Isvara* or *Bhagavan*—has to say about it. There's no reason to put myself in jeopardy emotionally trying to get a result. I just do my action.

And if I am consistently putting forth actions that are not producing results that I want, maybe there is a problem with my wants with reference to the field. Maybe I am not wanting the right thing for me or for the field and *Isvara* is just frustrating me. It happens all the time.

“Don't think of yourself as the author of the results of your actions and don't be attached to inaction.”

“Don't be attached to inaction” is an important statement because Arjuna is thinking, “I won't do anything. I'll just quit.” He thinks he will avoid action by not fighting. But he's wrong because renouncing the fight and just sitting there being emotional is an action. The point here is that there is no such thing as inaction. You are constantly compelled to respond and act at all times.

Krishna says to not think that you are the author of your actions. So who is the author of your actions? The *gunas*. *Isvara*. *Maya*. That is what is causing the actions here, not you. And that is what is delivering the results, not you. So, don't think you are the author of action or the giver of the results of the action because you are not.

More and more research comes in all the time showing that you have made up your mind what you are going to do before you know that you've made up your mind what you are going to do. In other words, you are just acting out an impulse that comes from a deeper level of your being and then you think that you decided to do it.

Me and my friend Dave were recently in Morocco getting into a taxi. And there was this guy sitting on a little stone wall. He comes up and tells us to get into the taxi even though we are already getting into the taxi. As we're closing the doors he's saying, “Okay, you can close the doors.” Then the taxi pulls off and he says, “Now you can go.” He's real satisfied with himself. He acts like he made the whole thing happen and he goes and sits back on the wall with a little smile on his face. He had nothing to do with it at all but he was thinking that he was making those actions happen.

You think you are doing things but you are not doing anything. The *vasanas*, the *gunas* are driving you. Did I think just now, “Okay, now I am going to say ‘these *vasanas*, these *gunas* are driving you?’” No, I did not think like that. I just said it. If I had to think about every action, I would be exhausted after five minutes. These actions are just flowing through you. They are flowing out of you. You are not causing them. You can see Arjuna's problem. He is owning the doer and the results but none of those things apply.

Student: So is it that we're choosing to do an action or we think we're choosing to do an action?

James: We think we're choosing to do an action. But if we don't understand that *Isvara* is the doer, then we think we're doing actions.

Student: So, if you are aware of your *vasanas* you can stop the whole process.

James: Yes, you can. You are free not to act if you are aware of your *vasanas*. Basically, only mature people and *sattvic* people can do this. Because usually if you are *rajasic* and *tamasic*, you don't have that clarity. There is so much pressure from your *vasanas* you just keep acting them out unconsciously. But if you've got a degree of *sattva*, if your mind is self-reflecting and clear and still, then as that *vasana* comes up, you can reflect upon it and you can decide whether it's an intelligent action, whether you want to do that action and whether it's going to benefit you or not.

You can gain success in the world. Why? Because this is a purposeful, lawful universe. When you act with knowledge of and in harmony with the laws that are operating here then it's likely that you will get what you want. When you serve the field and the total in a particular way, you will get what you want. And you can gain success and power through your actions that way. We are just saying that there is no inviolable connection between doing an action and getting a result. There is some unknown factor operating there which may permit you to get what you want or deny you what you want: *Isvara*.

I am making *Isvara* look like it's a big person that's deciding what kind of results to give out. But *Isvara* is an impersonal principle. It's just the field of action as well as the intelligence that causes everything in the field to operate in an amazingly creative, beautiful and complex way. And for everything to operate harmoniously, the needs of the total have to be taken into consideration. So the needs of the total are the criteria that determines the results that *Isvara* gives out.

Your actions are taking place in a field, which most of the time is people. Of course, there is the environment and so forth and so on. But basically most of our problems are with people. So if you don't take into account the needs of the people around you, then you are going to have problems. If you only want what you want without considering the wants, likes and dislikes of others, you are going to have a lot of conflict. Why? Because everything that you get comes through people. It comes from the outside. It comes from *Isvara*. Nothing you get comes from you. Yes, you do certain actions because awareness is shining on your *vasanas* and it forces you to act. But you are not the one that is creating the results unless you are one of those people who read *The Secret*, unless you are one of those wonderful, intelligent people. (Laughter)

Where is *The Secret* now? It'll be back with a vengeance in about another ten years. It's usually a twenty-year cycle. Everybody gets all excited. Then it does not work. Then it takes about twenty years for them to forget that it does not work. And then some genius comes up and rewrites the same old idea all over again. And everybody gets all excited and they go out and try to beat the system. But what Vedanta says is that you cannot beat the system. The only way you can beat the system is with karma yoga because with karma yoga no effort is wasted and there are no bad results.

So go for karma yoga baby! Because operating in *samsara* from the point of view of your desires and fears is fraught with pleasure and pain. Sometimes you get what you want and feel happy. Sometimes

you don't get what you want or you get what you don't want and you feel angry, depressed and emotional.

And do not try to drop out and avoid your damn duties like Arjuna is trying to do. He wants to run off to a little cave in Rishikesh, put on orange clothes, grow a big, long beard and meditate on the self. It's not going to work for him and it won't work for you either because if you run off to India with all those *vasanas* still in place then India will become a total misery. Will you be able to work out your stuff sitting in an ashram or in a cave in India? I don't think so. Will you be able to meditate on the self and be pleasant and blissful? No way. You will be tormented by your unfulfilled desires, your incomplete life. You can't take a vacation from your *vasanas*. There is no escape except karma yoga. Now, karma yoga leads to what? Knowledge. So karma yoga is not the goal but it is the means to the goal.

“Remain steadfast in yoga and act without attachment to the results. Remain the same in success and failure alike. This steadiness of mind is called yoga.”

If you want to increase the chances that your actions will fructify into the intended results, you need to make sure that your actions are in harmony with what the field is asking of you. You have to try and figure out what *Isvara* wants and see to it that *Isvara* gets satisfied. And you need to do your actions at the right time. Doing appropriate actions at the appropriate time is doing your best. And once you've done that you surrender the result to *Isvara*. By doing that, even when the results do not turn out the way you want, you get a steady mind.

Student: So that is why no effort is wasted?

James: Absolutely. The reason you want objects is for a steady mind but getting a particular object may or may not steady your mind. But every time you practice karma yoga you get a steady mind, even when you get an object that you don't want. So there are no bad results. Nothing is wasted. No matter what the results of your actions are, by practicing karma yoga your mind becomes steady, pure and still. So karma yoga is the smart thing to do.

Krishna tries to tell Arjuna that his identity is awareness but since his mind is too *rajasic* and disturbed, he doesn't understand. Arjuna needs karma yoga so Krishna is going to give him a secondary identity as a karma yogi. He'll soon say, "Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi," meaning, "Be a karma yogi." It's a temporary identity but it's going to put Arjuna in the ballpark. In other words, once his mind is clear and steady, then he will be able to understand what Krishna is talking about. Unless he does the karma yoga, he's not going to.

Okay, so we will start on Verse 49 tomorrow. I have managed to end right on time. I hope you will forgive me for not going on and on as I usually do, but I really have to take it easy with my energy because I am still healing. And I need to sleep well and so forth.

Lovely to meet you all. Thank you all for coming. I really enjoy tis. See you all tomorrow.

Students: Thank you James.

James: Don't thank me. Thank *Isvara*. I am not the doer! (Laughter)

Day Two - Session 1

Chapter 2: Verse 49 - 69

People don't want to think. They just want a formula: Do this, do that, believe this, act like this. But the problem is that there is no formula. Every second a new situation is presenting itself and you have to step up to that occasion and relate according to what the situation demands. That's the ego killer. That's how you get rid of your ego because the ego only wants to relate in one way from one platform—it's likes and dislikes, or in other words, what it wants and doesn't want.

It's good to keep the big picture logic in your mind as the teaching progresses so it's good to review what we've gone over previously. The situation is that Arjuna, the eternal spiritual seeker, finds himself in a situation that is not in harmony with his likes and dislikes. He does not want to kill his gurus, friends and relatives that are fighting for the opposing army. So Arjuna finds himself in an environment—the environment is *Isvara* or everything that is—that is in conflict with his desire and he gets emotional. He doesn't want to do what the situation requires.

This happens to people all the time. You don't want to do what you're supposed to do but you have a duty to respond to the environment. Why you have a duty to respond brings up the emotional, devotional and religious sides of karma yoga. So far we've explained the rational, secular side of karma yoga, which is that the results of your actions are not up to you. Instead, they are up to the field. There's nothing particularly emotional about it, that's just the way it is. But now we want to expand our understanding of karma yoga a little bit, sweeten it so that we incorporate and include our emotions. We understand intellectually what it is, but we want to add an emotional and a devotional component to karma yoga.

Now why are you required to respond? Why should you be happy to respond to whatever *Isvara*—your environment—is asking of you? Let's put it this way, does anybody want to die? No hands go up. Why doesn't everybody say, "Yeah I want to die"? Because you want to live. Why do you want to live? Because life is beautiful. To be here in this amazing creation, with the faculties of mind, intellect, ego and the senses to enjoy and act creatively within it is a great pleasure.

Now, did you give that pleasure to yourself? Did you give yourself the gift of life? Did you create this situation? No you didn't. It was gifted to you. And that gift is the most valuable gift that you have. Who gave you that gift? Not the self. There's no life for the self. *Isvara*—the self associated with *Maya*—gave it to you. And when somebody gives you something valuable, don't you feel naturally inclined to give them something in return? If you get invited to dinner then you think in your mind, "Well I'll invite my host to dinner next week or next month." It's just natural to respond in kind. So when *Bhagavan*—*Isvara*—has kindly blessed you with this life and this opportunity to be here and to work your stuff out and enjoy this creation, then shouldn't you be grateful? Shouldn't you feel inclined to give *Bhagavan* what it wants? Doesn't that make sense?

What kind of a gift can you give *Isvara*? The gift of your response, your action. That's all you've got

basically, the ability to respond. *Respond-ability*. You have the power to respond and you should respond with the understanding that the results of your my actions are not up to you. And you should respond with gratitude.

Remember we said karma yoga is freedom from bondage to action. So how is bondage, the wheel of desire and action built up? It's built up by desire, by the ego. When the ego acts in the spirit of "I want or I don't want," with its desires and fears driving it, *vasanas* are created. However, if you act with the understanding that the results are not up to you and in a spirit of gratitude, in other words if you act with the intention of adding value or making a contribution to the situation, the action will not produce a *vasana*. Because *vasanas* are produced by the motivation of fear and desire.

But a karma yogi isn't operating out of his or her fears or desires. A karma yogi is changing his or her motivation and attitude when he or she acts. And actions done in that karma yoga spirit don't produce more *vasanas*. In fact the actions which are required of you, which are generated by your *vasanas*, exhaust when you take up this attitude and they're not replaced. The attitude neutralizes the *vasana*.

Every action becomes an opportunity to neutralize one of your *vasanas*. That's why there are no bad results. Krishna says there are no unsuitable results here because whatever you do in that spirit gives a good result. "Good result" means less *vasana* pressure. Your *vasanas*, or your karma, they are a kind of pressure that you feel. Everybody feels this to some degree, a compulsion or need to act. It's that need to act that's agitating your mind and preventing you from assimilating knowledge. So if you have that karma yoga attitude, every action becomes a *vasana* exhauster, a *vasana* remover, rather than a *vasana* increaser or a *vasana* reinforcer.

Not all *vasanas* are bad. There are good *vasanas* and bad *vasanas*. We're going to see this shortly in the verse where Krishna gives another definition of yoga, which he considers to be discretion in action. Discretion in action means you can refuse to act out *vasanas* that are inimical to you and you can increase *vasanas* that are helpful.

For instance, you can develop a *vasana* for karma yoga. Hopefully you do. And I hope you get a good *vasana* for inquiry, for Vedanta, because those *vasanas* will eat up all the negative *vasanas*. In other words if you're practicing karma yoga and self-inquiry you're not out in the world lying and cheating and stealing and going for old number one, are you? So whatever those tendencies are, they become weakened as you do your yoga, as you do your practice.

There is this notion in the spiritual world that karma yoga is for active people and that bhakti yoga is for emotional people and *jnana* yoga is for intellectual people. It's a dumb idea. It goes back to Swami Vivekananda. He cooked this notion up as a concession to Western psychology. He had obviously read Freud, and understood the importance of Freud in terms of Western thinking and he was actually a Western oriented Indian. So he cooked up this idea that there are these three special yogas for the different kinds of people. Therefore if you're an intellectual, you just practice *jnana* yoga. If you're the emotional type, then you practice bhakti yoga, and karma yoga is for people who are active in the world. Does that make sense? No. It doesn't make sense because everybody performs actions, thinks and feels. So if there are three different yogas then you need to practice them all. Bhakti yoga is for the heart. Karma yoga exposes the doer. And *jnana* yoga is for the mind, the intellect.

So how do you get the bhakti into karma yoga? By simply understanding that your actions are only appropriate when they are motivated by love. So when you offer your actions—remember karma yoga means consecrating your actions—consecration becomes a dedication. You know that you want a calm mind and you know you want *moksha*. So when you act you offer your action in a spirit of love, sacrifice and service to *Isvara*. This gets your emotions involved in karma yoga which diverts them away from objects and converts them into devotion for *Isvara*. So karma yoga is bhakti yoga. It converts your emotions into devotion.

Normally you want objects outside in the world. But as a karma yogi, you don't want objects outside in the world. You want a calm mind. The object that you want—and it is an object—is a calm mind. Not for its own sake, though it's nice to have a calm, quiet mind, but because a calm mind is a means for *moksha*. You need to have that kind of contemplative mind in order to understand that you are free.

Before moving on to Verse 49, let's take a look another look at Verse 47.

“You can choose which actions you wish to perform but you have no control over the results.”

To reiterate: Don't think of yourself as the author of the results of your actions. Why? Because you know *Isvara* is the author of the results of actions. Also don't be attached to inaction. Don't think that you can do nothing. Later in the text there is a verse that says that a wise person is somebody who sees action in in-action and inaction in action. And it's the same idea here. Arjuna thinks the solution is not to do anything, but not doing anything is an action. Just try to not do. It's the hardest thing. In fact, there's no such thing as inaction in this world because awareness is shining on *Isvara*, the Causal Body, and those *vasanas* are dynamic. You're moving, you're active, from womb to tomb. You're busy and active, whether you like it or not.

So Arjuna can't wriggle out of this situation by saying, “I'm not going to do it. I'm not killing those people.” If he's not killing those people, fine. But he's still doing something. What is he doing? Not killing. The doer is now not killing. So the doer hasn't disappeared. Arjuna hasn't solved his problem because the problem is not action. The problem is that Arjuna thinks he's a doer. He hasn't understood that he's the self as Krishna explains.

The point is that action is not going to get rid of the doer, because the idea that you're a doer is born out of ignorance of your nature as awareness. So by doing or not doing ignorance is not removed because action is not opposed to ignorance. In fact, you're acting because of ignorance, because of the belief, “I am the doer.” That is what is motivating your actions.

Verse 49 – “Desire prompted action is inferior to action performed with the karma yoga attitude. Take refuge in this attitude. Those who perform action only for the desired result are misers.”

“Desire prompted action is inferior to action performed with the karma yoga attitude.”

Now, it's a little tricky here because you're not doing karma yoga attitude without desire, are you? Desire is there but it's not desire for objects, for the unreal. It's desire for the real. So there is a

motivation. There is a desire behind it, but this desire will lead you to a state free of desire.

“Take refuge in this attitude.”

In other words, make this the way that you think about action, about your life, about doing. This whole spiritual thing is just an attitude adjustment. So we can make it real technical and Vedantic and all that but the fact is that it's just changing your attitude. Getting a positive attitude and making a contribution. In every situation you're presented with an opportunity to either subtract value or add value. The ego is always subtracting value from a situation because it's trying to get something for itself.

A karma yogi wants to add value to the situation. But he wants something for himself too. What? He wants to get rid of those *vasanas* that are disturbing him. Now you don't need to get rid of all your *vasanas*. But there is a notion in the spiritual world—and my guru was guilty of perpetuating this notion—called the *vasana shaya* theory of enlightenment. He didn't really believe it but he used this idea unskillfully and caused many people to think that you're not going to get enlightened until you're completely *vasana* free. This is the Buddhist or the yoga notion of *nirvikalpa samdhi* or nirvana. *Vana* means a desire or flame. So you're going to become desireless. It's called *vasana shaya*. *Shaya* means eradication of the *vasanas*. So the idea is that as long as you have a *vasana*, you're not enlightened.

To get rid of your *vasanas* the Buddhists have an eightfold path. And yoga has *ashtanga* yoga. Buddhism and yoga are basically the same. *Ashtanga* yoga is the yoga of eight limbs or steps or stages: *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samdhi*. You do all these actions in the right way, in the right spirit and at the end, whenever that is, you're free. I don't know why people never think twice about it. They think they're just going to get rid of all these *vasanas*. At the end all your *vasanas* are going to be gone and you're going to be nirvana or *nirvikalpa*. In other words you are going to be free of desire, and you are going to enter that permanent state of desirelessness. That's the fantasy.

If you've been into yoga, you know that's their idea. It's a good way to build a following and to get rich because it's never going to happen. You're never going to get free that way. You don't need to be free of all of your *vasanas*. You only need to be free of those *vasanas* which create disturbance in your mind, make you emotional and prevent you from discriminating. That's all. You just clean up the messy stuff. The good stuff is fine. The good stuff is not causing your mind to be disturbed. You can still easily discriminate when your mind is reasonably calm.

“Desire prompted action is inferior to action performed with the karma yoga attitude. Take refuge in this attitude.”

This is aimed at the ego, Mr. Egoji, that little part of yourself that is so sweet and so dear to you.

“Those who perform action only for the desired result are misers.”

Misers are those that are just trying to keep it all to themselves. You can easily see this problem in Western societies that are completely desire oriented. It's all about extracting value, about getting

what we want from a situation: the big house, the kids and the money. We keep trying to extract. Look at the resources and how we keep extracting the resources from the planet and not putting them back. In fact we're putting crap back. We're polluting. We're putting back detrimental value because of this attitude, and everybody has it. Let's be honest. Everybody has this, "I want, I don't want, I need" attitude to some degree and it has to be worked on. To work on it just means to be aware of it and to understand that when you act from that particular kind of motivation you're not helping yourself.

Verse 50 – "The karma yoga attitude causes steadiness of mind and frees one of good and bad karma in this world. Therefore, commit yourself to karma yoga. Karma yoga is discretion in action. With the karma yoga attitude the wise, no longer concerned with the results of their actions, and free from the bondage of rebirth, accomplish the result that is free from limitation."

"The karma yoga attitude causes steadiness of mind and frees one of good and bad karma in this world."

Maybe you think, "But I don't want to be freed of *good* karma." Oh yes you do! If you have a really good life, if you have good karma, you get as attached and addicted to that as you can to anything else, and you'll never grow beyond it. You'll get stuck in *sattva*, stuck in pleasure. And you'll develop a huge sense of specialness and entitlement. You'll think you are so wonderful because you're so successful. You have such good karma. You've got beautiful people in your life and money in the bank and you're popular and everything is just lovely. So God must love you extra special because God has given you all that stuff. And the poor schmucks who don't have anything, that means that God doesn't love them at all. Do you know that idea? There's no virtue there. So we don't want good karma and don't want bad karma. We want *Bhagavan*, and *Bhagavan* is beyond good and bad karma. So what we want is to understand who we are.

"Therefore, commit yourself to karma yoga. Karma yoga is discretion in action."

Now there are people that don't understand what this means because they say, "Well, what about *Isvara*? If *Isvara* is the doer, the author of the result of action and the giver of the fruits of the action, then I've got no discretion, do I? I have no choice, do I? Even when I think it's my choice, it's already been determined by *Isvara*." This is the topic of determinism versus free will. I get these questions all the time. I don't know how many satsangs on the website are about this. It's very tricky to understand because the intellect wants an either/or explanation, that either you have free will or you don't. But the question of free will and determinism just depends upon the point of view from which we are looking at reality. From *Isvara's* point of view, there is no choice. You are controlled, regulated and governed by *Isvara*. But from *jiva's* point of view, you have free will, you have "discretion in action." However, you still need to take *Isvara* into account and use that free will appropriately.

Isvara wants Arjuna to pick up his bow and fight but Arjuna doesn't want to do it. Arjuna is using his discretion in action, his free will, inappropriately. But he has a good *sattvic* reason right? He is a kind and com-passionate person. See the irony of the situation? You really want to admire Arjuna, don't you? Vyasa has created this tension in the situation because it's hard to see Arjuna as a jerk. He comes off looking like a saint because he doesn't want to kill anybody. But the whole society will crash if Duryodhana wins. It would be like Hitler winning World War II. So the situation is bigger than Arjuna's personal preferences. It's a civil war involving thousands of people and everyone is just a

pawn in the total mind that created this conflict. That total mind is called *Ishvara*.

So Krishna is saying that you do have a choice with reference to what you do, but you need to use discretion. Karma yoga means to use your choice wisely: choose to do what's appropriate in each situation. I call that—and I made this term up—dharma yoga. Dharma yoga means following dharma in every situation. Never mind anything else. Firstly, follow *svadharma* and act in harmony with your nature, whatever that is. Secondly, see to it that you don't break any of the rules. In other words you don't contravene or fight against *Ishvara*, because *Ishvara* is the rules. So dharma yoga involves knowledge of your own relative nature. In Arjuna's case that's being a warrior; that his *svadharma*. You also have to have knowledge of the rules of the field in which you are acting.

Those rules can be broken into two categories: *Samanya* dharma and *vishesh* dharma. *Samanya* dharma is universal values, the primary and most basic one being non-injury. What is non-injury based upon? The fact that we're all one. Everybody has an expectation of non-injury, honesty, truthfulness, non-stealing, and so forth. Those are universal values. Even the bad guys understand those values. A thief for example, hides what he steals. Even though he's stolen goods from someone else, he doesn't want the goods stolen from him. *Samanya* dharma, universal values, is basically ideals.

On the ground, as they say, little old you living your little old life, is presented with situations all the time that involve values. These situational values are called *vishesh* dharma. They are how to behave ethically and morally in a given situation. It's difficult because the same situation may require a different response at a different time. So every time something comes up you have to interpret *samanya* dharma—the universal values—in terms of the specific situation that's presenting itself to you at that time. So dharma yoga involves taking a fearless moral inventory in order to determine what your values are and trying to respond according to *samanya* dharma in every situation.

If you do that, your *vasanas* aren't going to matter. What's going to matter is living a righteous life, a dharmic life. One of the greatest Puranas—I even like it better than the Mahabharata which contains the Bhagavad Gita—is the story of Rama called the Ramayana. Rama is a really cool guy. Everybody likes him. He's friendly and kind, a good guy all around, yet everything in life goes wrong for him. Whatever he wants doesn't work out. In fact, *Ishvara* just presents him with a whole series of miserable situations.

For instance, when he's about to be crowned king, his stepmother calls in a favor to his father that forced his father to give the throne to her son instead of Rama. And to make things worse, she wanted Rama exiled to the forest. Rama thought everything was just fine, and as he was on his way to the coronation, someone came up to him and said, "Rama, do you realize that Bharata, your step brother, is taking the throne and that you've been exiled to the forest? That's what your father said." The poet says in regard to Rama, "His expression didn't change." Rama just said, "It's the duty of the son to follow the wishes of the father," and off he went. In every situation, irrespective of what he wanted, Rama did what was right. That was his *sadhana*. That was his dharma yoga. Rama was called a *dharmaraja*, a king of dharma. It meant that he always acted according to dharma. You can imagine what that does for your self-esteem. If you follow dharma it makes you feel really good about yourself.

Student: It seems that the universal values are misunderstood and get reformulated by the ego. And when you're talking to someone and you say compassionately, "Well perhaps your ego has manipulated those universal values," there seems to be a closed door.

James: Do you know what Krishna says about that? He says, "Let not the wise unsettle the minds of the ignorant." Forget it. They're just going to shut down and walk away. Don't try to fix them or correct them or tell them off. All you're going to do is make an enemy. You may be right and they may be wrong but you should value happiness over being right. Moralistic people who believe they are an authority on dharma think the exact opposite. They'd rather be right than happy and they suffer for it.

The problem is that determining dharma is a tricky thing. What's right in one situation may be wrong in another situation, so you can't determine the value of an action simply by the action itself. For example, a guy comes out of a bar at midnight. A man with a knife stabs him in the belly, kills him and takes his wallet. In another situation, a guy has appendicitis. He goes to the hospital, a doctor sticks a knife in his belly while operating and he dies. Both the robber and the doctor kill a man by sticking a knife in his belly. But the doctor is lauded for doing a *dharmic* action and he gets *punya* karma while the robber is reviled for doing an *adharmic* action and he gets *papa* karma.

Punya and *papa* are the results of your actions. If you do actions that are in harmony with dharma, you're going to get a store of *punya*. You're going to have good karma. You're going to be lucky. You see people who appear to be lucky but they're not lucky; good karma is earned. They have followed dharma carefully and the *punya* that is gathered creates pleasant situations for them all of the time. People who violate dharma, they are called *papis*, sinners. These are people who violate dharma and they have a store of bad karma. You can see how complex this topic is getting here.

Student: If someone hasn't done enough preparatory yogic practice or karma yoga to quiet their mind, how do they really know what the *dharmic* route is in any situation?

James: You experiment or you just follow scripture. We said the Bhagavad Gita is a dharma *shastra* and a *moksha shastra* and that the whole Vedic system—called *sanatana dharma*—is composed of those two aspects: dharma (karma) and *moksha* (knowledge).

The Vedas are four in number and they're big, voluminous works which primarily deal with karma and dharma. They're called dharma *shastras*, scriptures about how to act in this world. So if you have a doubt about how to respond, read the scripture. Now, some people are so dull and insensitive that they don't know what's right and what's wrong, so scripture is good for those people. But in our case we don't really need to read the scripture to find out what's right because we're *sattvic* people, evidenced by the fact that we are pursuing knowledge. Our predominant *guna* is *sattva*. That's why we're pursuing Vedanta.

Sattvic people can feel what's right in a certain situation because dharma is imprinted in the self. Dharma is the nature of the self. So when your mind is *sattvic*, you understand which actions are appropriate in a given situation naturally. You don't really have to think, "Well should I do this or should I do that?" It's just natural to respond in a *dharmic* way.

If you're consciously practicing dharma yoga you're interested in adding value. If you're interested in

adding value you're going to create good karma. Not that you're going for the good karma but when you add value to the situation all the people around you add value back to you.

I have a pretty good life. It's not by magic that I'm sitting here having a good life, going around teaching. I add a lot of value to the situation. I give all day long. The secret is that you do really well when you give it all away. It's not that you add value to the situation with the intention of getting something back. But when you do act in that way you enhance *Ishvara* and *Ishvara* takes care of you.

The self, Krishna, is going to say later in the text, "With a heart that knows no otherness, keep your mind on me alone and I will take care of your getting and keeping."

As a karma yogi you always have your mind on *Ishvara* in the form of what is happening. And as a karma yogi you are adding value to every situation, which means *Ishvara* is under obligation to look after you. It's like a contract. When you're practicing karma yoga, as Krishna earlier, "Even a little karma yoga protects one from great fear." Why? Because you know that *Ishvara* has your back. When you serve *Ishvara*, *Ishvara* serves you. So, you don't need to worry. Just keep giving, giving, giving and you'll keep getting, getting, getting. There's a beautiful saying by the poet Robert Frost: "The heart that gives, gathers." You don't give to gather, you just give because it's your nature to give. But there is a benefit. The Dalai Lama said that. He said, "We're not fools. It looks like we're just giving everything away, taking care of everybody else, but actually, we know that we're taken care of too."

"With the karma yoga attitude the wise, no longer concerned with the results of their actions and free from the bondage of rebirth..."

We have to deal with this rebirth issue. This is a big one in the Vedic and Buddhist spiritual worlds. When I say "we" it's the royal "we", meaning the Vedantic tradition. Even though in our texts we talk about rebirth as if reincarnation was real, it's better for us to think of rebirth as the identification with a particular *vasana*. So think of it in a psychological way.

Are you really worried about what you're going to be in the next life? Even if there is a next life, nobody's worried about it because you're too busy worrying about this life. I don't care what I'm going to be in five years or ten years or twenty years. I didn't go under the knife and get new tubes because I was worried about my next life. I did it because I wanted to live in this life and enjoy this life. I thought maybe *Ishvara* would bless me and let me continue on here.

So we're looking at rebirth slightly differently which means that when a *vasana*—a desire or fear—comes up, you don't have to identify with it. You're not required to act it out. If you identify with it, and feel that you need to act it out, we call that birth because you're born into the circumstance or the situation that is going to unfold from your identification with that impulse. And you have to suffer and enjoy the consequences until either that impulse dies or until you die to that impulse.

You can, at any time, right in the middle of any *vasana*, pull your attention away from it and that *vasana* will drop dead on the spot. If you find yourself in the middle of something then you can step back and just die to it. So we're going to look at birth and death from this point of view. Our whole idea is to purify our mind. This is accomplished with knowledge.

Karma yoga is also knowledge. It's the same as *jnana* yoga. You really have no choice about karma yoga. It looks like you do but if you understand the knowledge behind karma yoga you will have that attitude naturally. If you don't understand the reasons, then it will be difficult to take up that attitude. Once you understand the logic, it's natural to entertain that karma yoga view, in other words to operate from that particular type of knowledge.

"...(they) accomplish the result that is free from limitation."

Since no result is free of limitation in *Maya*, what is the word "result" referring to? The self. So the meaning here is that through approaching *Isvara*—your environment—with the karma yoga attitude, you end up with a mind that is prepared for self-knowledge, *moksha*.

Student: How does it look to die to that impulse (to act out a *vasana*)?

James: It just doesn't mean anything to you anymore. You realize right in the middle of doing something that it's stupid, and you don't even have to complete it. Have you ever been in a situation when you've caught yourself right in the middle of something and you just stopped? You saw how stupid it was and you didn't want to continue to collect that result anymore so you just stepped away? *Vasanas* only function as long as awareness is shining on them. So when you take your awareness off those *vasanas*, they can't function any more. They will play out, but they won't bind you. This is how knowledge neutralizes your *vasanas*.

Krishna will say later on that there is no purifier like knowledge. "Knowledge," with reference to this particular topic, means that you understand that whatever results you're going to get in *samsara* are limited because *samsara* is a zero sum game. They can't satisfy you permanently. And you don't want temporary satisfaction because that means you've got temporary dissatisfaction. And dissatisfaction you definitely don't want. So you shouldn't want temporary satisfaction or temporary dissatisfaction. You don't want either one, good karma or bad karma. You shouldn't want either one of those things.

Verse 52 – "When your intellect is no longer deluded you will become dispassionate concerning what has happened and what will happen. When your mind is no longer concerned with the results it remains steady and becomes established in the self. This leads to self-knowledge."

"When your intellect is no longer deluded you will become dispassionate..."

Assuming that you're practicing karma yoga, you'll become dispassionate. In other words what happens won't bother you. That's all. If right now, what happens in your life doesn't bother you, it means you're already dispassionate. It means you are a *sannyasi* and you don't have to worry about karma yoga.

But if you are worried about what's happening in your life and what's going to happen, or if you are regretting the past, then you need to gain dispassion. Karma yoga will develop your dispassion. We said earlier that the basic qualification for *moksha* is dispassion. It comes from a clear, honest evaluation of the limitation that is inherent in life. Life is limited. All of the objects are limited. There's

nothing bad about it. There's nothing good about it. Whatever actions you do are limited and the results are limited. So you should want the result that's free from limitation. In other words, you should want *moksha*.

“When your mind is no longer concerned with the results, it remains steady and becomes established in the self. This leads to self-knowledge.”

This means that you will be thinking about the self all of the time. It will become your obsession. If you want this to work, you need to become obsessed. We call that *mumukshutva*, a burning desire to be free. It's another important qualification.

Now that Arjuna has heard this teaching about karma yoga, he's got a question. As I said earlier, this text is a dialogue. It's presented that way because that's how you learn. You put up your question against the teaching and you adjust your views based upon what you hear.

Verse 54 - Arjuna said, “Oh Krishna, will you please describe a person of steady wisdom, one whose mind is not disturbed by anything and abides in the self? How do such people interact with the world?”

Actually the verses says, “How do they walk, how do they talk, how do they eat, how do they sleep.” It's an important issue because in the spiritual world, there's this idea that enlightened people are really special and really different and their feet really don't touch the ground. Do you know the Babaji myth? I get people all the time writing in to ask, “What about this Babaji guy?” He's like 190 years old and he flies around and appears here and then he appears there and he appears in several places at once.”

So Arjuna wants to know. “This is great knowledge that you are talking about but I want to know how it looks in the world every day.” He's a practical guy. He wants to know what this knowledge is going to do for him on a daily basis. Krishna doesn't really answer the question as Arjuna has formulated it because you can't necessarily tell what a person is by their actions. Actions may or may not be a guide to what they think and feel and what they know.

We had Swami Sudhananda in our tradition. It was really a tough call because he was considered to be quite a good teacher and he had lots of disciples. People praised him very highly. He seemed to know who he was very well and other people around him seemed to gain the knowledge of who they were. But then he got caught with his dhoti down. So what did he know? Did the behavior negate his knowledge? It's a tricky area.

We have to explore this issue of the relationship between action or behavior and self-knowledge. You have all sorts of people saying that they are enlightened who are rooting around in the “stinking cesspool of sensuality” as my guru Swami Chinmayananda called it. He used to say that with a lot of disgust and contempt. In other words, people are acting like pigs in the world, rooting around after money and sex and all that, all the while saying, “I'm enlightened. I know who I am. I'm beyond all this.” So we have to explore this idea a bit.

If you think that you are enlightened, fair enough, but do the following qualities describe you? I don't

know. I only know if it applies to me. You only know if it applies to you. So this is a checklist for you.

Verse 55 - Krishna replied, "When a person gives up desires as they appear in the mind, Arjuna, and remains happy only in his or her self, he or she is a discriminating person. The one who is unaffected by adversity, who doesn't yearn for pleasure and is free from longing, fear and anger, is one of steady wisdom. A discriminating person is unattached to the outcome of all situations and does not rejoice when the circumstances are pleasant. Nor is he or she uncomfortable in unpleasant situations. And if a person is able to withdraw his or her sense organs from the sense objects like a turtle withdraws its limbs, his or her knowledge is steady."

"When a person gives up desires as they appear in the mind, Arjuna, and remains happy only in his or her self, he or she is a discriminating person."

Now it does not mean that he must give up those desires. It just means that the desires have been rendered non-binding. He or she can act or not act on a particular desire or fear that appears. "Desires" means fears also. A fear is just a negative desire and a desire is just a positive fear. They are two sides of the same coin. Some people are fear oriented. They are negative. Others are desire oriented. They are positive. But whether you are running away from things and trying to hide from things or you are engaging things, trying to gain things, it's the same business.

As you can see, the Bhagavad Gita isn't saying that enlightened people don't have desires. In fact, later in the text Krishna is going to say, "I'm the desire that's not opposed to dharma." So these people have desires in their minds. There is no doubt about it. The desires appear because *Ishvara* operates through the enlightened people as well as the unenlightened people. *Ishvara* is just is the total field of fear and desire and it operates through everybody.

Frankly, *Ishvara* doesn't care if you are enlightened. *Ishvara* is just *Ishvara* and it delivers the appropriate karma. So fears and desires will be there for enlightened people but the question is, "How do they relate to the fears and desires?" They can let them go. An enlightened person can walk away from something and not feel really bad like they've lost something.

You can say no to *Ishvara*. "What? But isn't *Ishvara* all-powerful?" No. You are all-powerful. Knowledge is all- powerful. If *Ishvara* has you running here and there, doing this and that, you can also say no to *Ishvara* and you don't have to worry about it because *Ishvara* will get someone else to do what it wants. Since *Ishvara* is not a person, it's not going to be offended. God isn't going to punish you because you didn't do what God wanted you to do. Enlightened people know that. They know they are beyond *Ishvara*, because they are awareness and awareness is beyond *Maya*.

"The one who is unaffected by adversity..."

There's no bad stuff. People of steady wisdom understand that the bad stuff is the good stuff, that there is an upside to every downside. They can see the bad behind the good so they are unaffected by adversity or by pleasure. When things go their way, they don't go high. When things don't go their way, they don't go low.

I was telling the story of Rama. Everything goes wrong for Rama but his mind doesn't change. He just takes everything as *prasad*. That's karma yoga. Not only do you make a contribution but whatever results are coming to you, you take as *prasad*. *Prasad* means "a gift." *Isvara* has put you here and everything that happens is a gift, so you take it as a gift. So there are no bad results.

"Who doesn't yearn for pleasure..."

It doesn't mean that they don't have pleasure. They just don't *yearn* for pleasure. They experience pain and pleasure because they have a Subtle Body and it's the nature of the Subtle Body to experience pain and pleasure. But they don't long for pleasure because they know they are the self and the self is *parama sukhadam*, limitless satisfaction. The self is *brahmanandan*, meaning it has no limits and it's always satisfied. So these people are always satisfied. They don't long for pleasure. They know there is nothing to gain. If pleasure comes they take it as *prasad*, and if pain comes, they take it as *prasad*.

"...and is free from longing, fear and anger is one of steady wisdom."

"Free from" doesn't mean that they don't experience it. It means they don't take it to be real. Somebody asked me, "Well if you're standing in the middle of a street and a big truck is coming at you at 90mph, will you feel fear?" They were setting me up. They wanted me to say yes so they could say that having fear proved that I wasn't enlightened. But I would definitely feel fear in that situation and get the hell out of the way as quick as possible. But I would know that I was free of the fear because it is just an object that appears in me. So enlightened people experience fear but they know they aren't affected by it.

Human beings are very status conscious. They have everything ordered from the most lowly, little person up to the most incredible beings. But enlightened people do not have some kind of special status. That's the whole point here. They are normal people who walk, talk, eat, sleep, poop, love, hate and do all the things that everybody else does. They just have a peculiar relationship to the body and mind that a normal person doesn't have.

They are looking at their body and mind from a different platform, from the idea that life is good. "I'm perfect. I'm whole and complete and nothing is missing here." That's their idea so they don't have all these psychological complexes and problems that normal people have.

"A discriminating person..."

Remember that Vedanta's definition of *moksha* is just discrimination. It's not a special state or anything like that. It's just knowing the difference between *satya*, awareness, and the objects appearing in it and not confusing the two. Undiscriminating people confuse *satya* and *mithya*; they confuse the *jiva*, the ego, with awareness. But discriminating people have no confusion. They've got egos, Subtle Bodies and karma, everything everybody else has, but they don't identify with any of it. They know all of it belongs to *Isvara*.

"...is unattached to the outcome of all situations..."

In other words, a discriminating person is a karma yogi. If you have this knowledge, you are an automatic karma yogi. In fact a karma yogi is just a realized person, actually. They are just somebody who understands the nature of reality and acts in that particular kind of spirit.

“...and does not rejoice when the circumstances are pleasant.”

Now, you see your ego and you see your body and you see the reactions. You are not censoring yourself or controlling yourself or expecting yourself to behave a particular way because you are enlightened. If you do that, it's called enlightenment sickness. The ego jumps on the bandwagon and it wants to make some story out of its enlightenment. It wants to either convince others that it's special or different, or convince itself that it's special and different.

I had enlightenment sickness so I can talk about it with authority. It can be a problem. Usually, if you have the right kind of teacher and the right kind of teaching, it will go away after a while because it's a temporary phenomenon. Although some people who get successful and make money and gain power have enlightenment sickness until the day they die.

Osho was a good example. He had some experiences and he got a lot of success: money, sex and fame. He never did any work after that so his ego stayed firmly in charge of his understanding. He wanted to make himself look big. If you know you are the self, you don't need 93 Rolls Royces. If you are the self you don't need to wear elevator shoes like he did. You don't need to get pads in your robes so you look bigger. And you don't have to sit up on a stage and look down on everybody or have guys with machine guns.

Did you ever see that picture of Osho having a satsang with several hundred people, including four guys standing next to him with machine guns? Seriously. He was full of fear. He thought someone was out to get him. Maybe someone was, but if you are enlightened, you know it's your karma to get shot. You sort of care, but you really don't care because nothing makes any difference. You know that nothing really changes you.

And when you know that it's *moksha*. You know that on the surface things change but nothing actually changes you. As experience appears, it doesn't modify you. It's as if you are the Teflon in a non-stick pan. It's like you are a Teflon person and nothing sticks to you. And that's the freedom. The good stuff doesn't stick. The bad stuff doesn't stick. You just exist as a radiant, peaceful and happy presence.

“And if a person is able to withdraw his or her sense organs from the sense objects like a turtle withdraws its limbs, his or her knowledge is steady.”

This doesn't mean that they are sitting in a cave with all their senses are shut down in *nirvikalpa samdhi*. It means they are actively involved. Their senses—eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin—are in contact with objects but when attachment comes they can withdraw their senses like a turtle withdraws its head and retreat into the self and not have a problem. They have control over their sense organs. This is such a beautiful verse. The psychology here is so elegant, so simple and truthful.

Verse 59 – “For the one who does not feed the senses, the senses come back to the self, leaving the longing behind. When the self is known to be one’s self even the longing goes away. Even for a person who practices yoga and whose goal is clear, the senses can pull the mind away from the self. Keep your senses under control and contemplate on Me with a discriminating mind. Self-knowledge becomes established in a discriminating, controlled mind.”

“For the one who does not feed the senses, the senses come back to the self, leaving the longing behind.”

“Longing” means the *vasanas*. They are left behind when you don’t feed the senses with food, sex, music and entertainment, or in other words when you don’t pursue objects. If you go out and keep chasing objects, then what you get is more longing—you build up your *vasanas*. However, if you don’t feed the senses, they turn inward and extract the joy or the bliss from the self.

We’ve determined already that the joy is not in the object. It looks like it’s in the object, but the joy that’s coming to you from the object is actually coming to you from the self. When you get what you want, the desire for the object goes away and you feel happy because you go to the Causal Body where you experience the bliss of your own self.

So if you don’t feed the senses they will just automatically turn within and you will start being satisfied in yourself. You’ll get that sense of pleasure and satisfaction that comes from the Causal Body, which reflects awareness. So you are actually experiencing yourself in this way. The senses get that pleasure but it’s a steady and constant pleasure. You feel this current of bliss all of the time. But if you feed the senses, it gets broken up.

“When the self is known to be one’s self even the longing goes away.”

In other words, you know that you are full and complete. You don’t long for things because you only long for things when you feel incomplete.

“Even for a person who practices yoga and whose goal is clear, the senses can pull the mind away from the self.”

The *vasanas* can be pretty powerful.

“Keep your senses under control and contemplate on Me with a discriminating mind. Self-knowledge becomes established in a discriminating, controlled mind.”

This chapter is power packed. It explains the whole psychology of ignorance, the whole psychology of *jivas* and how you get so far away from yourself. This isn’t the kind of psychology that’s peculiar to an individual person. It’s the psychology of every person because there is only one person: awareness plus the three bodies. That’s all you are. You may think you are a special, unique unit but you aren’t. You are awareness with a Gross, Subtle and Causal Body just like everyone else. The only thing that makes you different is the thought that you are different.

Knowing this should be a relief because it means you don't have to constantly distinguish yourself with reference to who you were before or what you are going to be, or with reference to other people. Think about how much mental pain and anguish is involved in making yourself special and unique. You can let it all go because there's just one of us here. We are all the same. Our bodies are the same and our minds are the same, meaning they all operate in the same way. How they operate is what needs to be understood. It's all *Isvara*.

Verse 62, 63 – “When you dwell on objects, attachment arises. Attachment causes desire and when desire is obstructed, anger arises. An angry mind is easily deluded and delusion leads to a loss of memory. When memory goes, the mind is incapacitated. And when the mind no longer functions properly, one's life is destroyed.”

“When you dwell on objects, attachment arises.”

“Dwell” means to think. It all starts with thinking. The more you think about something, the more attached you get to it. Take money and sex as examples. The more you think about money or sex the more attached you get to them. And what comes next is the *arishadvargas*: *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (pride) and *matsarya* (jealousy).

“Attachment causes desire and when desire is obstructed, anger arises.”

Maybe you think, “That's fine, but I'll just make sure none of my desires are obstructed.” But it's not going to happen because if all your desires were unobstructed, you'd be *Isvara*. But you aren't and the fact is that you can't always get what you want. Sometimes you get what you want, in which case you feel wonderful. Sometimes you don't get what you want, or you get what you don't want and then you get angry. It starts with ignorance and then you start thinking, then your desires come, and then you start to act out your desires. But sometimes *Isvara* has a different idea and it doesn't present circumstances that are conducive to your desire because reality isn't set up to make you happy. *Isvara* is set up to make *Isvara* happy. You are meant to do *Isvara's* bidding here. And in so far as your desires are in harmony with *Isvara's* desires, they will be fulfilled. And in so far as they are not, they will be thwarted.

For example, you see a beautiful man or woman at the store and you hit on them. You get their phone number and you get all excited. You think about them for weeks and when you finally get over the fear of being rejected, you get up the nerve to call them. They pick up and you say, “Hi, remember me? Would you like to go out with me?” and they say “Who are you, you creep? Are you the jerk I met at the store?” Now, are you going to feel happy and say, “Oh, they love me! They think I'm a creep.” No, you're just going to be angry because your desire was obstructed and blocked. So having desires is not necessarily a wonderful thing because it leads to anger. Do you want cancer? Do you want physical or emotional problems? Then just have a lot of desire and experience a lot of anger. Those molecules of emotion, they will ruin your body. And what's another problem with anger?

“An angry mind is easily deluded...”

You can't maintain anger for a long time. After a while it collapses and your mind gets heavy and dull —*tamasic*—and becomes deluded. Delusion is *tamas*. And then what happens? You can't remember what needs to be done, or what you should do or recognize a situation for what it actually is. You lose clarity with reference to your goal and to yourself. And then what happens?

“When the memory goes, the mind is incapacitated. And when the mind no longer functions properly, one's life is destroyed.”

This means you can't understand your purpose here and what you are actually doing. Desire will lead right to that. You will forget what you are doing here. People go on and off the path all of the time. Actually I see this quite often, although with Vedanta we don't see a lot of it. On the other paths, you see it a lot because their desires are so strong they give up their yoga or whatever it is and they go back to the world thinking, “Oh, I need a relationship.” Basically, it's the love thing most of the time. They aren't getting the kind of love they want from their practice, so they go chase a relationship somewhere else. Now they are incapacitated. They try chasing a relationship for a while and then the relationship doesn't work out. Then they go back to their yoga or to their spiritual practice.

So if you start dwelling on anything other than Krishna—awareness—then look out. In other words, you need to keep an eye on what your mind is thinking about.

Verse 64 – “Even when you move in the world of objects, it is possible to gain tranquility if the sense organs are controlled and you stand apart from your likes and dislikes. Self-knowledge, easily established in a tranquil mind, destroys existential sorrow. But for the agitated mind, there is no self-knowledge. Contemplation does not take place and without contemplation on the self there is no peace. Without peace, how can there be happiness? Self-knowledge will not stick in a mind distracted by changing sensations. They carry it away just as a strong wind carries a small boat across the water. Therefore, Arjuna, the self-knowledge of one whose senses are free of their respective objects, is steady.

“Even when you move in the world of objects, it is possible to gain tranquility if the sense organs are controlled and you stand apart from your likes and dislikes.”

Karma yoga is just managing your likes and dislikes. That's all. It's not that you don't have them, it's just that you manage them. Likes and dislikes are your *vasanas* when they appear in the Subtle Body. You don't really see your *vasanas* until they become likes and dislikes, *ragas* and *dveshas*.

“Self-knowledge, easily established in a tranquil mind, destroys existential sorrow. But for the agitated mind, there is no self-knowledge. Contemplation does not take place and without contemplation on the self there is no peace. Without peace, how can there be happiness? Self-knowledge will not stick in a mind distracted by changing sensations. They carry it away just as a strong wind carries a small boat across the water.”

Have you ever been in that situation? I used to fish these lakes in Montana. I had a nice little raft for rowing and I would go out for the evening bite. Sometimes I'd go to a place that I knew was a good

place to fish. I would have my fun, the bite would stop and I would want to go back but the sun would be going down and the wind would come up and if it was blowing in the wrong direction, like coming from where my camp was, I would try to row back but I couldn't do it. I could row and row and row and not get anywhere. Finally, I had to give up, let the wind push me to the other side of the lake and then wait for it to die down before I could row back. Just like the wind, desire will take you away from where you need to be.

Verse 69 – “In that dark daylight world in which all beings sleep, the wise person who has mastered the senses, is awake. Just as the water flows into an ocean leaving the ocean unchanged, objects arising in the mind of a self-realized person leave it unchanged. But the desirer of objects is never peaceful. The one who abandons the belief in ‘I’ and ‘mine’, moves through life without longing and is peaceful. This is steadiness in the self. The self-realized are not deluded by appearances. A mind that is fixed on the self at the time of death is freed.”

“In that dark daylight world in which all beings sleep, the wise person who has mastered the senses is awake. Just as the water flows into an ocean leaving the ocean unchanged, objects arising in the mind of a self-realized person leave it unchanged.”

The mind is just the self. When total dispassion is there and an object arises, nothing happens. It just remains steady.

“But the desirer of objects is never peaceful. The one who abandons the belief in ‘I’ and ‘mine’ moves through life without longing, and is peaceful.”

Why should you abandon ‘I’ and ‘mine’? Because everything belongs to *Isvara*. Did you give your body to yourself? I don't think so. Who gave it to you? *Isvara*. Did you give your mind and senses to yourself? No. *Isvara* gave them to you. What about your stuff? “This is my land here. I own from there to there and down. Four hundred acres I own.” No you do not. *Isvara* owns it. *Isvara* created it. *Isvara* has it now. *Isvara* will always have it. You don't own anything. “This is my wife.” No. Did you create your wife? Where does it say that you own her? You don't own your wife. None of it is yours.

The key is *Isvara*. The *jiva* doesn't understand *Isvara*. The *jiva* has a hard time understanding its total dependence on *Isvara* and appreciating what has been given to him or her by *Isvara*. *Jnanis*, enlightened people, understand *Isvara* and they know *Isvara's* got it all: *Isvara* creates it all, sustains it all and destroys it all, according to its own will and pleasure, whatever that is. So there's no reason to think that anything is yours.

“This is steadiness in the self.”

“This” means knowledge. Knowledge is steadiness in the self. Leave it all to *Isvara*. Let *Isvara* take care of it all. Why are you messing with it? Why are you trying to fiddle with it and manipulate it to make it work for you? It's already working for you. *Isvara* loves you and is taking care of you. Everything's fine. Just leave it up to *Isvara* and enjoy who you are.

“The self-realized are not deluded by appearances.”

This means they know that everything here is just an appearance. It's an apparent reality. It's not actually what it looks like or what it seems to be.

“A mind that is fixed on the self at the time of death is freed.”

This means that when you die to the present thought that is in you right now, the mind will go to the self. That is the time of death. The time of death is when you disassociate with whatever thought that you are attached to right now and you put your attention back on the knower or the witness. Then what? Your mind is free. And you are free.

Student: Does *Isvara* include all three *gunas*?

James: *Isvara* is the three *gunas*. Everything here is just energy in various forms, and there are three forms of energy—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—and that's all creation is. All of the objects are made up of those three energies.

DAY TWO - Session 2

CHAPTER THREE: Verse 1 - 27

We're still on karma yoga. You have the right to act but you have no right to the result. *Ishvara*, meaning the field, is what's producing action. It's the creator, the sustainer and the preserver of all the actions. It creates them, it keeps them in existence for a while, and it dismisses them. *Ishvara* is the giver of the results of the action and therefore, if you want to get a peaceful mind you need to act, to invoke *Ishvara* with *dharmic* actions.

Let's say you want to kill your wife. "Oh, I should dedicate this to *Ishvara* first. She's bothering me and I want to strangle my wife so I'm going to do it as karma yoga. Okay *Bhagavan*, this one is for you. And so the results will go to you and not to me because I am dedicating it to you." That's not karma yoga. Karma yoga is discretion in action, remember? You have to choose proper actions. If you have a doubt about what proper action is, read the scripture. It tells you what actions are prohibited and what actions are sanctioned.

There are basic actions that are part of karma yoga. One is worship of your deity. Worship of your ancestors is also karma yoga, and it's a good one. In other words, have the right attitude about your parents and you honor, respect and love them. It's a ritual they do in India every year. They do it in China too. What that does is it clears up childhood resentments. A lot of problems are resentments towards one's parents that were never worked out. So by looking at your parents and grandparents as the self and worshipping your physical lineage with love, you neutralize the karma that's there. Worship of the environment is another action that is part of karma yoga. Any *sattvic* action like serving other people is karma yoga. You should see to it that you are serving other people, not just looking after yourself. So you need to have discretion in action, which basically means doing *sattvic* actions, not *rajasic* and *tamasic* actions. Doing actions such as these in the spirit of gratitude dissolves your *vasanas*, purifies your mind and prepares it for *moksha*.

Now, Arjuna, he has a doubt here. He always has the same doubt but he phrases it differently.

CHAPTER THREE: KARMA YOGA

Verse 1 - Arjuna said, "You say that knowledge is superior to action, but if this is true why do you encourage me to do this gruesome deed? You are confusing me with seemingly contradictory words. Decide what is best and reveal the one path to liberation."

"You say that knowledge is superior to action, but if this is true why do you encourage me to do this gruesome deed?"

Arjuna is still trying to wriggle out of doing his duty.

"You are confusing me with seemingly contradictory words."

He's confronting the guru but he's doing it in a nice way. Notice that word "seemingly"? He's not saying, "You're confusing me! You said this and you said that and it doesn't work." No, he's saying more like, "Maybe I don't understand something, but it seems like there is a contradiction between you telling me to do action when you say that knowledge is superior. If knowledge is superior, tell me to do knowledge and I'll do knowledge." This is of course what he wants to do because he doesn't want to do the action.

"Decide what is best and reveal the one path to liberation."

Now it's typical of beginning seekers to want a formula. They just want the guru to tell them what to do. Earlier, Arjuna said, "I surrender, now tell me what to do." Now he's saying the same thing: "You decide what's best." Krishna can't decide for him. Krishna can only explain things to Arjuna so he can make the choice for himself. Otherwise Krishna would be robbing Arjuna of his self-reliance, independence and self-esteem.

Supposedly, going to a guru, turning everything over to them and doing what they tell you is surrender. But if you surrender to a guru you are asking for trouble unless the guru is really a clean guru. So what do you do when you don't know if someone is really a guru? You offer your mind with discrimination to the guru. In other words, you will listen to what they have to say, but you won't forego your discrimination. You will think about it and make up your own mind. In some cases it may be better to go with what you believe to be true rather than what some guru tells you to do. What Vedanta wants to do is to give you the logic and the reasons so you will understand and be able to make up your own mind. Then you decide what is best for you.

So Krishna, in the tradition of a good teacher, explains the whole situation. He doesn't say, "Well I told you already, you moron. Stand up and fight." He starts to explain karma yoga, how it works and the relationship between karma and knowledge. He's already explained karma and already explained knowledge so now Krishna says:

Verse 3 – "I ordained a two-fold lifestyle for beings in this world...the path of knowledge for renunciates and the path of action for doers. You cannot get free of action merely by the non-performance of action. Nor can you attain liberation simply by renunciation. Indeed, you cannot avoid action even for a second because *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* compel you to act.

"I ordained a two-fold lifestyle for beings in this world...the path of knowledge for renunciates and the path of action for doers. You cannot get free of action merely by the nonperformance of action."

Arjuna's already said, "I'm not doing that. I'm free of it." No, you are not free of it. You don't get free of action by not doing something. If you renounce one thing, you'll just do something else. You are active from womb to tomb. We are going to see more on this theme as we go along.

"Nor can you attain liberation simply by renunciation."

You can't just walk away from these things unless you have purified your mind. Once your mind is

purified then you can actually walk away. In other words, you can renounce it with understanding. But until you have done the work, you can't just walk away.

"Indeed, you cannot avoid action even for a second because sattva, rajas and tamas compel you to act."

Sattva, rajas and *tamas*—the *gunas*—are just another way of looking at *Isvara*. Everything in the creation—the physical, subtle and causal—is *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.

Verse 6 – “A person who controls the sense organs yet still craves sense pleasures is confused. It is better to control the senses and act with the karma yoga understanding because action is superior to inaction you should do what has to be done. It is even impossible to maintain the body without action.”

“A person who controls the sense organs yet still craves sense pleasures is confused. It is better to control the senses and act with the karma yoga understanding.”

Look at my body, the Fat Man. The Fat Man loves to eat, so what to do? Stop eating but still crave the food? The *vasana* is still there so even though he's not eating he wants what he's not eating. And that just agitates his mind. It's just creating a conflict. So it's better to control the senses and act with the karma yoga understanding that the results of the action are not up to me. If I need something, *Bhagavan* will give it to me in good time. So stop craving it. If I am meant to have it, *Bhagavan* will provide, and whatever I already have is what *Bhagavan* wants me to have.

If you ask an enlightened person what they want, they will say that they want what they have. That means they don't want because they have what they want. So you see that in every moment *Isvara* is supplying you with what you want in the form of what you have. So there is no cause for agitation. But if you are craving what you don't have and you don't take *Isvara* into account then your mind is just going to be disturbed and that's not good for your discrimination. When your mind is agitated and disturbed you get deluded and you lose your way spiritually.

“Because action is superior to inaction you should do what has to be done.”

If you say, “I'm not doing” are you actually not doing? You may not be doing anything in particular but not doing is also an action. In other words, there is no such thing as inaction. Only awareness is actionless. But for the body and mind there is no such thing as inaction because awareness is illuminating the *gunas*, and the *vasanas* and everything is operating all of the time, 24/7. It's even impossible to maintain the body without action. You have to feed the damn thing. It's a hungry dog.

Krishna says it's a two-fold lifestyle: *sannyasi* yoga and karma yoga. Karma yoga is for active people. *Sannyasi* yoga or *jnana* yoga is for contemplatives and renunciates. These are people who have already burned up their *vasanas* so they can just apply knowledge. Obviously, both a karma yogi and a *jnana* yogi are going for *moksha* but the *jnana* yogi doesn't have to worry about karma yoga because he is already free of karma, he is a renunciate. A *sannyasi* is a person who just doesn't care what

happens. They are dispassionate. For them, everything is fine. They are only interested in *moksha*.

But a karma yogi can't say everything is fine because of their wants and desires. So what does a karma yoga lifestyle do? It turns a karma yogi into a *sannyasi*. In other words, you get more and more contemplative as you practice karma yoga. You should just keep practicing karma yoga even when you feel you are quite dispassionate, detached and contemplative. It doesn't hurt. At some point you'll realize, "Hey, I don't need all that stuff. I don't need to do that stuff. It's ridiculous."

I used to go to the temple in Tiru for evening *arathi*. It was a pleasant atmosphere. People would come after work and I would just sit there and watch. The place I liked to sit was where there was a group of four *sannyasis*. They didn't do anything. They just sat there all day. When food was there they would get up, go eat and then sit back down. That was it. None of them were agitated. None of them thought, "Well I have to do this or that." They just sat there, looked around and enjoyed and chatted with each other, or just sat silently on their own. They didn't have any karma. When they closed the temple at night they would go and sleep somewhere under a tree or on the mountain and that was it. They were just *sannyasis*. Everything was fine. When you have that kind of mentality, there's no pressure on you so you can keep your mind on *Bhagavan* all of the time. If you can keep your mind on *Bhagavan* 24/7, you'll get *Bhagavan* fast. It will happen.

Verse 9 – "Actions, other than those done in the sacrificial spirit, bind you to karma. The Creator instilled this spirit in the beginning and said, "By sacrifice you shall multiply. It will fulfill your desires." Honor life with this spirit and it will honor you. This attitude leads to freedom. When you honor life it supplies desirable things... but if you enjoy its gifts without offering something in return you are a thief. Those who eat the remnant of the sacrifice incur no guilt but those who eat only for themselves verily eat guilt."

"Actions, other than those done in the sacrificial spirit, bind you to karma."

To sacrifice means to make an offering with an attitude of gratitude. "Not just for me, but for you, O Lord." Where does this attitude come from?

"The Creator instilled this spirit in the beginning and said, "By sacrifice you shall multiply. It will fulfill your desires."

Look at a tree. What is a tree sacrificing? Oxygen. It gives it away freely. We make carbon dioxide. We sacrifice our carbon dioxide and the tree converts it into oxygen. Everything in the creation has got this spirit of taking in and putting out. It's natural and it's built into the whole creation. So Krishna is saying to get in touch with that spirit in you. It's dharma. Offering is the solution here because getting what you want won't really fulfill your desires. The spirit of sacrifice will fulfill your desires.

"Honor life with this spirit and it will honor you. This attitude leads to freedom. When you honor life it supplies desirable things."

Because everything you have comes from life, doesn't it?

“...but if you enjoy its gifts without offering something in return you are a thief.”

Before Krishna said, “You are a miser.” Now he says, “You are a thief.”

“Those who eat the remnant of the sacrifice incur no guilt but those who eat only for themselves verily eat guilt.”

You will be guilty and you will be disturbed. Now Krishna is going to explain how this sacrificial thing works, how everything is serving and sacrificing for everything else. It's all one seamless whole with each part contributing to it.

Verse 14 – “Living beings are born of food, food comes from rain, rain comes from the effects of sacrifice and sacrifice is born of action. The Vedas encourage a sacrificial religious attitude and the Vedas come from the imperishable self. If you keep this attitude you are always in harmony with the self. The lives of those who do not live in harmony with the cosmic order but pursue sense pleasures instead are wasted.”

Verse 17 – “Nothing needs to be done by those who delight in the self, are satisfied with the self alone and whose lives are centered on the self. They have no reason to do or not to do...nor do they depend on objects for their happiness. Do what is to be done well, without attachment, and you will attain the highest good. Not only will you attain liberation by acting in this spirit, you will inspire others to act in this way because whatever a role model does is done by others.”

“I need not act. As far as I am concerned, everything in the three worlds is perfect so there is nothing for me to do. Yet I act because if I become lazy and refuse to act people would follow my example. They would become confused. The social bonds that keep a society healthy would unravel and it would deteriorate.”

“Nothing needs to be done by those who delight in the self, are satisfied with the self alone, and whose lives are centered on the self. They have no reason to do or not to do...”

For those with self-knowledge, action is not prohibited or enjoined. You can do, you cannot do or you can do something different.

“...nor do they depend on objects for their happiness. Do what is to be done well, without attachment and you will attain the highest good. Not only will you attain liberation by acting in this spirit, you will inspire others to act in this way because whatever a role model does is done by others.”

My guru was a role model and he inspired me. So I'm just copying him and I want to be a little Swamiji clone and teach Vedanta. I'm a small potato. He was a big potato but still he inspired me to express myself by offering my knowledge. I have all of this knowledge so I'm offering it. I am giving it to you. Take it. If it's good for you, then good.

“Are you ready for the final teaching? I don’t know. You need to work for me for a few more years and give me lots of money. Maybe then you’ll be ready to get my final teaching.” That was Papaji’s thing. He was always giving out the ‘final teaching.’ But he had no final teaching. He didn’t have any teaching at all but people didn’t know that. They just felt high when they received *shaktipat*. David Godman wrote this big three volume set of books on Papaji called “Nothing Ever Happened.” He went and interviewed Papaji and he asked him, “Well, what is your final teaching?” But Papaji didn’t answer. There wasn’t a final teaching.

There’s nothing hidden with Vedanta. We are telling you right now that you are full, whole, complete, actionless, ordinary awareness and that’s it. If you want more, go somewhere else. But you can’t do better than perfect and Vedanta is telling you that you are perfect. You are okay. That’s the final teaching and it isn’t a secret.

“I need not act. As far as I am concerned, everything in the three worlds is perfect so there is nothing for me to do. Yet I act because if I become lazy and refuse to act people would follow my example. They would become confused. The social bonds that keep a society healthy would unravel and it would deteriorate.”

Everything is fine when you understand the world as it is and know that you are whole and complete. You don’t feel compelled to do anything. But you still respond to situations as they arise. Not because you have to, but because it’s appropriate.

Verse 24, 25 – “Just as the unwise who are attached to the results of their actions act only for themselves, the wise should perform action without attachment for the good of others. They should not lecture the unwise concerning action and its results. Instead they should encourage them to act in the right spirit by example.”

“Just as the unwise who are attached to the results of their actions act only for themselves, the wise should perform action without attachment for the good of others.”

Because you are always with others, aren’t you? Even when you are in a cave, the others are all there in your mind, aren’t they? Even in a cave you still have a relationship to all these other people. So take them into account and serve them. That’s all we are saying.

“They should not lecture the unwise concerning action and its results.”

Unless you are asked repeatedly, unless someone begs you to tell them if they are living the right way or the wrong way, keep your big mouth shut. It’s none of your business what other people are doing. Everything is fine. Don’t go shooting off your mouth telling them how they should be or how they should live or what they should do. Just live a righteous life. If you are happy and you keep your mind on *Bhagavan*, then other people will follow your example. They will want what you want. They will start copying you and asking you questions and accepting your ideas. Gradually their lives will be transformed. Teach by example not by just by words and ideas. A guru in this tradition not only talks

the talks but walks the talk. Just seeing my guru Swami Chinmayananda living as a truly free person was all I really needed. I needed the teachings too but his very presence proved to me that the knowledge worked.

Verse 27 – “It is a delusion to think ‘I am the doer’ because actions are caused by the gunas influencing the body, mind and senses. The wise however, remain free because they understand that body-mind-sense-complex engages its objects automatically. Those unaware of how the gunas affect action get caught up in the actions of the body-mind-sense-complex. One who knows the self should not disturb the understanding of the indiscriminating ones who don’t.”

“It is a delusion to think ‘I am the doer’ because actions are caused by the gunas influencing the body, mind and senses. The wise, however remain free because they understand that the body-mind-sense-complex engages its objects automatically.”

Isvara has it all set up and operating. You are not doing it, *Isvara* is doing it. There is a doer and the doer does participate in this process. However, the doer is just one link in the whole chain of causation, in the matrix of factors that are producing action. Doership is only the thought, “I’m doing this” or “I’m going to do that.” It can’t act alone. Without the intellect how could you gain knowledge to know how to act? Without the sense organs or organs of action, how could you act? Without *vasanas* and *gunas*, where would you get motivation to act? Even if you have knowledge, organs of action, sense organs, and motivation, you still cannot act unless there is an outside world, a field in which to act. If just one of these links or factors is removed from the apparent reality, there’s won’t be any action taking place, just like a car won’t run if you remove even one part from the engine. All of the factors in the field, *karakas*, are required to produce action. They are the constituents of action. To believe the thought “I act” is to ignore the other factors. You need to understand that the thought of doership is just one part in the whole matrix.

“The wise, however remain free because they understand that the body-mind-sense-complex engages its objects automatically.”

You don’t need to be a doer. You don’t need to worry. The body-mind-sense-complex, this whole field here, connects you to the objects all of the time. You are always connected to what you need to be connected to. You don’t have to dig out your sense organ and try to connect it. You are always smelling, tasting, touching, feeling, etc. You are always connected. “Oh no, I don’t like what I’m experiencing now. I want to connect elsewhere.” Do you want to take over from *Isvara*, do you know better than *Isvara*? *Isvara* has it all set up. The way it is, is the way it is. It’s supposed to be this way and you are supposed to appreciate it for what it is. But what do you do? You want a different experience. It happens every day. You’re not satisfied with the way things are and you want to change the situation.

Krishna is saying that the situation is perfect the way it is. And you have to see how perfect your condition is. You have to see that the downside, which you don’t want, has an upside to it, that there is an upside to the downside, and a downside to the upside. You have to understand the ramifications of this fact and appreciate the nature of *Isvara*. “Well that doesn’t work for me because I want what I

want when I want it and the way I want it. Thank you very much. I'll be my own *Bhagavan*." That is the ego talking saying. You won't be your own *Bhagavan*. You'll be suffering.

As Swami Dayananda says, "You rub up against *Bhagavan* and *Bhagavan* rubs against you." And it won't be just a little war that you are going to easily win because *Bhagavan* is inexorable. People say stuff like, "I'm a boy but I want to be a girl." *Bhagavan* made you a boy but now you want to be a girl? Okay, go ahead and try to change but you'll suffer. Remember, this sense of dissatisfaction is just born of a lack of understanding, a misunderstanding of the nature of reality and of the self.

"Those unaware of how the gunas affect action get caught up in the actions of the body-mind-sense-complex."

The *gunas* are everywhere because everything is *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. For example, at this time in the afternoon, there is a bit of *tamas* in our minds. Have you noticed? In the morning we are all perky and *sattvic*. A little *rajas* is there and a little *sattva* is there. We all laugh and it's all good, but by four in the afternoon, *tamoguna* is operating.

Now, did you make this state of mind? No, the *guna* is just playing out. The *gunas* are always operating here. You have *rajas*, that active power, so you are zipping around here and there doing this and that. You have the dullness and the sleepiness, the *tamoguna*. Or you have that clarity and that meditative stillness, the *sattva guna*. The *gunas* are always shifting and changing.

Can you control them? Yes you can, but only up to a point. You can influence the *gunas* by the way you live. Just observe the unseen results of your actions. "What? How can I observe results that are unseen?" You observe what state of mind you get into when you do a particular action. If you go out on Friday night and the TV is playing loudly in the sports bar and you drink a bunch of beers and have a big pepperoni pizza, it's great, right? Sure, until Saturday morning when *tamas* appears. And is that *tamasic* state of mind—which was formerly unseen or unmanifest—disconnected from the actions that you did before? No it's not.

So if you want to manage your *gunas* and get a *sattvic* mind, you find behaviors and actions whose long term result is *sattva*. You go to satsangs, you pray, you meditate, you eat *sattvic* food, you go to bed at a reasonable hour, and you don't associate with *rajasic* and *tamasic* people. That's a big one, a huge one. You will find that your mind gets exactly like the minds of the people you associate with. So if you associate with *rajasic* people, your desires will start to build up and your mind will always be active and dissatisfied. *Rajasic* people are dissatisfied. If you associate with *tamasic* people, you will be dull, make mistakes and have accidents. If you associate with *sattvic*, pure minded and holy people, then your mind will get that way.

It's a choice. Yoga is discretion in action. You always have the ability to choose. So you need to be paying attention to your experience all of the time, connecting the dots and gradually, slowly removing the *rajas* and *tamas* until you get the proper balance. We define *sadhana* as manipulating, changing or balancing the relative proportions of *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva* to achieve an inquiring mind.

To get the kind of mind that is suitable for *moksha*, you need to manage the *gunas*. You would be surprised at how incredibly powerful your mind can get with this yoga. I think it is the most advanced

and sophisticated yoga. We are all experience oriented and there is nothing wrong with experience, so why shouldn't we have a divine kind of experience? Why shouldn't we have a lot of bliss and clarity and energy and have a very positive attitude towards life and just create a wonderful life? Why shouldn't we do that? We can do that by managing the *gunas*.

Managing the *gunas* is simply knowing what they are and understanding the upside and downside of each *guna*. The upside of *rajas* is motivation, energy, and enthusiasm. You need it to do what needs to be done. But a person with a predominantly *rajasic* mind is like a four year old child. They have so much energy that they don't know what to do with themselves.

You need to have *tamas* in order to sleep properly. If you have too much *rajas* and too little *tamas* then you are not going to sleep very well. This is a big problem spiritual people have. If you get too much *sattva* and a lot of *rajas*, particularly women, you won't sleep well. You will always feel tired. It's the wired but tired syndrome. So you need enough *tamas* to sleep well, to be practical and to stay grounded. But too much *tamas* causes dullness, laziness and apathy.

We've been saying that you need a *sattvic* mind but can you get too much *sattva*? Yes. You've seen people like that, the bliss bunnies. There was a German woman in Tiru. She was in her late thirties and very attractive, slim with blonde hair and a very nice face. She was totally into 'the energy', she was an energy junkie. She was *sattvic* and wore white. And you would see her walking around and you would think how graceful and how lovely she was. It was like her feet didn't really touch the ground. She looked like she was floating and always had a radiant and blissful smile. She just always looked light and high and happy.

There is a Devi *shakti* temple right near the main road and it's very popular with the locals because of the energy. With that kind of *shakti sadhana* you get worn out. You get really high off of one practice or symbol and then it doesn't work. It's like taking a drug. So then you have to go dig up a new deity or a new practice to get you high off of that energy. So she discovered this temple and she was hanging out there, kind of floating around. And she's in a state like, "I'm seeing Bhagavan everywhere. It's so beautiful!" She had so much *sattva* that she wasn't connected. Not paying attention she just walked right out into the street and a big truck came along and wiped her out. Very often people who come to me are that kind of person. They need to get grounded. They are not here on the Earth. That's how too much *sattva* can be a problem.

So basically for *guna* management you want to have a predominantly *sattvic* mind with enough energy, *rajas*, to do what you need to do and enough practicality, *tamas*, to move your life forward. This is *guna* management. "It may be simple, but it isn't easy." It's not easy because *tamoguna* and *rajoguna* are very powerful, and it's hard to break old habits. Transforming those habits is what this *sadhana* is about. It's about dealing with your *tamasic*, *rajasic* and *sattvic vasanas*.

You can end up like Ramana, really pure, powerful and full of love. It isn't because he was enlightened that he was so great. There are thousands of enlightened people. Enlightenment is just the knowledge that you are awareness. No, he was great because of his lifestyle, how he managed his *gunas*. He was a pure *sattvic* soul. His mind was so still and radiant that when people sat around him, they started to feel good without even knowing why. He got that from living a pure, simple Vedic style of life.

It was a lot easier in those days. For us it's much more difficult because our environments are so degraded, so full of *rajasic* and *tamasic* people. Our society is totally *rajasic* and *tamasic*. There is a little *sattva* here and there but basically it's all *rajas* and *tamas*. So your environment is working against you all the time. Particularly if you are in the West, you need to protect yourself against your environment by creating a little bubble of *sattva* and staying in it as much as you can. And when you go out into the world take the karma yoga attitude and take your knocks, but stay in that pure state of mind.

It's not good to think of yourself as a *rajasic* person or *tamasic* person or *sattvic* person. What are you doing when you do that? You are identifying with the *guna*. It's better to look at your mind and say, "My mind is *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic* today." And if you do that on a moment-to-moment basis you won't identify yourself with the *guna*.

We speak as if we are the *guna*. For example, I was very *tamasic* a few minutes ago. Now, I am starting to get perky. The more I talk about this, the more excited I get, the more *rajas* comes up. Now, does that mean I am a *rajasic* person? No, not really because I was a *tamasic* person before and I will be *sattvic* in twenty minutes. So is that me? No, that is the energy, the *gunas*, and the *gunas* affect the quality and texture of your mind. And that is what we are interested in because we are inquirers. We are constantly inquiring into who we are, constantly applying knowledge and looking at ourselves and constantly moving our lives toward *Bhagavan* and *moksha*. So we need to manage our *gunas*.

Day 2 - Session 3

Chapter 3: Verse 30 - 42

Verse 30 – “With a discriminating mind free of anger, expectation and a sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ offer your actions to me and fight! If you faithfully follow this teaching without finding fault you will be freed from the results of your actions. But if you are doubtful and do not follow it you will not progress. It is wise to act in harmony with your own nature because all beings follow their own natures automatically what use is control?”

Verse 34 – “Attachment and aversion to sense objects are your intractable enemies. It is better to die imperfectly performing one’s duties according to one’s own dharma than to live performing the dharma of another well. The dharma of another is fraught with danger.”

One thing Krishna is talking about here is *svadharma*. You need to look after yourself. It doesn't mean that you ignore people. It doesn't mean that you don't help people. It just means that you don't feel like you must fix people or help people. If it's natural and somebody asks something of you, just give it naturally without any ego or desire, just see them as *Isvara* and offer it. Don't try to become better. This is not about self-improvement. There is nothing wrong with you. Even as a *jiva*, the apparent

person, there is nothing wrong. And even if there is something wrong, it's not your fault. You can blame *Isvara* for it.

Svadharma is accepting yourself as you are, not criticizing yourself, not judging yourself. Stop thinking, "I should be better. I should be spiritual. I should be different." Get "I should have, I would have, I could have" and "I'm supposed to be" out of your mind. You are fine. If you don't like yourself or others and you are trying to change them or yourself, you are wasting your time because as Krishna says, "they are following their own nature, so what use is control?"

Student: If we find ourselves acting like a jerk it's not saying that an apology would be inappropriate, is it?

James: If you have injured or offended somebody else, yes, an apology is appropriate. But the point is that nobody consciously sets out to be a jerk. A jerk is an unconscious person who doesn't realize that he or she is out of touch with what is going on around them. They don't set out to be that way. It just happens.

Student: I noticed earlier that I was being a bit of a jerk. I don't like to think of myself doing that.

James: The problem is that your shadow, your unconscious self, contradicts your own good opinion of yourself. That is why it's kept in the shadow. That is why you repress it. *Tamas* is the repressing mechanism that is hiding it from you. There are things in you that are not pretty. You have this idea, this image of yourself, rather than taking yourself as you are.

I used to be a jerk. And I had a lot of unappealing, unconscious stuff. And I got at it through my dreams. All those useless, violent, ugly, selfish people who appear in your dreams, are you. They're just manufactured out of your own mind. *Rajas* projects the dream so it puts somebody else's face on your stuff, but it's not anybody else's stuff. Not your boss's, not your father's, not anybody else's. They aren't the jerk. You are the jerk. You are the violent, greedy, ugly person. That is in you.

So you need to acknowledge it and accept it. And once you say, "*I am a jerk. I am selfish and vain*" or whatever it is, it goes away. If you resist it, it persists. What you resist persists, and what you accept disappears. The whole point here is that you can't blame yourself for this stuff. Once you become aware of it, then you can work on it if you want to or not. It's up to you.

Karma yoga is discretion in action and that involves looking at yourself and cleaning up your mess. If you know it's a mess you basically won't do it much longer anyway. It's only when you think you are not a mess that you continue to persist in these bad habits, these bad *vasanas*. We call them self-insulting *vasanas*. It's not your fault. It's ignorance.

Student: Can you talk about *tamas* again?

James: *Tamas* is just denial, like being in denial about the unpleasant parts of your personality. It may not make you feel good to see those things, but once you do, you can work on them.

Dreams are a great way to see the parts of yourself you are in denial about. I had a lot of very positive experiences through studying my dreams. Dreams are just your *vasanas* appearing in this very dramatic, visual way. You need to learn the language of the dream. The dream is just *Isvara* and *Isvara* speaks in a strange language in dreams. Once you start looking at your dreams and looking at your stuff, you will see that *Isvara* has a great sense of humor, aesthetics and beauty and great integrity. You will find all of this stuff inside of you that actually belongs to *Isvara*, and by cleaning yourself up you gain the qualities of *Isvara*.

Isvara is pure awareness plus *Maya*. Awareness has no qualities. When *sattva* is there, awareness appears as all these good, holy, saintly, beautiful values. It's not something that you are acquiring. It's something that you are uncovering, it's built into *sattva*.

Vedanta is really honest. It tells you the truth, the upside and the downside. So what is the problem here? The power of desire. We are going to have to look at this.

Verse 36 - Arjuna said, "What is that terrible force that causes self-insulting actions even though there is a strong desire to the contrary?"

You can see Arjuna is talking from his own experience. You can see he knows that he has *vasanas* and what they are. Even though you don't want to do something, you find yourself doing it. It's like my Fat Man. "Oh I want that almond cake." I said no to the Fat Man and then just as I was walking by the counter, the Fat Man took me over towards the cake. You see I had said no but the Fat Man still wanted to go over and take a look and see if it really had sugar and eggs in it. Desire is always itching you, and moving you, propelling you to act. It wants what it wants.

Verse 37 - Krishna said, "*Rajas* produces desire and anger. It is a great glutton and an inveterate sinner. Know it to be an intractable foe. Just as a fire is often covered by clouds of smoke, as a mirror may be covered by dust or a fetus is hidden in the womb, self-knowledge is hidden by desire. The insatiable fire of desire is the constant enemy of the wise because it prevents self-knowledge. Situated in the senses, mind and intellect, it deludes the person and obscures his or her wisdom. Therefore, O Arjuna, control the senses at the outset and destroy this force, the killer of wisdom."

Krishna said, "Rajas produces desire and anger. It is a great glutton and an inveterate sinner."

Society tells you that desire is good because if you don't have desire, you won't get all the stuff you want in life. But like the Buddha said in the Four Noble Truths, "Desire causes suffering." All you have to do is look to your own experience to see that wanting is painful. It makes you feel incomplete and drives you to chase objects.

"It is a great glutton and an inveterate sinner."

Remember I told you that Ganesha rides on a rat and that the rat symbolizes desire? That Ganesha is riding the rat means that he's in control of his desires. But for a normal person, the big rat of desire is riding on them, driving them to go here and there.

"Know it to be an intractable foe."

Desire is only an enemy until you learn how to sublimate it into something noble. You can turn it towards spiritual practice and leading a righteous life. You can channel your desires away from the pursuit of objects and towards the pursuit of *moksha*. So here Krishna means that desire for objects is your enemy, not desire itself. Arjuna has a *rajasic* mind so he needs yoga to redirect the *rajas* away from objects and back to awareness. In psychology, it's called sublimation. So it is the conversion of these emotions into devotion for *Bhagavan*. That is where the desire should go, but it takes a while. You have to slowly gather your desire out of all of these various objects and put it into your spiritual work.

"Just as a fire is often covered by clouds of smoke, as a mirror may be covered by dust or a fetus is hidden in the womb, self-knowledge is hidden by desire."

You know who you are inside but it's covered over. Why do they use these three examples? They indicate three different kinds of desires. The first one, fire, is often covered by smoke. All you need to get rid of smoke on a fire is a little breeze and it will just blow away. There are certain desires that are like that. Just sit back, wait a minute and they go away. Not a problem. You don't have to worry about those.

The second kind of desire is like a mirror covered by dust. I used to be an antique dealer looking for treasures. I found a lot of mirrors, and sometimes I couldn't even tell they were mirrors they were so dirty. No matter what you do, that dust is really clinging to that mirror. It's not just going to blow off. It takes some elbow grease, soap and water and you polish it and then the mirror becomes clean. So these are desires you have to consistently work on.

The third kind of desire is like a fetus hidden in the womb. Is a fetus in the womb going to come out when you want it to come out? No. It's like a flower. If you have a lotus you know it's a beautiful flower. But if you start peeling the outer layers off before it's ready to bloom, it's just an ugly, miserable thing. You have to wait until it slowly unfolds on its own. It opens up and then it's beautiful. So the fetus in the womb is the desire that you have to wait for, let it fructify and work out on its own. There is nothing you can do about those kinds of desires. Don't try to work on things that are not going to come out. Just wait and let them come out. Don't worry about the petty little everyday stuff; those desires will just blow away. But those persistent habits that agitate your mind, those are what we are working on. You need to identify the kind of desire that you are working on and work smart. This is a beautiful verse.

“Situated in the senses, mind and intellect, it deludes the person and obscures his or her wisdom. Therefore, O Arjuna, control the senses at the outset and destroy this force, the killer of wisdom.”

So desire is everywhere. It is in your mind, your senses and your intellect. “Control the senses” means to watch your behavior and control the way you act because that is how desires come out. Reduce your *vasana* load slowly and destroy this force.

Rajas is the most awful energy. *Tamas* is bad but *rajas* is worse. People who are under the spell of *rajas* usually have big egos and are very attached to action. They really think that they know best and they are going to solve all of the problems. If you have that kind of tendency, it takes a long time to get rid of it.

My guru was extremely *rajasic*. I couldn't understand it at first. Once I really got to know him I saw that he really wasn't *rajasic*. His mind was incredibly busy because he was at the center of a web of tens of thousands of people so there was just energy coming from tens of thousands of minds every day to him and just acting on his subtle body. If you have people thinking about you out there every day, your mind will feel it because it's in consciousness and those people are invoking you when they think about you. When he died his picture and obituary was on the front page of every major newspaper in India.

I was fairly *rajasic* as a business person. I realized how painful it was and I set out to master it. It took a long time. I didn't like that greedy, rapacious mindless doing and going for stuff. It's ugly. You waste so much energy on things that don't solve the problem. So Krishna's pointing this out. He's saying to look at your desires.

This next verse is where I came up with the chart that I use at all of my seminars. I didn't invent it. I read the Gita and I looked at my guru's chart. He was the first one to have a chart. The traditionalists really hated him for it. His chart was very simple. He had OM at the top then BMI, PMT, and OET. And he had a wand made out of an antenna from a car with a knitted wool ball that they had fixed on the

end of it. BMI meant Body, Mind, Intellect. PFT meant Perceiver, Feeler, Thinker. OET meant Objects, Emotions, Thoughts. And then he explained all of those factors in light of awareness. It was a cool chart, very simple. Although my chart is slightly different than his, they are both just describing the way reality is set up.

Verse 42 – “The sense organs are subtler than the body; the mind is subtler than the sense organs; the intellect is subtler than the mind and the self is subtler than the intellect. Know That which is beyond the intellect, steady your emotions and destroy this hidden enemy.”

The five elements—space, air, fire, water and earth—make up the material world and the body. They are a way of describing matter. Science describes how *Ishvara* creates matter when they tell us about the Big Bang. But someone asked me the other day, “What did the Big Bang *bang out of*?” Scientists can’t tell you that because they have no instrument to record consciousness because it is subtler than their instruments. They know something must have been there but they can’t tell you what. But Vedanta can: awareness. So awareness was there and when *Maya* or *Ishvara* started operating, BOOM, out exploded these five elements, the basis of the material world.

Now, how was consciousness, awareness, going to know the material world? By evolving the *jnana indriyas*, the organs of knowledge, otherwise called the sense organs. There are five sense organs—eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin—because there are five elements. These organs of knowledge—made out of *sattva*—allow awareness to experience the material world. The five elements are at the gross level and the sense organs that know them are at the subtle level, part of the mind or Subtle Body.

The mind has three functions. There are five streams of information coming in from the sense organs but you don’t experience five different experiences, do you? No, you experience life as one simple, cogent experience. All of the information from the senses has been integrated and gathered into one spot by the mind.

The mind also has a doubting function. We’ve all thought, “What should I do? What’s happening here? What do I want?” Now why would consciousness, *Maya*, in the form of *Ishvara*, evolve a function that makes you question what is happening? Because in *Maya*, nothing is what it seems to be. It’s a big magic show and if you mindlessly accept whatever you experience without questioning it, you are asking for trouble.

When the mind doubts, it needs a way to resolve that doubt. So consciousness evolved its third function, which is the ability to make decisions, or the ability to sort through the information it is presented and determine a course of action. This is called intellect.

“The intellect is subtler than the mind.”

The intellect is the knowing function. It’s the instrument of knowledge. To respond appropriately to the situations you are confronted with, you need to have some kind of knowledge. Where does the intellect get its knowledge? From your *vasanas*. What you have previously experienced becomes your conditioning and that conditioning determines how you respond to a situation. In other words, your *vasanas* drive you. What is presented to you is the stimulus and how you react is the response. This process takes place in a fraction of a second and it repeats continuously. It is a chakra, a wheel, that is constantly turning and ever changing. Information comes in and you respond, over and over again.

When you respond to the stimuli coming in, the Doer—an idea in the intellect—comes into the wheel. It thinks you should take some action. For example, say you think, “I should kiss my wife. I’m not sure if I should but based upon previous experience, when I have kissed her it’s worked out pretty well, so I think I’ll kiss my wife.” There is a *sankalpa*, a desire, a resolution to act. The Doer is the part of the Subtle Body that owns action. It says, “This is me. That’s my wife. And I should kiss my wife.”

Even though the ego or the Doer is there, you still have to have power to motivate the action. So the mind has to perform another one of its functions by generating the appropriate emotion to motivate the *karma indriyas*, the organs of action. Only then do you say, “I love you dear,” and give your wife a kiss. This is how the whole stimulus and response cycle is set up.

This cycle is essentially the whole of your life. But what is missing? The self! It’s hidden from you behind the veil of *Maya*. So all you are doing is nervously looking outside and reacting and then creating a new situation and then reacting again. It’s a chakra, a wheel of desire and action. It starts as a desire, goes to an action, produces an experience which creates a *vasana*, the *vasana* becomes a desire and on and on. It’s a dynamic wheel of energy that is going round and round and all of your attention is fixated on the actions and the desires, or in other words, on what is happening.

Poor *Bhagavan* is not known and appreciated for what it is. So what does Krishna say? “Know That which is beyond the intellect, steady your emotions and destroy this hidden enemy.” Until you take into account this wheel of desire and what it’s causing you to do, this extroversion of mind that is being produced by these desires, you are going to have a hell of a time figuring out who you are and appreciating who you are.

Student: Where is the line between just accepting things as they are and standing up for yourself? For example, like asking for more money in your job.

James: First of all you have to figure out what standing up for yourself is, and what self you are standing up for. In this case, I think you mean the ego, the *jiva*, the person, because the self doesn’t have a job and it doesn’t care about money. I think I would ask myself why I thought my actions were

worth so much money.

Generally, you get paid according to market conditions i.e. the availability of labor in the world. In other words, the price of labor is determined by *Isvara*, by the total number of people with that skill and offering it for sale. First of all I have to consider *Isvara*. Is it reasonable to ask for more money? If you stand up for yourself you might just stand yourself right out of a job. The boss may think, "Hey, you want 20 dollars an hour? You're barely worth 15! I can get somebody to work for 10 dollars an hour so see you later, buddy." You've stood up for yourself but now you are out of a job because you haven't considered the field in which you are acting. On the other hand, if you are being exploited maybe you have a legitimate beef.

So if you think you are being exploited then tell your boss what you think is reasonable, but don't act like you are entitled to that money, or that you deserve that money. It seems to me in this situation that there is some ego involved in what you are being paid. You are associating your actions with some monetary value. And if you are a spiritual person, you are not doing actions for the money. You are doing actions, doing karma yoga, for purification of the mind. Now that doesn't mean that money isn't important. Obviously you need money but you need to be very careful.

What are you really saying? Do you have low self-esteem? Often if you have low self-esteem you think that if you get something like more money that it will raise your sense of worth and you will feel more valuable. "Hey I'm getting 50 dollars an hour and you're only getting 20 dollars an hour so I'm more valuable than you." But is the "I", the self, in any way associated with material values? No.

So why are you doing this in the first place? If you feel that dharma is being violated, then approach the boss in a polite and friendly way. Make a good case for getting a raise. If they say no, look for another job.

The point is that in Vedanta we don't tell you what to do. We just tell you how to think and reveal all of the factors in the equation so that you can make an intelligent choice on your own. Maybe you should stay, keep your mouth shut, and agitate for more change in your job or whatever. I don't know.

Let's say that you get more money. Now what are you going to do with the extra money? If you want more money and you are a spiritual person going for *moksha* then there should be a good reason why you need more money. If you are thinking, "Well more money would make it easier for me to do my *sadhana*," be careful, because you don't want to cover up a worldly desire with a spiritual explanation. So you need to be asking yourself what this is really about. It's a very good question but there is no pat answer to it. There never is. In *samsara* there is no obvious solution. You have to think it through.

Student: It seems that simply asking, "Who is asking the question, the ego or awareness?" is a wonderful inquiry.

James: If you're an inquirer and you want to know who you are, then that question is important. Who is asking the question and why?

If you're the self, 8 dollars an hour is the same as 80 dollars an hour. The self is what sees things equally. When you have self-knowledge all objects have equal value. That's what *samdhi* means. *Samdhi* is not a particular yogic state of mind. It's just looking at reality from the point of view of awareness and from that point of view, all objects are equal. The 8 dollars or 80 dollars are both just consciousness appearing as different values. There are no good people or bad people, smart people or dumb people. All people are just consciousness appearing in the form of people. There will be discrimination but the fundamental vision will be that all things are equal. If it's an ego problem then tread carefully because you are tempting the boss, *Isvara*. And even if you are being exploited, you shouldn't stay in the job just because you need the money. Why? Because you are abusing yourself by staying there. It's like people who are in abusive relationships and they won't leave.

So you think about these questions through inquiry. You look at the situation from all of the different angles and try to get clear about how to respond. The intellect needs to respond. You have to respond, but your response should be based upon knowledge. Your *vasanas* are not necessarily knowledge.

What we are trying to do here in Vedanta is to get you to understand the *mandala* of existence, the nature of reality, and respond from the knowledge of reality, not from the basis of your own experience. If the intellect looks at things from the Vedantic point of view, and you make your decisions based upon self-knowledge, you won't have problems. If it's just on the basis of your feelings and your own experience, maybe you will get it right and maybe you won't.

We are trying to introduce a cognitive shift in values and knowledge at the intellectual level. There has to be some shift here in the way you see things. In other words you jump out of the whole chakra, step to the side and say, "Well who is asking the question?" And then you get a whole different take on things. And then you have to include *Isvara* and the uncertainty of things, all the while remembering that the ultimate goal is to know who you are.

When you are in this world you have to be careful because you have all these egos and all these desires and circumstances that are really beyond your control. You need to be very clear about what you are doing, and what you want, and how you do it by following dharma.

Student: To function in life from the perspective of the self it seems that I would not want anything. How does that work in the world?

James: If you see that everything in the world is the self, and that the wants are yourself or *Isvara*, and your wants are reasonable, then you can indulge your wants. That's what Krishna is going to tell

Arjuna. He is going to say, "I'm the desire that is not opposed to dharma." So there is nothing wrong with working out your wants. If you are the self, then that's different. But in this case we are talking about somebody, Arjuna, who doesn't know that they are the self. So he has to work in the world and work at his wants.

Student: I just don't get how awareness knows itself without means, without a body or a mirror?

James: Well, do you know that you exist?

Student: Yes.

James: How do you know that?

Student: (Silence)

James: You know that you exist because you exist. It's not your eyes or your mind or anything else that says you exist. You know you exist without any other means of knowledge. Because you exist, you know you exist. Nothing is required to know who you are other than who you are.

This is what this verse is talking about when it says that the self is subtler than the senses, mind and intellect. They can't see the self. It sees itself by itself without any instrument because *Maya* isn't covering all of awareness. *Maya* is just a tiny little fly speck of ignorance sitting like a little pimple on the face of awareness. Awareness is not hidden by *Maya* at all. It's self-aware or self-luminous. And it is non-dual, so there is no way that anything else could know it. It can only know itself by itself.

That you are conscious and that you exist is known to you because you are conscious and because you exist. This is obvious, and that is why Vedanta doesn't have to tell you that you are conscious and that you exist. All we have to do is take away your ignorance and leave awareness uncluttered by dumb ideas like "I am the Doer" and "I need this" and all of the other forms of ignorance that are floating around obscuring the appreciation of yourself as awareness.

This is very difficult to understand because as a *jiva* everything is known through the Subtle Body, the instrument of knowledge and experience. So the *jiva*, which is just awareness 'encapsulated' in the Subtle Body, cannot imagine that it can know itself without any thoughts or feelings or ideas. But all that this knowledge does is knock off ignorance. It's not going to leave you knowing anything special. It's just going to leave you as awareness knowing yourself as awareness.

The knowledge itself goes away along with the ignorance. It's like Alka-Seltzer. Once Alka-Seltzer has neutralized the acid in your stomach, it disappears. Similarly, once the knowledge has neutralized the ignorance, it disappears. And you are left knowing yourself as you are, without any external aid,

because you are 'knowingness' itself. If the self doesn't know itself by itself then there is no *moksha*, because you can't be free if you have to depend on a means of knowledge for your freedom.

Experience and knowledge—meaning intellectual knowledge and perception—work fine in the dharma field but they don't work for awareness because the self is beyond experience. It's *trigunatita*, beyond the three *gunas*. The only means of knowledge for awareness is Vedanta. Reading a few books isn't enough. You need to be taught Vedanta so you can be clear about what these teachings are, what they actually mean and how to apply them. Then you become your own guru and you take care of your own ignorance.

I can take away my ignorance but I can't take away your ignorance because that is standing in your account. Using the teachings of Vedanta, I can only show you what ignorance is and how to get rid of it. You will have to get rid of your own ignorance, but Vedanta will give you the tools to do it.

You can get rid of *avidya*, your own personal ignorance, but you can never get rid of *Maya*. When you wake up and find out who you are the world stays just as dumb as it was before. *Isvara* just continues to delude all beings. You've just removed your own delusion, that's all. You know who you are, you understand what *Isvara* is, and you understand how this works and where it fits into the big scheme of things, meaning where it fits with reference to awareness.

For this to work you need to consistently and faithfully apply your mind to it over and over and over, year after year, month after month, week after week, day after day. You just keep plugging away at it and gradually you will feel more happy, more clear, more peaceful, more secure, more confident. Everything just works. Don't worry about the end result. That is why Krishna is telling Arjuna to just do his duty. He's telling Arjuna to just do karma yoga and he's going to get there.

You are on the bus. You are not doing it, *Isvara* is doing it. You are on *Isvara's* bus and *Isvara* will get you there. The bus may break down a few times, but that's okay. Just stay on the bus. And when you are on the bus what do you do with your suitcase? You set it down. You don't need to carry it anymore so you can just sit, be free and look out the window and enjoy yourself.

That is why Ramana said to put your baggage down. When you have this means of knowledge, you relax. Put it down, just do your thing, look out the window, enjoy yourself, you are on the bus and you will get there because that is *Isvara's* promise. He says that over and over again.

Day 3 - Session 1

Chapter 4: Verse 1 - 11

Karma yoga means you have the right to act but you don't have the right to the results. Therefore, whatever emotional energy you have invested in getting what you want, once you've acted, is useless. You are wasting your emotions, your feelings and your energy worrying about the results, and "the results of actions" doesn't just mean what's going to happen in the future. It also means your life right now.

And how are you meant to deal with that? You are meant to take whatever happens right now—which is the result of your actions as it filters through the dharma field and comes back to you—as *prasad*. *Prasad* means "holy food." So it means you take the results of your actions as a gift. You don't care whether you get what you want, what you don't want, or something else altogether.

You are concerned with maintaining a peaceful, clear mind and burning your *vasanas* with this attitude. So you act with a spirit of gratitude because you have an obligation, a duty to respond to *Isvara's* demands, since *Isvara* has given you everything that is valuable. Your life is *Isvara's* way of talking to you and telling you what mistakes you've made, where you are right and where you are wrong, and it gives you an opportunity to correct yourself. You should be very happy for that opportunity so you take whatever comes as *prasad*.

What about the past? Again all your feelings, thoughts and regrets about what has happened are totally useless. They don't add value to the situation. Take what has already happened as dead, gone and finished. It's all a gift from *Bhagavan*. This attitude burns up your likes and dislikes. In other words, what *Bhagavan* wants for you is more important than what you want for yourself. You have your wants and that's fair enough. But you want to value the information from the field more than you value your fears and your desires. In this way, *Bhagavan*, the field, awareness in the form of the creator will lead you where you need to go.

Some of you have read my autobiography, "Mystic By Default." I wrote it, but it isn't really my story. It's *Bhagavan's* story. All I did was follow the clues. *Bhagavan* made things happen, I thought about them and then I moved in that direction. If I made a mistake *Bhagavan* gave me a whack so I would learn that that wasn't the way to go. Gradually, I kept getting closer and closer to my goal.

"Mystic By Default" means that I didn't set out to be a mystic. *Bhagavan* was in me and I listened to *Bhagavan* talking or I 'followed my heart' as they say and it led me to my guru, to Vedanta and ultimately to *moksha*. The events in your life are orchestrated for the purpose of your own enlightenment, if you have this attitude. If you are just out to get what you want for 'Ol' Number One', meaning the ego, then it's anybody's guess where you will end up. You'll just be stuck in *samsara* knocking heads with everybody else, competing with them for *Bhagavan's* stuff. But we don't want *Bhagavans'* stuff. We want *Bhagavan*. We want to know who we are and what life is all about. We are knowledge seekers. So our interest is not in getting something from the world.

There is nothing wrong with chasing things in the world. But the problem is that for anything even slightly valuable there are always more people who want it than people who don't want it. Take air, for example. Who wants air? Nobody, because there is always plenty of air. But a Rolls Royce? There is a limited number of those, they cost a lot of money and a lot of people want them. So you can pray to *Bhagavan* all the time for a Rolls Royce but whether you get it or not just depends upon the nature of the field and all the other desires in the field. It's a tough life. The more valuable a thing is, the less available it is and the more competition there is for getting it. Say you want a relationship with Angelina Jolie. Lots of other people do too, but *Bhagavan* has already decided on that one. He sent her Brad Pitt. It's that way with everything in this world.

In addition, when you get what you want you only feel whole and complete for a short time. And then you go right back to feeling incomplete again and you have to dig up another *vasana* and another object to pursue and off you go chasing it. This is very important to understand because it's the main issue in the beginning. Are you going to chase objects or are you going to chase yourself? If you are going to chase yourself, the thing that is standing in the way is your *vasanas*, your likes and your dislikes. So these things need to be cleared to some degree, before you can appreciate the value of this teaching.

In a way Krishna wasn't a very skillful teacher in the beginning because he just blasted Arjuna with the truth all at once without even giving him a lot of logic. He just said, "This is how it is." Maybe Arjuna was intelligent enough to have some of the subtle *prakriyas*, teachings, worked on him such as the three states analysis. But all the same, he wasn't prepared and that's the point.

That you have to do some preparation is not a popular idea. Nobody else is telling you that you have to do this work. All the gurus present *moksha* as some kind of experience or state, something that you can just get, but it doesn't work that way. If it was so easy to get *moksha*, then why doesn't everybody get it? Millions of people want freedom but when you look at the facts, only a handful of people get freedom. Now why is that? Either it's an unskillful teaching, an unskillful teacher, or the person who is seeking *moksha* isn't qualified.

We are from wealthy cultures and we are entitled people and it's a democratic society so we feel like, "It's my inalienable right to have my *moksha*!" We basically want the world to kiss our butts because we are so wonderful and so special. But *Bhagavan* doesn't think you are wonderful and special. *Bhagavan* just sees everything as *Bhagavan* and delivers to you what you need according to your karma, your actions.

Action will not produce *moksha* because you are already free. You cannot do an action that will get you free. But action can clear and purify your mind. So action or karma is for *antahkarana shudhi*.

Antahkarana means “the inner workings” or “the inner cause.” *Antah* means “before.” My face is like a clock face and behind the clock are all these gears and springs. All you see are the hands going around. But to get the hands to go around you have all these little gears working like crazy. That is what’s called the *antahkarana*, and it is the instrument of knowledge and experience. Unless it’s prepared, this knowledge is not going to stick. Even if you appreciate it for a minute or a month or longer, you will unappreciate it at some point when those *vasanas* you haven’t taken care of come back.

In India I met a Japanese fellow who was quite famous. While he was skiing down Mount Fuji he entered into some kind of *samdhi* and he continued in that state for 4 years. Then some *vasana* kicked up its ugly little head, he got identified with it and he came crashing down back into the *samsaric* state of mind, and he was so miserable, like a fish out of water, just gasping. He was in total pain because he had lost this most valuable, beautiful thing. He dropped everything, went to India and was in the Muktananda ashram hoping that the Swami could zap him with this experience again. The spiritual world is full of people whose minds have been temporarily *sattvic*. Awareness illumined their mind, they concentrated on it and felt really high and happy. And they said, “I’m enlightened,” until they weren’t.

The point is unless your mind is prepared, these *vasanas* will grab you, irrespective of how you feel, so you have to be alert. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance. I was sitting in an internet shop reading my book waiting for a computer to come free, and across from me is this serious babe. She was like, “Excuse me,” and it was hard not to look at her because she was so beautiful, but I didn’t want to embarrass her so I just ignored her and kept reading my book. Every once in a while I would feel this energy coming in my direction and I would look up and she would smile at me. Pretty soon the guy next to me gets up from his computer and she gets up and moves next to me and starts vibing on me. And I’m thinking, “Are you out of your mind? I’m old enough to be your father.” So finally I turned to her and we started a conversation.

She said she didn’t know why she was talking to me but that she felt she had something to tell me. Her story was that she had been with Papaji and he had said she was enlightened. So she went back to Italy to take care of her brother. Before, when she was in Italy, she hated Italy and everybody there. She didn’t like her life and everything was a mess. But when she went back after Papaji telling her she was enlightened, everything was just perfect. Things just flowed, everything worked and she was so happy. This amazing state lasted for four or five months.

Then one day, Mr. Right came along and she thought, “I’ll take this as *prasad*” and she got involved with him. Within one month she was more miserable than she had ever been before. She lost her state, she was fighting with this guy; everything went wrong. A *vasana* was just sitting there and it had never been dealt with. It had never been thought through or worked out. When it came up, instead of acting it out totally in the karma yoga spirit or just renouncing it and sticking with what she

had, she went for it. She thought that because she was enlightened nothing could touch her. She got money and a job and she thought *Bhagavan* was also giving her this guy. But you can't trust *Bhagavan*. Swamiji used to say that the Hindu gods are like that. With one hand they're blessing you and with the other hand they're giving you the business. So you have to use your discrimination all of the time.

And the very first discrimination or teaching that Arjuna needs is the knowledge of yoga. That is why Krishna says, "I've taught you knowledge and now I'm going to teach you yoga." This teaching is going to correct your attachment to your likes and dislikes. You are going to have your likes and dislikes; everybody does. But they need to be carefully managed and looked after so that they aren't the driving motivator or force in your life. So that is what karma yoga is for. It will make you contemplative.

In the beginning Krishna says that there are two lifestyles, that of the karma yogi and that of the *sannyasi*." In traditional Vedanta, there are only two lifestyles or paths: the path of action (experience) and the path of knowledge. All other apparent paths fall under one of these two categories.

Why do you want an incredible experience or to feel good? Because you feel bad. That's the psychology here. But does creating circumstances that make you feel good like getting high or falling in love or whatever that take care of the reason that you feel bad? No. So what Vedanta says is to investigate why you feel bad. Don't try to cover the feel bad with a feel good experience. You may get the feel good experience but that old feel bad, that *vasana*, that problem, will come back and you will be right back where you were before.

So by searching for some kind of pleasant experience in the *samsara*, you are not doing *sadhana*. You are just postponing, delaying or avoiding doing what you need to do. You need to look at why you feel bad, and if you dig into the cause, you can unravel the source of the problem and deal with it. Then, your mind will become clear and steady. We're not looking to feel good or to feel bad, neither one. Those things happen according to our karma. But we are interested in understanding the cause, the why. This is all about the why.

Like yesterday a fellow asked about whether he should tell his boss that he is worth being paid more. Well, I can't tell him whether he should say something to the boss or not. But we can examine what his thinking is, what is causing him to ask that question and all of the factors involved in it and then he can make an intelligent choice.

Student: Before you told us the karma yoga attitude is the result of this knowledge. So there is only knowledge.

James: Yes that's true. There is only knowledge. Karma yoga is just knowledge. When you

understand and get this knowledge you will automatically assume that attitude. But until you are clear about it, you have to keep practicing. You will surrender to *Isvara* when you understand what *Isvara* is. You will surrender because you realize there is no other choice. But until you understand *Isvara*, then you keep struggling. So knowledge will set you free but action is also necessary.

You are right that there is actually only knowledge. But Arjuna doesn't know that. You know that because you are a *sannyasi*. Krishna just presents it as an attitude that you take with respect to action and its result. He says, "Change your attitude. You're here whining, complaining. You're negative. You're depressed and you're suffering. That attitude is not working. So here's a new way to think about things."

Student: Self-help gurus also say to change your attitude. But you are saying change the attitude from the context that you are awareness, not from the context that you are your mind?

James: That's right, from the knowledge. In other words, operate from knowledge, not from your desires and fears. Knowledge tells you that this attitude is a good attitude. Dispassion with reference to the results of your action is really the only attitude because the results aren't up to you. If you are in control of the results, then you can have any attitude that you want. But you don't make things happen. You make actions and sometimes results come that make you believe that you were the author. But that belief is caused by a failure to understand *Isvara*.

Isvara is the whole key. The self is no big deal. It's just awareness. And you as a person, your life and your psychological problems, is not a big deal either. You know all about that. But what about *Isvara*? What about the world around you? That's the hard part to understand because when you are too egocentric you don't care about the world around you. Your desires are just pushing you.

This is why the topic of dharma comes into the topic of karma. When your desires and fears are too strong, you don't consider your environment, the field in which you are acting. You are driven by fear, desire and pain and you violate the rules of the field, or you go against your own nature, or both. If you are going against your own nature, it means you have a lot of inner conflict, which means that you are going to be very agitated, which in turn means that you are going to have a lot of problems with your environment: your wife, your kids, your job and all that stuff. You have to take the field into account.

The Neo Advaitan's don't give you any of this: values, action, doership. None of these things are considered. They just say, "You're awareness. Just get it!" But you can't just get it. You need to have an understanding of the big picture and Vedanta gives you that big picture.

CHAPTER 4: KNOWLEDGE AND THE RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

Verse 1 - "I taught this eternal yoga to Visvasan who taught it to Manu who taught it to the kingly sages. It was handed down from generation to generation but as time passed it has been almost completely forgotten. Because you are my friend I will reveal this secret path to you."

Verse 2 - Arjuna said, "You were born recently but Visvasan lived thousands of years ago. It doesn't seem likely that you taught Visvasan in the beginning"

Here again, Arjuna has a problem. He says, "Hey boss. You were born recently but Visvasan lived thousands of years ago. It doesn't seem likely that you taught Visvasan in the beginning." Here Krishna is speaking as *Ishvara*, as the self operating *Maya*. But Arjuna misunderstands because he just sees Krishna as his friend, a guy who is going to help him in this conflicting situation. Arjuna is polite and that's why he says, "It doesn't seem likely." He doesn't just attack him. Arjuna is always polite. He's a cultured person who knows how to talk. Before he said, "You are telling me seemingly contradictory words." So Arjuna is leaving himself some wiggle room to be wrong. He isn't just pointing at the guru and saying, "You're wrong!" and arguing.

Verse 5 - The Lord replied, "Many births have passed for both of us, Arjuna! I know them all but they are unknown to you. Even though I am the unborn Lord of all beings and my self-knowledge is unshakable I seemingly come into being through the power of my own *Maya*. Whenever there is a decline in right living and people become addicted to corrupt ways I assume a physical body and appear in the world to establish dharma by encouraging and protecting those committed to it and destroying those who violate it.

"I seemingly come into being..."

This means that what Arjuna is seeing is only an appearance. This is a seeming reality, not a real reality. If it's a real reality then you can never get rid of it because there is no way you can dismiss something that is real. But you can dismiss something that is seemingly real like a mirage on the desert. This is an important point. If you see a mirage on the desert, how do you dismiss it or get rid of it? You understand that it's only an appearance. You see the mirage and you think you will be able to drink from it. So you walk one quarter of a mile and then you see that the water has moved one quarter of a mile. So then you walk again and you see that the water has also moved. You start thinking, "Where is that water? Where is it because when I move, it moves." Eventually you come to the conclusion, "The water must be in my mind. Somehow my mind must be projecting water there, and I'm not seeing actual water. I'm seemingly seeing water." So just like the mirage, this seeming

reality of bodies, minds, people and things can be dismissed by knowledge, by understanding.

An important point to make about the example of the mirage is that when you know it isn't real, you still see it. I have to mention this because many in the spiritual world believe that once you understand that you are awareness that *Maya*, the appearance of the world, goes away. They think the world is going to suddenly disappear and they will just be in this radiant field of light and bliss without any objects, or something like that. But just like the mirage, when you understand that this is a seeming reality it, it doesn't go away. Your body and mind remain and they keep interacting with the apparent reality in exactly the same way. The difference is that you know it's an apparent reality, instead of believing that it's real. Remember, the definition of "real" in Vedanta is "permanent."

If you look at *Maya*, how can you describe it? How can you describe any object, for that matter? Everything here is under the spell of the *gunas* and everything is changing from moment to moment. So, an object that is known to be one thing one moment, is something else the next. If an object is in this state of constant change, how do you describe it? What's the reality of it? It has no reality. It has an apparent reality. This whole world is just flickering on and off.

It's like when you go to the movies and you see a mountain on the screen. The mountain looks still, permanent and solid. But it isn't. The image is flickering on and off so fast that the eye cannot detect the change, so it appears that the mountain is still when in fact it is constantly being created and destroyed. That is exactly how this reality is when you start to investigate it. You cannot put your finger on any one of these objects or processes or events and say, "This is that and that is this" because from one minute to the next it's changing.

This is what we mean by "appearance." *Maya* is making everything look like it's solid and real just like the projector and moving film make the mountain look solid and real. This is why we call it beautiful, intelligent ignorance. It's such an amazingly well designed movie. It smells interesting, tastes interesting, feels interesting and seems to be so real. We just assume that it is real. If you knew it wasn't real, would you chase it? If you knew that the water was a mirage, would you try to drink the water? No.

All objects break down under inquiry. That's what inquiry is. Inquiry is looking for the source, the cause, that part of the object that you cannot remove—its essence. What is the essence of every object? Awareness. When you break down any object, you get to awareness. There are no objects without awareness.

Let's do the analysis of matter inquiry. I have an aluminum pipe. But I say it's not really an aluminum pipe. I say it's atoms, protons, neutrons and electrons spinning around in space creating the appearance of the pipe. Scientists would also tell you it's not a pipe. When they get their instruments and start looking at it they see the constituent elements of the pipe. At first they thought there were

only atoms but as their instruments became better they saw that there was more than just atoms here. They found mesons, quarks, bosons and then the Higg's boson. And all of those particles exist in space so you can't discount space. Where do space and the particles exist? In awareness. Without awareness there is no space and no particles vibrating in space. From whatever level we look at matter, from the Newtonian or from the Quantum level, everything still reduces down to awareness, to consciousness.

All of these teachings are just ways that we break down this crystallized structure of *Maya*. Because of ignorance, we have crystallized our lives. *Maya* has caused you to get fossilized or crystallized so that everything you see looks solid and familiar and real. You think you are really operating in a real reality here, until it changes or until a new factor that you have no knowledge of enters the picture, and then suddenly you don't know what to do with it. Inquiry is applying this knowledge consistently in every situation and reducing all objects to awareness. It's very simple.

Student: A business colleague of mine said, "What gets measured gets managed." What you are suggesting, is that there is no tool to measure awareness.

James: No, there is no tool, no instrument. And that is why we can't talk to the scientists. They require perception and inference. Those are their means of knowledge. But we know that perception and inference do not work on awareness. All instruments are experiential. So we can't argue with them. It's not that they are wrong. They go right down to awareness when they get to space, the ground of the material world, but they cannot go to awareness.

Space was the first element to come, then sound emerged, and then those vibrations created the objects. It's amazing how it works. So they go all the way down to space and objects but the one factor they cannot accept is the scientist himself, awareness what is watching and observing the objects. They will not turn their attention around and say, "Isn't it consciousness that knows this, isn't consciousness the most essential part of the equation?" It's generally discounted.

We don't object to any of the findings of science, none. Our means of knowledge is for consciousness not for objects. But we have a way of getting to consciousness by inquiring into the nature of objects, and it's scientific. All objects reduce to consciousness because every object is experienced in the subtle body as knowledge of an object: tree knowledge, wife knowledge, grass knowledge. And the subtle body is experienced where? Where is it located? In consciousness. So all the objects reduce to knowledge of objects and the knowledge of objects reduces to consciousness because you cannot have knowledge without consciousness. So consciousness is the essence of reality.

People say, "Well when I understand consciousness, then I'll be all-knowing." Yes you will and no you won't. Yes you will understand everything as consciousness, but you won't understand all of the details of objects because only *Isvara* understands all of the details. Just because you know who you

are does not mean that you are not going to become *Isvara* and create, sustain and destroy the whole universe.

Even if you get some special psychic powers, you will never get a power that will produce the whole universe. Only *Isvara* has the knowledge to create this whole thing because it's total, absolute, complete knowledge. *Isvara* knows the details of every single object right down to the nitty gritty. *Isvara* knows how bosons work and what their relationship to quarks is. And *Isvara* has organized all those different quantum and sub-quantum layers and keeps them operating endlessly.

So when you understand that it's all consciousness you still won't have the knowledge that *Isvara* has, the knowledge of all of the details, and you won't have all the powers of *Isvara*. *Jiva* has its powers—the power to create, the power of knowledge, the power of action—and so does *Isvara*. But *Isvara*'s knowledge is total and *jiva*'s knowledge is limited, incomplete. It doesn't matter that you find yourself in this little *jiva* body when you know that you are awareness. It's fine and you are happy to leave all of the creation business to *Isvara*.

Krishna is talking to Arjuna as *Isvara*. You have to understand *Isvara*. *Isvara* is the dharma field as well as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the dharma field; it is the deliverer of the results of action. The word "*Isvara*" can also mean pure consciousness. Why is there a difference between *Isvara* as pure consciousness, and *Isvara* as the creator?

If reality is non-dual, which is what the scripture says, it means that there is nothing but consciousness. *Dvaita* means "two." "*Advaita*" means "not two." So *Advaita Vedanta*—as you sometimes see Vedanta called—is saying that there's not two principles here. There's only one principle: consciousness. So from consciousness's 'point of view' there is no creation because there is only consciousness. But if it's all consciousness, then how do we account for all of the different names and forms, all of the different *jivas* and plants and animals?

Let's call the self *paramatma*. *Atma* means "self" or "the essence." What is essential is *parama*. *Parama* means "has no limits." So awareness has no limits, and there is no creation in it. It's unborn. Krishna has taught Arjuna about consciousness, about himself, and he's said that it's unborn.

But we know that creation is born. The very fact that it's called a creation means it wasn't here at one time, it's here now, and that it won't be here at some time in the future. In other words, this creation is born and it dies. Science tells us that. This creation 'banged' into existence, so we know at some point that it wasn't here and we also know at some time it will disappear.

So what is the relationship between the creation and awareness? Awareness isn't creating any objects. It's not creating creation. But if it doesn't have the power to create, it can't be limitless because it would be limited by its inability to create. But scripture is very clear that it has no limits. It

says awareness doesn't begin or end and that it doesn't modify to experience. It often refers to awareness as *brahman*, which means, "has no limits."

Awareness plus *Maya* makes the apparent creation possible. *Maya* is a power, a shakti, in awareness that allows awareness to create. And it's a funny kind of creation that we have here. It's a two-way creation. Normally when you create in this world the thing that you use as a substance for the creation gets changed into something else.

An example is turning milk into cheese. You have milk as the substance and you subject it to a process and it becomes cheese. Can you take that cheese and go back to get milk? Can you reverse the process and get the milk back? No, because the substance has been transformed into a different nature. Cheese has a different nature than milk.

What if awareness becomes this world? Then there is no awareness because it's been transformed. But awareness has not become this world. If awareness has become this world then how are you going to get it back once it's disappeared to become this world? When there is an actual transformation of one thing to another, like milk to cheese, it's called *parinama*. But awareness creates in a different way in a process called *vivarta*. *Vivarta* is an apparent transformation. It means that awareness only appears as or seems to be this world. "Seems" and "apparent" are key words here.

Awareness plus *Maya* equals the creator and we call that *Isvara*. *Isvara* cannot create without awareness. If there is no awareness than *Isvara* cannot create. So how does it create? Creation arises out of awareness because in a non-dual reality, there is no other substance. So awareness is the *upadana karana*, the material cause of the creation. And when the power of *Maya* is operating, awareness as *Isvara* creates the material world out of itself. *Maya* or *Isvara* is the *nimitta karana*, the efficient cause of the creation, or in other words, the intelligence that makes awareness appear to be the various subtle and gross objects.

Student: I'm just having a little trouble with something actionless creating. I know this happens through *Maya*. What is really happening when actionlessness becomes activated?

James: When awareness is filtered through or becomes activated through *Maya*, then we get the causal, subtle and gross worlds.

Student: How does something that is actionless, activate?

James: It doesn't. It apparently activates.

This is why you will see the expression, "Nothing ever happened." Awareness doesn't become this

creation, the way milk becomes cheese. It doesn't become an active, dynamic thing at all. It only appears to be a dynamic, active thing, the way clay only appears to be a pot or gold only appears to be a ring. Any object made out of clay or gold is never anything but clay or gold. The clay and gold never change. The forms made of them are only appearances. Similarly, any object made out of awareness is only awareness. Awareness itself is never changed or lost. When you have a created object, you always have awareness present. The objects that you have are created out of awareness.

Where do all the objects appear? As thoughts in your mind. And the thoughts are made of, and inseparable from, your mind. Where does your mind exist? In you, in consciousness. Now, look at your own experience. Can you find a mind separate from you, from consciousness? Is there any evidence that the mind is coming from some different universe or that it's made from some substance other than awareness? No. The mind is made of awareness, awareness under the spell of *Maya* waves. Even though the ocean of awareness doesn't change when *Maya* is operating, it gets a wave in it. And that wave is called a *vritti*, a thought. In the same way that a wave is nothing but the ocean, a *vritti* is nothing but awareness. Waves are only appearances that do not change the water that is the ocean. Similarly, *vrittis*, objects, are only appearances that do not change awareness.

Student: So the milk only apparently turns into cheese?

James: Milk does turn into cheese. It is an example of *parinama*, an actual transformation of one thing into another. But the 'transformation' of awareness into objects is *vivarta*, apparent, like a rope appearing to be a snake. When you see a snake where there is only a rope, the rope never actually becomes a snake. The creation of the snake is only apparent, a product of ignorance.

The snake and the rope story happens at twilight. Because in midday there is enough light—light represents knowledge—that you can't mistake a rope for a snake. And at night in total darkness—darkness represents ignorance—you can't mistake a rope for a snake because you can't see anything at all. So there are no mistakes in total ignorance and no mistakes in full knowledge. That is why the story takes place at twilight, a time when there is a little bit of light and darkness, because only when you have knowledge and ignorance mixed up altogether—*Maya*—can you make a mistake like thinking a thing is something it isn't.

If the rope actually becomes a snake, then it's a real snake and it can bite you. But remember the old man comes along and laughs and says, "Hey that's a rope. There's no snake." He is looking at it objectively, not subjectively. He is not under the spell of *Maya*. He sees what is actually there and the snake disappears. And you can't get it back once you know that it's a rope. Next time you look at it you know it's a rope. It won't appear as a snake to you again. Whereas, the mirage on the desert, it will continue to appear as water.

Arjuna has taken himself to be a *jiva* and he takes this world that he is in to be real. He doesn't know

it's just a projection. He doesn't know that he is in a dream called beautiful, intelligent ignorance. He is caught up in the dream, he is identified with it and he is emotional. He takes the objects to be real. So he's been told to worship *Isvara*. In other words he's been told to understand the total.

Look at your own context. Get yourself in harmony with your environment, your life and then you will be able to dismiss *Isvara* and the *jiva*. But until you do that, this is not going to make any sense. It makes sense to us because we are Vedantins and we don't have the problem that Arjuna has. It's fairly easy for us to understand this.

Verse 5 - The Lord replied, "Many births have passed for both of us, Arjuna! I know them all but they are unknown to you. Even though I am the unborn Lord of all beings and my self-knowledge is unshakable I seemingly come into being through the power of my own *Maya*. Whenever there is a decline in right living and people become addicted to corrupt ways I assume a physical body and appear in the world to establish dharma by encouraging and protecting those committed to it and destroying those who violate it."

"Though I am the unborn Lord of all beings and my self-knowledge is unshakable..."

Why is awareness's knowledge unshakeable? Because it knows itself and there is nothing other than it to contradict its knowledge. So when you know who you are, that is the end of it. You can never forget because there is no other means of knowledge to contradict you. Your experience and your memory don't contradict you. Does the wave contradict the ocean? Does the clay contradict the pot? Does the ring contradict the gold? No.

The Veda makes a statement that all is consciousness: *prajnanam brahman*. Awareness is consciousness and consciousness is limitless. That means that there is only consciousness. Understanding this is a problem because we don't experience only consciousness. Technically, we do, but when we don't know it, we see objects and take them to be real. We take this experience of duality to be real and it contradicts the assertion of the Vedas that reality is non-dual. That almost everybody takes their experience to be real is why so few people are qualified for Vedanta. It is hard to swallow when Vedanta says, "What you are experiencing is not real. Your experiences are only apparently real and you are being tricked. *Maya, Isvara*, is tricking you."

Student: Is it fair to say that part of the role of *Maya* is to give humans a chance to realize who they really are?

James: Yes, because when you are under the spell of *Maya* you suffer, and suffering is not natural because you're actually non-dual awareness and your nature is bliss. When *Maya* is operating,

awareness apparently suffers, and that suffering is not natural to you. This is why, whenever you feel limited in any way your life boils down to nothing but a series of attempts to remove that sense of limitation. Which means that *Maya* is actually forcing you to realize who you are.

Student: Is it fair to say that this is part of the human journey, to realize this game?

James: What Vedanta says is to just analyze human behavior. The teachings are based upon experience. What universal conclusion can you draw from human experience? That suffering is not acceptable to human beings. If suffering was acceptable then we wouldn't need to have a scripture.

If you think suffering is good then you don't need Vedanta. But nobody thinks like that, because suffering is not your nature. It's your nature to enjoy yourself. That is why the second word in the chant I use at the beginning of the teaching is *paramasukha*. It means that your nature is nothing but pure satisfaction.

You have to get this psychology clear. When you act, it's always an attempt to get rid of a sense of limitation. And when you feel full and whole and complete, do you try to get rid of that feeling? No. When you feel whole and complete, happy and blissful, you hang onto it like anything, like that Japanese guy who hung onto his experience of fullness and completeness for four years until some other thought came in and he lost it.

When you have the tiniest irritation you move, you change, you do some action to get rid of it. If you feel lonely then maybe you get on Match.com. It's not because you want a girl or a guy although you think that's the reason why. It's because you want to get rid of loneliness because loneliness makes you feel limited and inadequate. Every single thing you do is an attempt to get rid of the feeling of limitation. So that means that freedom is your nature. Your nature is limitless.

The sad fact is that *Maya* makes you think that some object can get rid of that feeling of limitation. But the object can't get rid of that feeling because the feeling is caused by ignorance—beautiful, intelligent ignorance—not the absence of an object. Get this psychology clear because once you do, you are home free.

Student: So, is it the nature of the self to realize the self?

James - Yes. It is the self that realizes the self. It's never the *jiva* that realizes the self unless you take *jiva* to mean awareness associated with the Subtle Body. It's always only the self that realizes the self because there isn't anything other than the self to realize. If reality is non-dual then there are no people here to realize the self.

When a person says, "I realized the self, or that I am enlightened" you know very well that they are an

idiot and that they haven't understood what that statement means. You were never not the self and there is nobody else to realize it. They are making it look like this person got this thing called the self, but it's never like that. All that happened was that the self lost its apparent ignorance. It obviously can't be real ignorance because if the ignorance is real, it can't be lost.

So the only solution to this quest is to understand. The solution is knowledge. And knowledge is just removing ignorance. The knowledge of who you are is already in you. Knowledge is just waiting to be uncovered or discovered. The knowledge that you are awareness is always present.

That is why Swami Dayananda would say that just one experience of yourself as awareness is enough to convince you that you are awareness. It just takes one because you actually are awareness. It's very difficult to stop thinking that you are limited because *Maya* makes you, awareness, identify with the subtle body, and the subtle body is full of notions and ideas, all of which are telling you that you are limited, inadequate and incomplete.

Student: Did Swami Dayananda mean an experience of awareness or a clear hit of the knowledge?

James: Knowledge and experience would be the same thing. You are always experiencing awareness because there is only awareness. But when your mind gets really *sattvic* you get the experience of awareness as an object and the knowledge of that arises in your subtle body and you know, "I'm awareness" until the experience ends when *sattva* becomes *rajas* or *tamas* and the knowledge goes away.

Now in Ramana's case he retained the knowledge, or at least we think he did. He had the experience, and when the experience was over he was left with the knowledge, "I'm awareness." He didn't go back and try to recreate the experience because he got what was valuable out of the experience which is the knowledge, "I'm awareness."

Sundari says, "Experience is a decaying time capsule meant to deliver knowledge." It's a capsule in time that's always decaying and it's releasing knowledge. If you grab the knowledge then you are free of object experience because it's always decaying. But the experience of your self is never changing. It never decays. This is why, when we have our satsangs here and your mind gets *sattvic*, everybody feels whole and peaceful and complete and clear. We are just experiencing our self. It's just the self experiencing the self, and that feeling is a feeling of peace, bliss, clarity, etc.

Student: So in fact creation is impossible?

James: Yes that's right. But *Maya* makes the impossible, possible. It's impossible that there be a creation here but *Maya* makes the impossible possible and creates this dream. When you are in a dream you think that what you are experiencing is real. Your wife leaves you in a dream and you feel

suffering, but when you wake up, your wife is still there smiling at you. So the reality of the dream is contradicted by the reality of the waking. Until you wake up to the understanding that you are awareness you always believe that this world is real, and you think that the person you appear to be is real. And that causes some existential discomfort.

I don't really like the *avatara* teaching in the next verse because it makes a lot of problems. It's kind of true but people make crazy things out of this teaching. Look at the Sai Babas of the world and every other third rate idiot who has had some sort of epiphany. They make a web site saying they are the *avatara* of this or that because it's just become a huge spiritual status.

It's a subtle teaching and there is truth to it but it's not like you think it is, and it's not something that's going to happen to you. I sometimes say, "I'm the *avatara* of the Aquarian Age" but *it's just a joke*. All Krishna is saying here is that when individuals in this society suffer from *Maya* they get in a state of anger and fear and they go to war with each other, they start destroying. That is the situation, and when you have this kind of conflict in yourself and with the world, then there is a spiritual power that comes into your life and starts to change you. He is just expressing this in terms of society, but society is nothing but individuals.

When you are in a state of conflict then the self is going to appear in one way or the other, and that means an *avatara*. It's going to come down and take incarnation and appear to you in the form of a book or whatever. All of this spiritual ferment is nothing but the self appearing here to correct the problem that will destroy society unless it's corrected. So all of us sitting here, we are *Isvara* and we are the solution to the problem. As we get knowledge, it goes out and transforms lives, and the balance between dharma and *adharma* is re-established. When there is too much suffering, *adharma* is winning. Krishna is saying here that he has come down to be on the side of dharma to make sure that dharma doesn't get eradicated.

What if Duryodhana had gotten first choice and had chosen Krishna? Boy that would have been a mess, because then Duryodhana would have had power over Krishna and he would have said, "Let's establish *adharma*." Obviously that can't happen because that's not the way reality is. The self has got to come down on the side of dharma to maintain the balance, because *Maya* is creating all of this pain and suffering. It's creating all of the ignorance. *Isvara* is both the pain and the suffering and the solution to pain and suffering.

After we said that yoga is discretion in action, meaning you can choose to act in a *dharmic* way or an adharmic way, someone asked, "Well what about *Isvara*?" *Isvara* is dharma as well as *adharma*. So that is why we say that you need discrimination and you need to be able to say no to *Isvara*.

You can see the apparently contradictory nature of *Isvara* because yesterday he wanted us to transmit the seminar and today he doesn't want us to. Now that's a pervert. One day he makes everybody

out there on the internet happy because they are getting the knowledge and the next day he makes a big storm, destroys everything his knowledge doesn't get out.

So you have these two forces. *Isvara* is appearing as both, and you can't have it either/or. What the Christians have done is that they have God on one side and then they call the other side somebody else, the Devil. But we don't have a dualistic notion of reality. We have a non-dual notion of reality, so if *Isvara* is anything *Isvara* has got to be everything.

Student: So is *Isvara* neutral?

James: Yes, *Isvara* is neutral because *Isvara* is actually awareness, which is the other meaning of the word *Isvara*. But when *Maya* is operating *Isvara* creates dharma and *adharma*. Duality comes and you have light and dark, good and bad, up and down, in and out. You have all the dualities and they're called the *dvandvas*. Then life just becomes an attempt to get out of duality.

"...I seemingly come into being through the power of my own Maya. Whenever there is a decline in right living and people become addicted to corrupt ways I assume a physical body and appear in the world to establish dharma by encouraging and protecting those committed to it and destroying those who violate it."

This refers to *jnanis*, teachers of Vedanta and other spiritual teachers because we do the same thing that *avataras* do. We give self-knowledge to people to help correct the suffering in the society.

Verse 9 – "Those who understand the reality of my divine birth and my purpose here, let go of attachment to the body, realize who I am and are not born again. Free of craving, fear and anger, happy with only Me and purified by the discipline of self knowledge many come back to Me."

Verse 11 – "In whatever way people worship Me I bless them according to their worship. People follow my path in many ways. If they desire the results of their actions they worship the world. In the world results come quickly."

Student: Is the Bhagavad Gita written in the same translation all of the time?

James: No, there are tons of different translations. Every Tom, Dick and Harry has a translation. We are using my English rendition of Swami Dayananda's translation. I've read his Bhagavad Gita Home Study Course twice and I'm going through it a third time. It's two thousand pages long. I'm very careful about it so you won't get any discrepancies. Every time I teach it I find a word or two that I would like to jiggle.

Student: When you use the words “seems” or “seemingly,” are those words that are used in the traditional texts?

James: The traditional texts are written in Sanskrit, so they use the word *mithya*. Swami Dayananda translates *mithya* as “as though” or “as if” but I use “seems” or “seemingly.”

Brahma satyam jagat-mithya jivo brahmaiva naparah. This is a statement made by Adi Shankaracharya and it is the essence of Vedanta. *Brahma satyam* means awareness is the truth, or in other words, that there is only awareness. *Jagat* means “world.” So *brahma satyam jagat mithya* means, “The world appears but only *brahman* is real.” *Jivo brahmaiva naparah* means, “There is no difference between *jiva* and *brahman*.” *Jiva* is *brahman* appearing as any kind of living, sentient, embodied being, be it a person, a dog, a plant or even a microbe. Even though each *jiva* has a different body or program, at their essence, each one is *brahman*.

Student: What’s the definition of an insentient and a sentient being?

James: Insentient means “not aware” and sentient means “aware.” A chair is insentient, inert; it doesn’t have intelligence. It has no knowing faculty, no Subtle Body. Sentient beings have subtle bodies. They are conscious and they each have their own *vijnanam*, special knowledge that allows them to exist and to survive.

The sentience that we enjoy comes from awareness. The gross elements—or matter—that make up an insentient object like a chair are composed of *tamas*, so they absorb the light of awareness, similar to the way a black cloth absorbs sunlight. But the Subtle Body is composed of *sattva*, which gives it the ability to ‘reflect’ awareness, similar to the way a mirror reflects sunlight. And that allows the Subtle Body to be intelligent and sentient.

Day 3: Session 2

Chapter 4: Verse 11 - 31

Verse 11 – “In whatever way people worship Me I bless them according to their worship. People follow my path in many ways. If they desire the results of their actions they worship the world. In the world, results come quickly.”

“In whatever way people worship Me I bless them according to their worship.”

If you want six pack abs, you have to get them from *Isvara* because *Isvara* gives the results of actions.

So how do you worship *Isvara* to get six pack abs? You do sit ups. You offer your actions to *Isvara* in the appropriate way and *Isvara* gives you the appropriate results according to your worship.

If you love Jesus, can you pray to Jesus, dedicate your karma yoga to Jesus and get the same result? Yes you can. If you're into Allah, you can worship Allah. It doesn't matter because the self is beyond all forms, be they material, religious or otherwise. Your self knows what you want even before you know what you want. So it just delivers the results to you that are appropriate according to your form of worship. Every prayer, thought, feeling and physical action is an invocation of *Bhagavan*, and *Bhagavan* is required to respond to whomever you are and wherever you are, from the jungle to the boardrooms of New York.

What do the stock brokers on Wall St. worship? Money. So they worship *Bhagavan* by playing the stock market and investing. Then *Bhagavan*, according to the nature of their worship delivers the result. They put down money on a stock and according to *Bhagavan's* will, they make money or lose money.

Since everything you do is invoking *Bhagavan* one way or the other, you'd better be careful what you ask for or pray for. If you do an action, that action is an invocation that is going to produce a result. That is why we counsel discrimination and consecration.

Krishna already said that karma yoga is discrimination in action. You need to be clear about what you are asking for and what actions you need to do to get it. But why should you consecrate your actions? To make sure that your attitude is right when you are doing them. If you are an inquirer, what should you be asking for? *Moksha*. Say, "*Bhagavan*, I want you, I want to understand you." Those prayers go directly to aware-ness and awareness sends a message to the creator, to *Isvara*, and the result comes back.

"People follow my path in many ways."

This means that everybody, everywhere is following *Bhagavan's* path. You have no choice because there is only one consciousness. That is why you don't want to look down on anybody because everybody's actually searching for *Bhagavan*. They may not know it, but they want to know who they are. Really, when you're doing anything, you're trying to find out who you are.

"If they desire the results of their actions they worship the world. In the world results come quickly."

Why does he say, "In the world the results come quickly?" Because in the spiritual world they don't always come that quickly. If you have a pesky, deep-seated *vasana* that doesn't want to respond to your work you may have to wait a long time for a result. For instance, the Fat Man has been with me since I was ten years old. So for 62 years I've been trying to get rid of the Fat Man, but I can't. The

human mind is very conservative. When you try to change its thinking patterns you are working against millions of years of evolution that has created well-entrenched desires for things like food, sex and security. The point is that the results can come slowly so patience is necessary. It's one of the qualifications. But don't worry, the results will come when they are meant to come.

Even though you need a burning desire to be free, you have to take this same karma yoga attitude towards *moksha*. It's best to think, "I'm doing my best and it will come when it will come." Keep your mind calm and patient and enjoy the journey.

Verse 13 - "The four social divisions based on qualities and duties is created by Me. Even though I am its author, know Me as a changeless non-doer. Actions do not affect Me nor do I long for results. If you know Me clearly you will not be bound by your actions. Be like those who know Me and perform action."

The four social divisions are based upon the *gunas*. A predominantly *sattvic* person would be a thinker, a leader, a knowledge person. We have a lot of *sattvic* people because the more complex society becomes the more *sattvic*, intelligent, intellectually bright people we need. They would be the Brahmins in the old days. In every society knowledge is in the hands of the *sattva guna* and *sattvic* people.

The first stage of creation is *sattva* because knowledge is required to create. So when *Maya* is operating the first *guna* to appear in awareness is *sattva*. In *sattva* is revealed all of the knowledge behind the creation. Then comes *rajas* and *tamas*, not that there is really any time sequence. But speaking in terms of time just helps us understand the nature of *Isvara* and the causal body.

So let's say the next force or power that manifests in awareness is *rajoguna*. *Rajasic* people are those who are your active and dynamic people. They have a base of *rajas* but they have a lot of *sattva*. These are the police, the military and your political class. They protect dharma. The Brahmins teach dharma, but warriors like Arjuna uphold and protect dharma. It's their duty.

Military people have a code of honor and they have values. They are actually taught a kind of low level karma yoga, in that they are taught that the needs of the service or the country come first. So, they sublimate their needs into the needs of the total. They have enough intelligence and *sattva* to understand and operate like that and to defend the values of the country.

Then when *tamas* comes in you have the commercial class. These are your business people, your entrepreneurs. They have *rajas* with *tamas* and a little bit of *sattva*. Their duty is to use their wealth to uphold the dharma. They should provide the society with wealth to give it a sense of stability and

security.

In India, wealthy people support the gurus. If I was wearing orange and living in India, the rich people would come and say, "Here's some money so you can go and do the Vedanta." That's the commercial class. Lots of big business people support Vedanta. The Advaita Academy was set up by an extremely wealthy Indian man. Swami Dayananda's ashram, which is very beautiful, was done by commercial class people. They appreciate the value of knowledge.

Finally, when *tamas* predominates and *rajas* is secondary then you have the working class. The differences in the predominant *guna* create the working class, the commercial class, the warrior, police, political class and the teaching or knowledge class. You have these divisions in every society and they are *guna* based. But as awareness, you are beyond the *gunas*.

Verse 16 – "Even sages are sometimes confused about action and actionlessness. If you understand my teaching about action you will be released from samsara. You should know which actions are sanctioned and which are forbidden by scripture. You should also understand actionlessness. Karma is difficult to understand."

"Even sages are sometimes confused about action and actionlessness."

Is anybody confused about the self? No, it's just awareness/consciousness. It's ordinary, it's always present, it doesn't change, it didn't begin, it doesn't end, and these are just simple things that you can verify by looking at consciousness, looking at that part of yourself that doesn't change.

But what about action and actionlessness, doing something and doing nothing? That's a tricky topic because it doesn't involve a simple principle. It involves two principles: awareness plus *Maya*, and *Maya* is indeterminate. You can never really tell what *Maya* is. All we know is what it does; it creates objects out of awareness and makes awareness think that the objects are separate from itself. It apparently strips the wholeness and completeness away from awareness. Awareness's knowledge of itself gets robbed and it thinks that the objects can complete it. But this is no simple thing to understand. Krishna says it's a topic that even wise people have a hard time with. So if you're having trouble with it, don't get depressed or dejected.

"If you understand my teaching about action you will be released from samsara."

All you have to do is understand what action is and you will be released from *samsara*. You cannot understand action without understanding actionlessness. The self is *akarta*, actionless awareness.

If everything is awareness and awareness is actionless then how do we get action? How can awareness do anything? It's everywhere, all pervasive. It's the ground of being so there is no place where it isn't. If it had a limit then awareness could move over to one side of that limit and it could do something, but it can't because as soon as it goes over there it was already there from the beginning, so we have a problem. What is this thing called action? Is anything actually happening, or does it just look like things are happening?

“You should know which actions are sanctioned and which are forbidden by scripture.”

Now Krishna is speaking to Arjuna as a person. From the *jiva's* point view the *jiva* should do sanctioned actions, and sanctioned actions are *sattvic* actions. *Rajasic* actions are not necessarily bad if they serve your spiritual practice and self-inquiry. *Tamasic* actions are always bad. They cause you to devolve. So you need to be careful which actions are *tamasic* and avoid them. You don't want to produce too much *tamas* or you will get so dull and unconscious that you will never be happy.

Rajas can be helpful to motivate you and get you going on the spiritual path. And insofar as you need to support yourself in the world, it can help you to go out and get a job and earn money. Obviously, money shouldn't be your number one priority—inquiry should—but if you're too poor, you're not going to be able to do inquiry. You will spend all of your time worrying about food and clothing and shelter instead. Look at these poor people in Sudan. Are they going to be inquiring? No, they are not. They haven't got a pot to piss in and somebody is trying to kill them. *Rajas* and *tamas* are so powerful in those places that nobody is doing any inquiry. They are just trying to survive.

So which actions should you be doing? Self-inquiry. Karma yoga. Charity. Taking care of the environment. Scriptural study. In other words, living a pure, decent, holy life.

“You should also understand actionlessness. Karma is difficult to understand.”

Now we are at one of the most famous verses in Vedanta. Every once in a while Gita gives you a check list. If you think you are enlightened, here's a list that's like a test of your *moksha*.

Verse 18 - “The one who sees actionlessness in action and action in actionlessness is wise and has done everything that is to be done.”

We'll take up the topic of action in actionless first. If somebody calls you up and asks you what you are doing and you say, “I'm not doing anything,” are you really not doing anything? No, because you are doing the action of not doing anything. This means that it's impossible for the *jiva* not to do action.

For example, say you are standing on the edge of the shore and you have just seen your relatives off

on a boat ride. Once the boat gets out a mile or two, it doesn't look like it's moving anymore. It looks like it's just sitting there. Of course, after a while it disappears, but for a long time, from your perspective, it appears to not be moving. But it's actually going the same 30 knots an hour.

In the world, we know things that are apparently not moving are actually moving. If you look at a chair it's actually atoms and protons and neutrons that are spinning and vibrating but it doesn't look like anything is happening at all. When we start looking into it we see that there is a whole dynamic world of action taking place right here in something that looks like it isn't changing.

Another example is a building in a movie. You're looking at a house in a movie and it's just standing still. People are coming and going through the door and kids are playing in the yard but the house is standing still amidst all that action. But is it really standing still? No it's not. It's flickering on and off as each frame of the movie changes. So in *Maya*, wherever you have apparently no action, there is still something happening.

Then we have actionlessness in action. This part of the verse is referring to awareness. If you are on a boat going along a river it can look like the trees are moving, even though they aren't. Or the moon. It's a windy night and clouds are going across the sky fast this way, and it looks like the moon is going that way, in the opposite direction. After you look again you realize that it isn't moving but it sure looks like it moved.

You might say, "I came to Spain to hear James talk." But you didn't come to Spain. You are the self, which is all-pervasive and actionless. So how could you move or go somewhere you weren't already? When you don't actually do anything or go anywhere you say, "I came here to Spain." Why? This happens when you're looking at yourself through *Maya*, through an apparently moving vehicle. And when you look at yourself through something that is changing, it seems like you are changing, but you aren't. In truth, you are awareness, the actionless substrate of action. So the wise see that

This is just a variation of the *satya* and *mithya* teaching. If you say that you are not doing, like Arjuna said he wouldn't fight, you are doing something. So for the *jiva*, the individual, there is no such thing as actionlessness. You are busy from womb to tomb doing something. If you think you are the apparent person, you're always busy. If you are not doing some physical action, you are thinking, feeling or sleeping. Even sleeping is an action, indicated by the fact that we say, "I slept well." Well actually you didn't sleep well because you weren't there to sleep. Sleep appeared in you is actually how it is. But what do you say? You identify the 'I' with the action, the sleep and you think that you did something, that you slept. But did you do anything? No. You disappeared and then sleep appeared in awareness for as long as it appeared, and deep sleep means there is no mental or physical activity for the sleeper, and then the waking dream appeared.

Understand, *moksha* is not for the *jiva*, insofar as it isn't freedom for the doer. The doer says, "I went

to India. I met the Swami and I got enlightened.” But is that right? Did the ‘I’ really go to India and meet the Swami and get enlightened? No. But when we identify with the doer, that’s how it appears. The correct statement would be, “The ignorance about myself was removed and I discovered that I was always awareness. Because I am awareness I am free of everything, including the doer. The idea that I went to India and got enlightened was just an idea, a dream, a story that appeared in me, in consciousness.”

You can renounce actions all you want as a doer. The doer can say, “I’m not doing this and I’m not doing that.” But if you say, “I won’t do this action” does that equal actionlessness? No, because *moksha* is freedom from the doer. *Moksha* is not freedom for the doer. The doer is never free. The doer is just one little link in a whole chain of causation that is completely controlled by *Isvara*. In other words, *Isvara* is the doer.

Renouncing actions is called *karma sannyas*. *Sannyas* means renunciation. Okay, so you renounce everything and you’re a really pure sadhu. You don’t have anything. You don’t know where your next meal is coming from. You are really spiritual. Well, that’s great but what about you? Have you renounced ‘you’, meaning the doer? No. You’ve gotten rid of all of your stuff and you’re living hand to mouth but you haven’t gotten rid of ‘I’, the doer. But can you do anything to get rid of or destroy the doer? No. All you can do is subject your mind to the teaching of Vedanta and get knowledge of yourself.

So even though the doer cannot literally be destroyed, it can be renounced by *jnana*, knowledge. This is called *jnana karma sannyas*. The doer is nothing but an idea in the intellect that appears at a certain stage in this process of life, the cycle of stimulus and response. That’s all it is. You can understand what the doer is, know that it’s not you and understand that, “I am the awareness of the thought ‘I am doing.’” And by understanding that, you have put the ‘I’ back where it belongs, back with awareness because the real ‘I’ is actionless. It’s *akarta*. *Karta* means “doing” and the “a” in front the words means, “not.” Being able to identify with awareness instead of the doer comes about through understanding what actionlessness is, what action is, and what the doer is.

So *moksha*, the firm understanding that, “I am actionless awareness” is freedom from the doer. But *moksha* is also freedom for the doer. “What? I though you just said it wasn’t. How does that work?” The self is already free and it already knows what it is. But the doer is that part of the subtle body, the *jiva*, that doesn’t know what it is. So you have to give the *jiva* knowledge of who it is and that sets it free from the ocean of *samsara*, because that *jiva*, that apparent person, remains once you understand that you are awareness.

People think that the doer, the apparent person, and the world have to disappear for there to be *moksha*. But if the person disappears then there is no enlightenment anymore because the self doesn’t need to get enlightenment. It is already enlightened. The world and the apparent person

only 'disappear' with the knowledge "I am awareness" insofar as that knowledge implies that there is no actual world or person; there is only awareness. But the appearance of the world and the apparent person remains, similar to the way a mirage in the desert continues to appear even when you know it is really only sand. So the *jiva* remains, but the *jiva* understands that it's awareness and that 'I' actually refers to awareness. When it says 'I' it doesn't think Jim or Sally or Pete. When the *jiva* says 'I' it thinks awareness. It knows that it is actually awareness appearing as Joe or Sally or Pete, as a human being.

So *moksha* is *satya* and *mithya*, action and actionlessness understood for what they are. It is the understanding that, "I am beyond action and actionlessness because actionlessness is known to me and action is known to me. The doer is known to me, so I have to be something other than it. I am pure consciousness, awareness. It's only by virtue of awareness that I understand what changes and what doesn't change. I am beyond the changeless and beyond what changes."

Those are just ideas we use to knock off your ignorance. When the ignorance is gone you are just sitting still as awareness as you always were and you say, "I was never not enlightened. I was never not this."

Student: What does "sees" mean in this verse?

James: "Sees" means "knows." Sight is a symbol for knowledge. "Sees" does not refer to physical perception.

When an enlightened person sees someone walking by, does it mean that he doesn't see anybody walking? No. It just means that he understands that although there is an appearance of action, there is really only actionless awareness. People in the spiritual world have these awful, weird, strange beliefs about what is going to happen to them when they gain *moksha*. A common one is, "I won't see the world. I'll just see the light." You are going to see the world. But you are going to know that when it's moving it's not actually moving. It just seems to be moving because *Maya* is producing the illusion of action.

Verse 19 – "The sages say that a person is wise if his or her actions have been burned in the fire of self knowledge. Such people act without desire for the results of their actions. Consequently they are content because they do not depend on results to make them happy. They are free of doership even when they act. Those who are free of expectations, whose bodies, minds and senses are well disciplined, who are free of attachment to possessions and act only to sustain the body are happy with what comes by chance, unaffected by the opposites, without envy, even-minded in success and failure and free of the need to act while acting. The karma of those who are free from attachment, whose minds have been liberated by self-knowledge and who perform action as an

offering is completely cleared.”

“The sages say that a person is wise if his or her actions have been burned in the fire of self knowledge.”

“Actions” mean the *vasanas*. Actions are *vasanas* manifest. “Burned” means they are no longer binding. If you take a rope and burn it, it will still look like a rope. All the strands in the rope will remain but the rope can’t bind anything. That is the meaning behind the strings or ropes they burn in India, that when your actions or *vasanas* are ‘burnt’ by self-knowledge, they become non-binding. Your gross, subtle and causal bodies have been reduced to ash in the fire of knowledge. In other words, you understand that, “These things have no more power to bind me, because I am *akarta*. I am actionless awareness.” “Actionless awareness” means that you do not change.

Let’s say there is a nuclear attack with a big blast. It still doesn’t affect awareness. The blast is gone but awareness is totally unchanged by that. Now that is a dramatic example. Look at your own life. You say in your life that you did this and that. You have your whole history and all of your stories. Where is all that stuff now? Are you any less aware now than you were five years ago? No. If those actions were adding to or subtracting from your awareness, then you should be more or less aware. But has your awareness actually changed?

Do you have a different awareness than you had this morning? We had all that wonderful teaching and where is all of that now? Is your awareness any different now than what it was this morning? Maybe some ignorance is gone, hopefully, otherwise I’m spinning my wheels up here. (Laughter) But has your awareness modified or changed? It’s always present, always aware. Actions, thoughts and feelings appear and disappear but they don’t leave any trace on awareness. They come right up to awareness and they stop. They try to change awareness but they fall back every time. Awareness is impenetrable. It doesn’t modify.

And all we are saying is that when you identify yourself as that awareness that doesn’t change you are free of karma. If you identify yourself as the part that does change then you are stuck in karma. Then you are driven by your *vasanas* and you think, “I have to do this and I have to do that” and so forth.

Now an enlightened person—actually there is no enlightened person because there is only awareness appearing as an enlightened person—acts without feeling like they are acting. They act but they don’t feel like they are doing anything because they know that they are actionless awareness. It’s the best of both worlds. You get to do and be a non-doer at the same time.

“Such people act without desire for the results of their actions”.

In other words the *vasanas* just pour out and they don't identify with the *vasanas*, or the results. They just see the *vasanas* creating desires, those desires creating actions, and those actions producing results. These people know that they have no connections to the actions because *Isvara* is the doer.

This is a great topic. You won't find a better topic than this. When you understand it, it frees you from the doer, from action. You get to do action without doing action. That's why *moksha* is a win-win situation. You get to act as a *jiva*, but you know that you aren't doing anything while you're acting. You're acting but you are free of action at the same time. It's not an either or. It's a both and. There are always these two factors: the subject, awareness, and the object. That is your own experience. There is you, awareness, and the object. That means duality.

People think that duality disappear into oneness when they realize, "I'm awareness" but it doesn't. The appearance of duality remains but it just doesn't confuse you anymore. Your belief that duality is real disappears but the experience of duality is still there. How cool is that? You get the best of both worlds. This is why we define *moksha* as knowledge of both *satya* and *mithya* and the relationship between the two.

"Consequently they are content because they do not depend on results to make them happy."

The doer depends upon results to be happy. But someone with self-knowledge does not because they know that they are awareness.

"They are free of doership even when they act."

This is because doership is only a notion.

"Those who are free of expectations, whose bodies, minds and senses are well disciplined, who are free of attachment to possessions and act only to sustain the body are happy with what comes by chance, unaffected by the opposites, without envy, even-minded in success and failure and free of the need to act while acting."

This is your checklist. If this applies to you, then you are a realized person, a liberated person. You have *stitha prajna*, steady wisdom.

"The karma of those who are free from attachment, whose minds have been liberated by self-knowledge and who perform action as an offering is completely cleared."

The *prarabdha karma* continues to manifest but you know it isn't real, it doesn't belong to you and that you are not affected by it.

Student: So *Ishvara* is neutral, it's got no preferences. The self is the same. It doesn't take sides or have any ideas that things should be a certain way?

James: That's right. It doesn't have likes and dislikes. It's without *vasanas*.

Student: I've heard you say that dharma is the self working in *Maya*.

James: Well, the *Maya* world exists in awareness; awareness is the substrate that permeates every aspect of the *Maya* world. So it has a total impact on whatever happens in *Maya*. And since awareness is non-dual, the universal values that appear in *Maya* are basically non-dual values. Those universal values are called *samanya* dharma.

Student: So dharma is like natural law?

James: Dharma is the order, the structure, the consistent rhythms and patterns of the world that make purposeful work possible. If this isn't a lawful universe, a *dharmic* universe where everything follows its nature, then you're not going to get out of bed in the morning are you? If this is a chaotic and inconsistent world where one day sugar decides to be salty, fire decides it's going to be cold, dogs decide they want to be cats and trees decide they want to be fish, then the whole world is going to become unworkable. What if gravity says, "I'm off duty today?" When you wake up and try to put your foot on the ground you start floating up. Who is maintaining gravity here? *Ishvara*. Who is causing the sun to shine and all of the forces of attraction and repulsion that are holding objects together? Who is causing thermodynamics? What about vision? What if the 'gods' or the powers that are keeping the optical systems working, what if they decide not to work and eyes say, "I'm going to do something different today?"

In fact, this is a highly intelligent, highly complex, completely logical machine run by knowledge, by *Ishvara*. And because it's predictable, because it's consistent from one moment to the next, *jivas* can work out their karma here. Otherwise, how are you going to know what is going to happen? Generally when you give a shopkeeper some money, the shopkeeper gives you some goods. What if this day the shopkeeper says thank you for the money but you don't get any groceries? What's going to happen to your life?

Take traffic, for example. You have these millions of automobiles and everything is behaving in unison. Can you imagine the number of potential accidents? Look at the traffic in India. The number of potential accidents per minute is huge because you have 15 or 20 different objects operating at different velocities in the same little, narrow space. And yet why don't you see even more accidents? What is it that's maintaining that order? It's called dharma. Psychological laws.

The psychology that we are presenting here is *Isvara's* psychological order. And it's the same for everybody. If you have a completely different psychology from me and she has a completely different psychology from you and he has a completely different psychology from her, then how are we going to ever communicate and understand each other? We're not. We understand each other because we are all basically the same. When I'm angry, you understand what I'm feeling because you experience anger. Anger is impersonal, it's universal. When a desire is obstructed, you get angry. This is the psychology and it's always the same. It's invariable. That's called dharma.

Student: There seems to be an ongoing battle in the outside world between dharma and *adharma*. I'm sort of stuck on the four social divisions. If I heard you accurately, there is an order.

James: Yes, society is structured a certain way.

Student: And we are just playing our parts?

James: Everyone is just following their dharma. This is a very complex reality or dream.

Student: It seems that society is valuing the commercial class more than the other classes.

James: Yes, because we are in *Kali yuga*. *Isvara* is in a state of *rajas* and *tamas*. When the macrocosmic mind is predominately *sattvic*, it's called *Satya yuga*. *Satya yuga* means the period of time where *sat* is predominate. It's when the spiritual life and following dharma is prevalent. It's when there are a lot of *sattvic* people and all kinds of spiritual creativity, like the time of the forest *rishis* in India who originally received the Vedas.

But now we are out of that Vedic age, the *sattvic* age and we are into *Kali yuga*. And in the *Kali yuga*, *tamas* and *rajas* are the predominate energies. There is some *sattva*. We are the *sattvic* people, but there aren't many of us. The majority are all out there going hell bent for leather, for *Bhagavan's* stuff. We call them *rakshasas*. They are making trouble for themselves and everybody else because they are totally materialistic. When *rajas* and *tamas* predominate, the values in society become materialistic and that is when the self comes. That's when Krishna says, "Okay, I can't let everything get completely out of balance." *Rajas* and *tamas* may predominate for a while but eventually, *sattva guna* starts to come back.

We are the vanguard for the next *yuga*. We will be the saints and the sages in the next *yuga*. We've already been cleared. We are the ones who are going to control, regulate and govern the society in the next *yuga* after the whole thing ends. These forces that are operating through you and me are eternal. *Sattva* never disappears. But the predominance of *sattva* is shrinking now.

Student: And this is a natural occurrence within the laws of awareness like evolution?

James: Yes, you could liken it to evolution. Within this thing there are changes taking place. They aren't real, in the sense that they don't last forever. But they are apparently real. They exist, operate for a given period of time and then they change. So at certain times one *guna* predominates, and after a while things change and another *guna* predominates.

Student: So does *Isvara* balance itself out?

James: Yes. This system is actually self-equilibrating. It's always balanced. It just looks like it becomes unbalanced. One *guna* may seem to disappear, but it has just gone unmanifest for a while and later on it will manifest again and balance the situation.

So actually nothing is going on here. That is what we mean when we say that nothing ever happened. Nothing's actually happening. *Isvara* is just continually balancing everything, keeping the situation stable so that the *jivas* can work out their karma. If you haven't got a stable, *dharmic* universe how are the *jivas* going to work out their desires and their karma?

If you look at the creation story in Vedanta, why didn't *Isvara* say, "Let's just create *jiva* first"? In the Bible creation story why does man come at the end? Because the whole purpose of human beings is to realize the self. That's what we are doing here. And if there is no field in which the *jivas* can operate, how are they going to work out their karmas? This is why *Isvara* lays down the whole dharma field first. Awareness is present, and then when *Maya* starts operating the dharma field appears. Eventually, the first little sense organ pops out of the cosmic ooze. The first cosmic ear appears and awareness gains the power to hear itself in this world. Then the first cosmic eye comes out and then the cosmic skin and so forth. Then all of the senses start appearing. And then the mind evolves and then the intellect.

So now the *jivas* have equipment and a field in which to operate, and *Isvara* set the whole thing up. First the matter and then the equipment. The senses and the subtle body get set up by *Isvara* and then the *jivas* appear. That is why they say human life appeared in evolution after this long period of time.

The scientists are right. They just don't know that consciousness was here before matter. They assume that consciousness evolved out of matter. They have no way to measure it so they think that somehow these chemicals, these five elements wiggled together and life began.

Student: How can there be ignorance without *jivas*?

James: Because you have *Isvara*, *Maya* before *jivas* appear.

Student: Isvara is ignorance?

James: Yes, we say Isvara is ignorance because when Isvara starts operating the self apparently forgets what it is. And then it apparently—not actually—becomes a jiva. And that jiva only appears once Isvara has laid down the field for the jiva to work out its fears and desires.

When *Maya* is operating, awareness thinks it's a *jiva*, and suffers a sense of incompleteness. Then it appears in the dharma field and it assumes that the objects it sees will complete it. So, it chases objects, collects karma and develops *vasanas*. The *jiva* is actually awareness under the spell of *Maya*, ignorance.

Now ignorance is an interesting thing because it has no beginning. Why doesn't ignorance have a beginning? Because it's a power in awareness and awareness has no beginning. I will give you an example. When did you become ignorant of the *gagabooguy*? There's no answer to that because you've always, eternally been ignorant of the *gagabooguy*. And until I tell you what the *gagabooguy* is, you are still ignorant. But as soon as I tell you that the *gagabooguy* is seven feet tall, walks on its toes, has two horns, the skin of an elephant, the tail of a donkey, and is pink, you know what a *gagabooguy* is. *Gagabooguy* knowledge has come and *gagabooguy* ignorance is gone and life is good.

So when Vedanta teaches awareness that it's awareness it hears that message and stops thinking it's this *jiva*, limited by the Subtle Body, and it goes back to what it always was, realizing it's always been free.

Verse 24 – “The means of offering is the self. The offering is the self offered by the self into the sacrificial fire...which is also the self. The self is indeed obtained by the one who sees everything as the self.”

This is just a reiteration but it explains the whole cosmic cycle. You have to understand *Isvara*. It's really, really, important. The verse in Sanskrit is, “*brahmarpanam brahma havirbrahmagnau brahmana hutam brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarmasamdhina*. This is a big verse. It's always chanted at the beginning of food. Food is a ritual. Eating is a ritual. The food is offered to *brahman*. The one who offers it is *brahman*. The food is *brahman*. The one who is eating it is *brahman*. The whole thing is *brahman*. And *brahmakarmasamdhina*, “*brahman* is the deliverer of the karma.” *Brahman* is the one who gives us the fruits of our actions so we take everything as *prasad*.

This is the vision of non-duality. How is it obtained? Simply by seeing. And “seeing” means

“knowing.” It means that when you know that it is all you, awareness, then the party is over, the inquiry is finished, and there is no more need to know anything. As Verse 18 said, you have done everything that needs to be done.

It doesn't mean that you can't do anything from that point on. It just means that you won't seek to know yourself anymore because you know that you are the self. And it's not a knowledge that you will forget. If you forget who you are then you are taking yourself to be a *jiva*. But when you know that the words “I” and “me” refer to the self, it can't be forgotten because you are always present. You can only forget something that's not always present. So when you know, “I am awareness” it is the end of knowledge because it is the knowledge that ends your search for knowledge.

You actually know that you are always present. Can anyone in this room find a time when they do not exist? Raise your hand, please. No hands are going up. Why? Because you can't find a time when you don't exist. You always exist and when you understand that, then game over. As long as you think the self is an object to be known and that it's something other than “I” or “me” and that you can get it by doing something, then you can always forget it. You can always lose it. But have you ever lost yourself? When have you ever not existed? You have always existed. You have always been present.

Now Krishna is talking about this spirit of sacrifice. Basically, he says that everything in the creation, except human beings, acts according to this sacrificial spirit. Sacrificial spirit means in the spirit of contributing, of adding value, of responding according to dharma. That spirit of contributing, of giving, is built in. We won't talk about all the details of this. He just gives examples of the spirit and it all gets very spiritual and mystical and complicated.

Verse 25 – “Karma yogis perform rituals to invoke the deities, while contemplative renunciates offer their lives into the fire of self knowledge. Others sacrifice their senses to the idea of self control or the sense objects into the fire of the senses. Still others offer the activities of the senses and the organs of action into the fire of self-mastery ignited by self knowledge. Some sacrifice wealth and some commit to religious disciplines like the practice of yoga while others devote themselves to the study of sacred texts. There are those committed to the control of the mind through the breath who stop the flow of inhalation and exhalation and offer the outgoing breath into the incoming breath and the incoming breath into the outgoing breath. To control the intake of food others offer their desire to eat into the digestive fires. Irrespective of the type of discipline one follows the sacrificial attitude burns the impurities of the mind.”

So offering your desire to eat into the digestive fires means you just go hungry. Controlling the intake of food, that's what I'm working on. (Laughter) And when you act with a sacrificial spirit what do you get out of this?

Verse 31 – “Those who drink the nectar of the sacrifice realize the eternal self. Nothing truly beneficial is gained in this world without the spirit of sacrifice. How then can anything be gained in the next? Various religious disciplines are offered in the Vedas. Knowing that they are born of karma, liberates. Sacrifice motivated by self knowledge is superior to the sacrifice of material objects because action itself is resolved by self knowledge.”

“Those who drink the nectar of the sacrifice realize the eternal self.”

“Nectar” means the essence or what’s left over from the sacrifice, and those who have that attitude realize the eternal self.

Student: Is it fair to say that there is a battle? We are hard wired to be ignorant and we are hard wired in the sacrificial spirit.

James: Yes, both are built in.

Student: So if those are the two combatants?

James: Yes. You could put it like that. There is a selfish tendency to grab and get and steal and keep. But there is also this generous, outgoing tendency to give. That is a war that is going on inside of us.

Student: The more we cultivate the sacrificial spirit, it dissipates the hard wired ignorance?

James: Yes, that’s right. That’s why you want to cultivate this spirit that relies on *sattva*. You need to pay attention to the motivation of your actions. What idea is motivating you? Greed? Fear? A desire to contribute? And as soon as you discover your motivation you see to it that you change your attitude and look for a way to add value to the situation rather than to extract value for your ego. “Value” just means that you contribute your energy, yourself. You offer yourself to the situation. So when somebody comes and they want something, you just don’t ignore them.

Day 3: Session 3

Chapter 5: Verse 1 - 16

Student: Before I was born, it seems like I was not present. But I would have to be present in order to say that, correct?

James: Exactly. And in fact, that is how it was, wasn't it? One day, you just become aware that there was this funny, little, fat baby body going, "Wah, wah, wah, wah." You become aware of that. Which means that you were there before the body appeared in you. When the *prarabdha* karma fructified, it generated a new body and then the new body appeared in awareness.

Student: So what was awareness aware of before the body? Is it just self-aware?

James: Correct. Awareness is self-aware and it doesn't require any instruments to know itself. It's self-revealing. It reveals itself to itself without the aid of a body and without the aid of a mind. So what was awareness aware of before the world appeared? Itself.

Student: This is difficult to understand.

James: Yes, it is. You need to contemplate on it. Here's how I can maybe help you understand it. What are you doing to be aware?

Student: Nothing.

James: There's your answer. That means you must be aware. By nature you are awareness or you can say awareness must be your nature. You must be aware of yourself without doing anything. Think about this teaching.

What are you doing to be aware of yourself? Nothing! So that means awareness is self-aware, doesn't it? Because you are aware of yourself. Now if you think the self is an object, then you have a problem. But in Vedanta, right in the very beginning of the second chapter, Vedanta says through Krishna talking to Arjuna, "The self can't be objectified."

Student: Is this self-awareness in deep sleep?

James: Awareness is aware of itself when deep sleep is appearing as an object in it. This is why you know that you slept. You can infer it when you wake up as a *jiva*. When you're not there as a *jiva* and you're sleeping, and somebody wakes you up at two in the morning with loud music, are you happy to get woken up? Your *jiva's* not there. Your *jiva's* gone and you're unhappy. Why? Because you were experiencing yourself, experiencing bliss, and temporarily, you were distracted from yourself and you suffered because you came away from it. So that shows that you were there experiencing deep sleep, not as a person, but as awareness.

Student: I'm trying to figure out what is the experience without experience...

James: It's not objectifiable so it can't be an experience. Look at it this way: you exist. Are you doing anything to exist? If you think you're the body then you could say, "I'm eating to exist" because if you don't eat, then you don't exist as a body. But that obviously doesn't apply to you. Why? Because the body is known to you so you are something other than the body. You are what exists beyond the body, and that existence is the same as your awareness.

Existence and awareness are the same thing. They aren't two different things. *Sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*

are all words that describe the same thing, the self. *Sat*, existence, exists as *chit*, consciousness. And they are both *ananda*, which means they have no beginning and no ending. They are limitless.

What are you doing to be aware and what are you doing to exist? Nothing, no action is required to be aware or to exist. So on what basis is your existence centered? Only on itself. Not on the apparent person. All our thinking is coming from the position that we are this person and we think awareness is something other than us. Vedanta says the seeker is the sought. The one who's looking for the self is the self. That's the point.

Do you know the tenth man story? Ten people went on a pilgrimage and they came to a raging river. And they decided, "We really want to go to this temple, so we'll swim across the river and then continue on." There was no bridge. So they all took off their clothes, tied them up in bundles and started swimming across the river. On the other side, the leader of the group said, "Okay, line up so I can count and make sure we're all here." So everybody lined up and he counted, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9." He only counted nine. So he said, "Oh my, we lost somebody," and everybody got very sad. They went back and looked all over but they couldn't find the missing man. So they came back together and sat down totally depressed.

And then an old man came along. There's always an old man in these stories. The old man represents the scripture. The old man says, "Hi. What's up? You guys looked depressed." And they told him, "We were ten and now we are nine." And the old man said, "Okay, I will produce the tenth man for you." This is what happens when you hear about the self. "Oh my god, there's a self?" Then you suddenly get excited. "Maybe there is a tenth man. Maybe we haven't lost our self. Maybe we haven't lost him."

So the old man says, "Okay, line up." So they all lined up. But when the leader stood off to the side of the line the old man said, "You get in line too." The leader got in line and then the old man counted, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10." The leader was the tenth man. He had forgotten to count himself.

That's what we're not counting. We're not counting our self! The one who wants to know is what he wants to know. In other words, it's me that I am trying to find. How can I find myself if I already am myself? If I don't know that I'm already myself, then I need an old man, I need the guidance of scripture. I need somebody outside to point out what I have. In self-inquiry we aren't getting anything. We're just losing ignorance. And this story illustrates that fact perfectly.

Can you say—if you think you're this *jiva*—that you're doing anything to be aware or to exist? No you can't. Yet you do exist and you are aware, so that means what? That awareness is aware of itself. It's self-aware. When you go to sleep at night and the *jiva*, the person you think you are, is not there, are you not aware? You couldn't sleep if you weren't aware, could you? Because for every experience, for every bit of knowledge, you have to have awareness. So awareness is present when sleep is present. Awareness is present when waking is present and awareness is present when the dream is present. Awareness is present in and through all three states of consciousness.

The old man represents knowledge, the scripture, and the scripture is saying, "It's you. You are the tenth man. You are what you're seeking for." In Vedanta we say, "The seeker is the sought." So look at the seeker. Don't try to look elsewhere to find this thing. Is the seeker is going to find this other

thing called awareness somewhere? Is it going to discover it or experience it? No. The self is the very nature of the seeker. And the self is just simple, ordinary, ever present, limitless awareness.

CHAPTER 5: RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

Verse 1 - Arjuna said, "O Krishna, you praise renunciation of action and karma yoga. Tell me definitely which is better."

Arjuna Thinks there's a contradiction in what Krishna said, so he's asking for an explanation.

Verse 2 - Krishna replied, "Both renunciation of action and the performance of action as yoga lead to liberation. But the performance of action as yoga is better than the renunciation of action. A renunciate is free from likes and dislikes and therefore is free of bondage."

Krishna replied, "Both renunciation of action and the performance of action as yoga lead to liberation. But the performance of action as yoga is better than the renunciation of action."

For Arjuna, performance of action is better than renunciation of action. Arjuna isn't capable of renouncing action. He has to do the actions that are required of him by *Ishvara*. If he was a *sannyasi*, he could walk away. But he's not a *sannyasi*. He's got *rajasic* and *tamasic vasanas* and they put him in this situation. They're telling him, "You've got to act here."

"But the performance of action as yoga is better than the renunciation of action."

Why is the renunciation of action not the solution either? Because renunciation of action gets rid of certain actions but it doesn't renounce or get rid of the doer. And *moksha* is getting rid of the doer. So just quitting activities, just stopping doing what you're doing, isn't going to solve the problem because you're still identified with the doer.

You can only get rid of the doer by understanding who the doer is. Or in other words, by understanding *Ishvara* and the nature of awareness. When you understand the nature of awareness you know that it's not the doer and you know that *Ishvara* is the doer. Remember, *Ishvara* means awareness plus *Maya*. That's what is causing action. So you only get rid of the doer by knowledge. The doer is just one essential, little part in this whole chain of causation that's producing experience, action and results.

"A renunciate..."

A renunciate of what? Of the doer.

"...is free from likes and dislikes and therefore is free of bondage."

A renunciate of action alone is not free of the doer. And therefore they are not free of likes and dislikes because the doer will always have likes and dislikes.

Verse 4 – “Some argue that self-knowledge and karma yoga are different but both lead to liberation. Therefore the wise see karma and knowledge as one. Renunciation of action is difficult without karma yoga but if you are discriminating and committed to karma yoga you will quickly realize your limitless nature. If your sense organs are restrained, your mind is purified by karma yoga and you know that your self is the self in all beings you will not be affected by karma.”

“Some argue that self knowledge and karma yoga are different but both lead to liberation.”

Both *sannyasis* and karma yogis are going for *moksha*, but *sannyasis* don't have karma to deal with. The *sannyasi* is somebody in the traditional Indian system who is legally dead. They are legally dead. They can't vote. They don't owe taxes. When they take up the identity of a *sannyasi*, they burn their clothes and let go of the name they were born with. They are given a new name and they take certain vows. Mostly it's a vow of *ahimsa*. “I vow not to injure any living being. I vow not to stay in one place more than three days. I vow to only take what comes to me and not chase things.” So for them, they don't have any likes and dislikes. They're just totally reliant on *Isvara*.

But a karma yogi like Arjuna who's living in the world who's got a wife, kids, a family, a job and all that sort of stuff, he just can't do that. Why? Because if you just walk away from all that stuff, how are you going to feel? Guilty as hell. Unless you are a *sannyasi*. If you're a *sannyasi*, then you can walk away from your wife and your kids and you won't feel guilty as hell.

Swami Abhedananda, my second guru, just married to please his mom and give her a granddaughter. Mom wanted a granddaughter and it was his duty as a son to provide an offspring. He provided the offspring and then he walked off. He was a *sannyasi*, so no guilt, nothing.

He had an ashram and all these people were there because a program was going on. Everybody wanted to see him. But one day he just walked out of the ashram. It wasn't until months later that somebody went to Rishikesh and saw him sitting with a bunch of sadhus on the bank of the Ganges having satsang and chanting. They said to him, “Swami, what are you doing here? You have an ashram. All the devotees are upset and they're waiting for you.” He said, “Oh, I have an ashram? Then I must go see them.” And he went back to see the people. That's a *sannyasi*.

And all he would wear was a pair of underwear and a shawl. And he just wandered around, never carried any money or anything. When I traveled with him, it was amazing. With Swami Chinmaya it was different because there was lots of money and lots of stuff. But with an *avadhut* like Swami Abhedananda, you never knew where the next meal was going to come from. You didn't know where you were going to sleep at night. One time we just got on a train. We had no tickets and nobody asked us for a tickets. We arrived at our destination station and we're standing there on the platform. I'm thinking, “What are we going to eat and where are we going to sleep?” Suddenly the station master appears, touches the Swami's feet and says, “Swamiji, we have nice rooms here at the station.

Come and stay at the station.” So we had rooms at the station. That’s a *sannyasi*.

But a karma yogi is not like that. Karma yogis want to be free but they have to do karma yoga. Karma yoga will neutralize the *vasanas* and then you become a *sannyasi*. That’s the idea. So Krishna’s saying there’s no difference between karma yoga and *sannyas*.

“Therefore the wise see karma and knowledge as one.”

Karma yoga is just knowledge.

“Renunciation of action is difficult without karma yoga but if you are discriminating and committed to karma yoga you will quickly realize your limitless nature.”

The verse says, “quickly” because if you really commit to karma yoga, it won’t take that long.

“If your sense organs are restrained, your mind purified with karma yoga, and you know that your self is the self in all beings, you will not be affected by karma.”

He’s going to take on the doer again. This is for contemplation. You have to think about this.

Verse 8 - The organs automatically contact their objects so you should not think “I am doing” while you are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, talking, releasing, grasping, opening and closing the eyes.

“The organs...”

“Organs” means the senses and the Subtle Body. The Subtle Body is called the *antahkarana*, the inner organ.

“...automatically contact their objects...”

This means that you don’t consciously connect the sense organs to sense objects. If sense objects are present and the sense organs are functioning, the two connect automatically. And it’s not like you have to try to find a thought to think, or find a feeling to feel. You are always feeling something. You’re always thinking something. Remember, nothing here is actionless. Every object is always operating here so the mind is always thinking, the feelings are always feeling and the senses are always perceiving. That’s the idea here. So you don’t need to mess with the system at all because *Isvara*’s already got it all set up. So, what is the conclusion?

“...so you should not think ‘I am doing’ when you are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, talking, releasing, grasping, opening and closing the eyes.”

You can throw in thinking and feeling too. Even though all of this stuff is just happening at *Isvara*’s behest, you think, “I see you. I hear that sound. I’m touching the chair. I smell that awful smell. I’m

eating my dinner. I'm walking. I'm sleeping. I'm breathing." Like that guy we saw in Morocco. He was trying to claim actions that were already taking place completely independent of him. The car drove up and he told us that the car can drive up. We got in the car, and he tells us we can get in the car. The car drives off and he permits us to drive off. I'll never forget that. That was just so funny.

And it's the same thing here. Everything is going on all the time but you say you're doing it. Are you standing behind your eyes? Have you got this control panel and you're pushing all these little knobs and levers to make sure your eyes see? No, you're not doing that. When you're breathing, are you actually inside your lungs going making them inhale and exhale? You can breathe consciously if you want to but even then, are you actually doing that? You're not. When you eat dinner, are you digesting your food? If you're busy digesting your food, then you're not listening to me, are you? (Laughter) You're not doing any of this stuff. This is something that has to be understood.

Verse 10 – "If you act after you have offered your actions to Me you will not be affected by agitation, just as a lotus leaf is untouched by water. Karma yogis let go of attachment to results and act with the body, mind and intellect to purify the mind. The life of karma yoga leads to inner freedom while a life of motivation by desire for worldly objects leads to bondage."

"If you act after you have offered your actions to Me you will not be affected by agitation..."

That's what we call consecration. If you turn over the results of the action to *Bhagavan*, to *Isvara*, then when you do the action, you won't be disturbed. You'll be fine.

"...just as a lotus leaf is untouched by water."

Lotuses are always in the water but water doesn't stick to them. It's like water off a duck's back. Have you ever seen a duck? His body is down in the water but when he comes up, there's no water on it. He's right in the water, totally immersed in it. But when he pops up, there's no water on him. When you have the karma yoga understanding, actions don't cling, don't stick to you.

"Karma yogis let go of attachment to the results and act with the body, mind and intellect to purify the mind. The life of karma yoga leads to inner freedom while a life motivated by desire for worldly objects leads to bondage."

Student: It seems like he's saying two different things, like there is a contradiction here. First he says, "You're not the doer" and then he says, "If you act after you've offered your actions to me..."

James: It's because Krishna is teaching from both points of view, from the point of view of the apparent person who seems to perform actions as well as the point of view of actionless awareness. That he is not the doer but actionless awareness is something that Arjuna needs to contemplate on. But in the meantime, since he thinks he's the doer, he should do what? Act with the karma yoga spirit. You can do *jnana* yoga and karma yoga at the same time. The distinction is not as obvious as I'm making it in the teaching.

There are all kinds of different karma yogis and different people at different levels of evolution. Some don't need a lot of karma yoga. Some need a lot. Some are quite contemplative already but have a few minor *vasanas* that aren't very binding. They can contemplate. They can maybe understand what this means and then that will eliminate the need to do karma yoga because they'll know, "I'm not the doer anyway. *Isvara's* the doer so I'm off the hook. I don't need to worry about that." I mean, if you really understand that *Isvara's* the doer, then that is karma yoga. We've given you ample information to allow you to assimilate that knowledge.

It's like the Wizard of Oz when Toto pulls the curtain back and exposes the Mighty Oz, pulling all the levers and turning the wheels. Vedanta shows you how to pull back the curtain and expose the doer. And what does Oz say when he's exposed? "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain." But you do need to pay attention because the man behind the curtain is *Isvara*. And once you understand that *Isvara* is doing, is making all this big magic show and making it all so wonderful, then you let *Isvara* make the magic show and you just sit and you enjoy. Life is really a play. It's funny. It's a comedy sometimes and a tragedy other times. But it's always entertaining. *Isvara* keeps it going. What are you really doing besides watching objects appear and disappear? You're just aware of what's going on, that's all.

Student: What was the answer to my question?

James: The answer to your question was, if you think you're a *jiva*, then you do actions. If you understand that *Isvara's* the doer, then you don't have to do actions. It's all a set up. It's all happening. Why worry about it? Why involve yourself? Why not just see that life is ongoing and you're in that great river of life, that great flow, and you're just being carried along by all these waves? You don't know where you're going to end up. You can't even remember where you came from. You're just continually pushed here and there by the currents of life.

Well, who cares where you end up? What's the difference? The joy is in what? In seeing. The joy is in being. It's a joy to exist. It's a joy to be aware. That's where the happiness is. We have to convince you that it's not in the objects but once you see it's not in the objects, then you can see it's in yourself. And you just sit still and enjoy.

Verse 13 – "When the indweller is self-controlled and indifferent to the results of its actions, it lives happily in the body, neither acting or causing others to act. The self doesn't create a sense of doership, nor is it directly or indirectly responsible for the results of your actions. The idea that you are incomplete and inadequate causes doership and willful action. The Self is indifferent to good and bad karma.

Because Self-knowledge is covered by ignorance you take yourself to be a doer."

What self are we talking about here? Are we talking about *Isvara* or *paramatma*? We're talking about *paramatma* because *Isvara* is responsible, directly and indirectly, for actions and the results. But the self, pure awareness, doesn't cause action. It's free of action altogether. That's why it's called *akarta*, a non-doer. It's actionless awareness. And so if you're actionless awareness you're not a doer and

you're unaffected by action. Only by *Isvara* or *Maya* is action generated. When you understand *Isvara* the notion of doership goes to *Isvara*.

Student: Does "indweller" mean the *jiva*?

James: Yes. But remember that the *jiva* is awareness. *Brahma satyam jagat-mithya jivo brahmaiva naparah.* *Brahman* is *satya*, the reality. The *jagat* is *mithya*, the apparent reality. *Jivo*, the *jiva*, is what? Non-different from *brahman*. There's no difference between the *jiva* and *brahman*. So awareness is an indweller with reference to what? The body. Actually the body dwells in awareness, but so Arjuna can understand it Krishna says, "The self is dwelling in the body."

"The self doesn't create a sense of doership, nor is It directly or indirectly responsible for the results of your actions."

You've got to get the self out of the picture in regards to it being the creator of doership and action. So then, what causes them? It's the idea that you're incomplete and inadequate that causes doership and willful action. In other words, ignorance causes action. Ignorance causes desire. Desire causes action. Ignorance of the self is the problem, not the self.

Student: The private internal conversation many of us have is, "I am not good enough."

James: That's called *Maya* or ignorance. It's just a thought. It's not true but we believe that we're not good enough, smart enough, pure enough, or holy enough. We believe that we're incomplete, inadequate and that there is something wrong. Most of us have that voice of diminishment, incompleteness and inadequacy. We falsely believe that we are unable to deal with what life has to offer. That voice is ignorance.

"The self is indifferent to good and bad karma. Because self-knowledge is covered by ignorance you take yourself to be a doer."

The cause of the sense of doership is ignorance.

Verse 16 – "Just as the sun reveals objects previously hidden in darkness, self-knowledge destroys self-ignorance and reveals the self to be limitless and complete. When the intellect is aware of the limitless nature of the self and is solely committed to self-realization its impurities are eventually destroyed by self-knowledge and you will no longer be troubled by self-limiting thoughts."

There's a really interesting word here: eventually. That means that when you realize you're the self, there's going to be a lag, a gap, between what you know and what you think. You're going to still have some negative thoughts about yourself and you're still going to do actions that are self-insulting, at least for a while.

Student: That ends in 5 to 7 minutes, I figure. (Laughter)

James: It takes however long it takes. So a person can be self-realized and hear a voice inside them say, "I want this. I want that. I need this. I need that." But you'll be very aware that that voice is the voice of ignorance speaking in you and that that voice is only there because of habit. You don't believe it anymore. You're aware of it. So it's okay if the *jiva* remains unenlightened for a while. Those thoughts and ideas will continue until they don't. They will stop at some point. They'll eventually burn out if you stick with the knowledge "I'm awareness" instead of "I'm the doer."

Student: Is it accurate to describe it like escaping out of a gravitational pull?

James: That's a good analogy. The pull of the *vasanas* is sucking you down all the time into action and results. It's tying you to the world of action. In fact the word *gunas* means "ropes." But the self is *trigunathita*, beyond the *gunas*. It's beyond the *gunas* so there's no pull. You're immune to that gravitational pull but you will feel it. However, you'll know it's not real and it's not you. And as your mind purifies, that gravitational force will become less and less. After a while you'll just enter a state of pure *sattva*. You'll just flow. Everything will just be steady. And you'll feel light and high and happy and there will be a sense of flow and movement to your life. No resistance, no blocks, no barriers, like floating on a magic carpet. But it takes a while for that feeling to become more or less permanent.

Student: If I recall, you said something about that it's okay to employ a 'fake it until you make it' attitude.

James: That's right, you take a stand in awareness. That's just a phase. We call it *pratipaksha bhavanam*, applying the opposite thought. There's a voice in you that says, "I'm not okay." And when that voice comes up, what do you do? You take a stand in awareness. "I'm whole. I'm complete. I'm full." And you say that to that voice. "It's not true. That's not who I am. I will not accept that. I do not accept that voice. I do not accept that. That's not knowledge." Knowledge is what? "I'm okay. I'm fine. I'm whole and complete." You're talking to yourself, obviously. And that's a great practice. The more conviction and energy you put into that affirmation of your wholeness and completeness, the quicker that voice of diminishment and incompleteness goes away. This is what we call *jnanabhyasa*, the application of knowledge. *Abhyasa* means "practice" or "application" and *jnana* means "knowledge."

Student: Is the verse saying that self-realization is a function of the intellect?

James: Yes, it takes place in the intellect. The intellect is the part of the self that's ignorant. The self is not ignorant but there's a part of the self called the intellect that's under the spell of ignorance and so it has to be liberated from its ignorance. So self-realization happens in the intellect.

Student: And if you stop discrimination, you can fall back?

James: It depends on whether the knowledge is firm or not. If the knowledge is firm, no. If the knowledge isn't firm, if you don't have full confidence in it, then you should keep discriminating until you're very clear that you're not this voice, this ego, this limited person that you think you are.

"I'm full and complete actionless, ordinary, unborn awareness." You just rest in that and you're fine. That happens to be the truth. You're not faking it. You're faking if it's not the truth, but it is the truth. Your epiphanies tell you that and scripture is clear on that. And the scripture comes from *Ishvara*, from the self. It's obvious it's not made up by humans, but humans have contributed to it.

So scripture says that and that's our means of knowledge. Our means of knowledge is scripture, not our senses, our mind, our intellect or our beliefs. We don't trust our experience because experience is telling us there's something wrong with us, right? Vedanta comes to you and says, "You're fine."

Student: So actually, it's faking when you believe you're incomplete?

James: That's right. You're actually faking it when you say, "I'm not the self" because that's not the truth. You're actually taking a stand in ignorance. You're not taking a stand in awareness.

Day 4: Session 1

Chapter 5: Verse 18-24

Chapter 6: Verse 1-3

Student: The joy is not in the object. When you get the object your desire goes and you experience some happiness. What is happening then? What goes to the bliss sheath?

James: The bliss sheath is always present.

Student: The bliss sheath is always present. But when the desire goes...

James: When you get what you want, your desire goes. It's just like going to sleep for a second. You experience bliss and happiness depending on the nature of the intensity of the desire. If it's just a tiny little desire that doesn't mean much and you let it go, you just feel a little tiny bit happy for a second and then the next desire comes up. If it's a huge, incredible desire you've been waiting for forever like, "I've been looking for my soul mate for 20 years and there she is," then when she comes there is a huge, long-lasting feeling of happiness and love. That's all.

Student: I understand that. But what exactly happens at the moment when happiness comes?

James: You feel happy! What do you mean, "What happens?" For who?

Student: The happiness is coming out of yourself.

James - Yes. That's correct.

Student: But is it because the attention is no longer on the desire?

James: It's the attention. That's correct. Your mind is no longer identified, no longer attached to the desire, to the thought, "I need this. I want this." And when the object comes, the thought dissolves, and your attention immediately goes back to the self. Earlier in the text, Krishna says that when you renounce, let go of a desire, the senses turn around and go back to the self.

Remember, desire is forcing your Subtle Body outward. These *vasanas* pressure the Subtle Body forcing it outward into objects so your mind is not resting in the self. When the desire goes, the mind just goes right back to the self, like going to sleep only you're awake. And then you feel good.

Student: It's true then that attention naturally always goes to the source?

James: Yes, that's right.

Student: So when you relax?

James: If you want to feel good all the time then you need to do karma yoga and get your *vasanas* exhausted because it's the *vasanas* that are extroverting the attention. It's these desires, these *vasanas*, which keep your mind from falling back into the self and enjoying the self.

Let me summarize a few points we've already covered. *Isvara*, life, is the doer. You didn't decide to be born. Life gave birth to you. Life supplies you with everything. It makes you breathe. It makes you walk. It feeds you food. It supplies experiences for you and then it removes you from the picture. That is *Isvara*.

Student: So is *Isvara* a sort of machine that's just churning out experience?

James: That's right. *Isvara* is the big experience machine. Because there is no experience for the self. It is the non-experiencing witness. The *jiva* is the experiencing witness. It is the person you think you are when you're talking about your story and your life. "Then I did this and then I did that and now I want to do this. I said this and I said that." That is the experiencing witness.

The reflection of awareness in the Subtle Body, called *pratibimba*, is the experiencing witness and awareness is the non-experiencing witness. So experience only happens because of the reflected light of awareness. This means that if you take yourself to be the apparent person and you think you are conscious, the consciousness that you believe belongs to you doesn't belong to you at all. It belongs to awareness. But because the Subtle Body is made out of *sattva*, it reflects the light of awareness, which makes the Subtle Body seem aware.

When awareness reflects upon the *jiva*, the individual thinks it is conscious. Vedanta often uses the analogy of the sun and the moon to explain this. In the light of a full moon, you can negotiate your way on the earth pretty well. And if you were to talk to the moon, the moon would say, "Look at me. I shine on all these things. I provide the light to the earth." But strictly speaking, would that be true? No. The sun is actually providing the light and the moon merely reflects it. Similarly, the Subtle Body that you think you are is just a reflector, like the moon, and awareness is like the light of the sun. All the thoughts and feelings and *vasanas* are all there, in the Subtle Body. So the reflection of awareness

and the thoughts and feelings and experiences that you have, they are so close together. They are just like a mirror and its reflection.

But how would you separate your reflection from the mirror? Do you see how close they are? When you try to think about it, you can't even really separate it, can you? The reflection and the mirror seem to be one. So the *jiva*, which is awareness when it identifies with the Subtle Body, can't discriminate between its own awareness, its own light, and the objects appearing in it because it's so close. So it says, "I think. I feel. I walk. I talk. I breathe. I went there. I did this. I did that." But actions and thoughts belong to the Subtle Body, not to the light, awareness, in which they appear.

Because this is hard to see, it's natural to assume that you are somehow responsible or connected to whatever happens to you as an experiencing entity, so you own it. You say "This is my stuff." Another definition of the ego, the doer, is the one who owns action. And this is where the whole trick is. Does what you're experiencing belong to you or does it belong to the Causal Body, to ignorance? It belongs to the Causal Body. When you see this, you understand that you, the doer, didn't create all of your stuff. You didn't decide to be born, you didn't choose your parents. Your parents were chosen for you by *Isvara*. It's not like you were thinking before your birth, "What kind of parents do I want in the next incarnation? I'd like a mom that's like this and a dad that's like that." Nobody is thinking those thoughts. Yet, when you're born here you say, "This is my mother. This is my father" and all that sort of thing. The "I" gets instantly identified with the thoughts that are appearing in it.

In short, the answer to your question is yes, *Isvara* is generating the experience. And since the experiences you have are given to you, you should relate to them as belonging to *Isvara*, which means you should be mindful of *Isvara* and grateful to *Isvara* for supplying you with your life. You value your life, don't you? Why? Because it's good. This morning I woke up and looked out the window. The sun was shining on the mountains and I just felt happy. Why? Because life is beautiful. Just being here, being alive, is such a gift.

How you relate to what happens in life is the issue here. When you take the stance that you are the owner of all the thoughts, feelings and actions, then you will have emotional problems. This is not to say that the *jiva* can act like a jerk and then blame *Isvara*. That's called projection and denial. You can't say, "I deny that I have any responsibility here at all as a human being to act in a reasonable and *dharmic* way. I blame *Isvara* for all the problems." People are like that. They act like jerks, they get whacked and then they say, "That's not right. God is bad," like Job in the Bible. They get pissed off at God and have a problem. They start whining and complaining. Understand that as a *jiva*, you do have a certain kind of responsibility. But we're saying your responsibility is to look at this stuff as belonging to *Isvara*. It gets you off the hook. You can relax. It's not personal.

Student: Previously what you said is that while it belongs to *Isvara*, one still needs to manage one's field.

James: That's right.

Student: So it's a both/and situation.

James: Yes, it's like, "I'm God's co-pilot." You could put it like that. The saying used to be, "God is my co-pilot." Remember that? I used to get hot under the collar thinking about it. If there really is two of you, then you are God's co-pilot, not the other way around. Insofar as the *jiva* exists, it has a relative kind of meaning. For example, "James" has a certain meaning. There is a kind of "James" identity here and insofar as there is a "James," then "James" needs to manage the stuff being presented to him in a reasonable way. But at the same time, I cannot feel good or bad about what stuff I'm managing because I'm not the guy that's going up to the Causal Body, digging out the stuff and saying, "I think I'll experience this today" or "I think I'll experience that today." You never know what you are going to experience on any given day.

The way you look at this stuff is the issue here, not that you have stuff or that you don't have stuff. Yes, if there's too much stuff and it's bothering you, you end up agitated. So if you want *moksha*, you should do karma yoga and try to reduce the stuff. You do have some control over *Isvara*, mind you, because you are actually awareness and awareness is beyond *Isvara*. So you do have a certain ability. In his book "Thinking, Fast and Slow," Daniel Kahneman points out that they've scientifically shown that by introducing different thoughts into the Subtle Body, you can change the nature of your personal Causal Body, which is part of *Isvara*, the total Causal Body. So you can affect *Isvara*.

For Arjuna, for the normal person, the war is not an experience he wants to have. But he didn't actually create that experience. It took millions of actions and events—most of which he was not even aware of—over the course of many years to create the war. So Arjuna isn't really responsible for what he feels. But because he takes responsibility for what he feels, he doesn't want to do his duty. And Krishna says, "The way to deal with this is that you look at it either from the self's point of view or from the point of view of your duty. But you're not looking at it from either point of view." If he does his duty, then those emotions are going to clear out.

Student: As I understand it, with karma yoga, the right thing to do is to do *sattvic* actions and not *rajasic* or *tamasic* actions. But Arjuna is going to do *rajasic* actions, isn't he?

James: Yes, but he's supposed to do *rajasic* actions because he's a warrior. In fact, that is why he's a warrior; his *svadharma* is *rajasic*. In other words, his nature is predominantly *rajasic* and he needs to act out conflicts. Later on in the text it's going to say that a *rajasic* person should not avoid conflict. It's through conflict that a *rajasic* person works things out. This is why conflict is good for certain types of people. They get to see their stuff and work it out. For other types of people, conflict is not good. A person who is predominantly *sattvic* should just renounce conflict because it's not suited for them. But a *rajasic* person is suited for war.

I was like that when I was younger. I was always ready to fight with somebody. When I was a kid, I had to get false teeth because a kid knocked out my teeth with a baseball bat. I was a fighter. I was always fighting somebody. I had fights all the time. And through that, I learned.

So let's say Arjuna decides, "Let's go over and hug Duryodhana. Let's say we're sorry. We don't want to start the war. We'll go back to the forest." How is Arjuna going to feel? His *rajasic vasanas* are going to drive him nutty. He has to work them out. *Isvara* has given him the opportunity to set matters straight and to do what needs be done, not just for himself but for the whole society. Arjuna's actions are going to have an impact on thousands of people.

Student: It's an interesting conundrum if your dharma or path is primarily *sattvic* and you are working alongside someone who is *rajasic*. I was thinking of Obama and Boehner and the US. When you're *sattvic*, how do you work with someone who is *rajasic*?

James: You just have to take the karma yoga view. The only solution in any relationship is karma yoga. The presupposition is that somehow you should change or they should change, isn't it? But as Krishna points out—and this is really important—everybody follows their nature. So Obama's going to be the cerebral, *sattvic* intellectual and Boehner's going to be this agitated, *rajasic* person. Now, Obama's not going to change because he's following his nature and Boehner's not going to change because he's following his nature. So all the *sattvic* person can do—assuming he or she wants to solve a problem—is to honor that other person by allowing them to follow their nature and not get agitated.

I know this because I'm *sattvic* and I've had relationships with several ladies. Most of the ladies I meet are *rajasic* and it's always difficult in the beginning because I am very laid-back and easy-going and I don't worry about a thing. But the women tend to want to organize everything, do everything and boss me around. And, you know, it takes a while before I win—*sattva* always wins—because I never take them head on. You can't fight with a person head on. It never works. It'll just make them more *rajasic*. A *rajasic* person, if you confront them, will get their back up and they will come at you. There will be resentment and all kinds of problems will come up.

So in this path, *titiksha*, forbearance, is one of the most important qualifications. You just forebear. You just stay in your own self. You leave the results up to *Bhagavan*. In other words, you let them do what they do and if doesn't go your own way, you don't get excited. You just wait because you know that *sattva* will prevail in the long run. A *rajasic* person will eventually understand the value of *sattva* because *rajasic* people tend to be quite intelligent. And what you don't know about *rajas* is that people who are *rajasic*—even though they may be quite proud of the things that they've accomplished or can accomplish in life—are suffering. *Rajasic* people are in pain, believe me, and because they are always looking for relief from that pain they project. That's why they're blaming you and making problems for you, because they're in pain. You have to understand that. This particular kind of energy is a painful energy for them. If you buy into it, you start experiencing that painful energy yourself. You can't help it because you're in the environment and there's only one Subtle Body, and if a Subtle Body is agitated, your Subtle Body will become agitated. So you have to be forbearing. My guru defined forbearance as, "Suffer the little pinpricks of life with equanimity." There are always little pinpricks. They arise all of the time and there is no point in getting yourself upset or worked up about it because it's just the nature of this reality. There's always conflict.

Student: So you can change from a *rajasic* person to a *sattvic* person?

James: Sure, that's what yoga is about. You obviously keep enough *rajas* to motivate yourself to get things done, but excessive *rajas* keeps the mind busy all of the time. A *rajasic* mind is a mind that always has to be doing something. It cannot take a nap in the afternoon. It can't just sit down and look at the sunset, smoke a cigarette and be lazy. It always has a big list. It's working all day long to get to the bottom of the list. The problem is that every time you get to tick one off the top of the list, another comes on the bottom. So you keep running faster and faster. The faster you run, the more stuff there is to do.

There is a kind of virtue in this *rajasic* cycle. My mother was *rajasic* and I remember from childhood what it was like. They think that doing is virtuous. It doesn't matter what they are doing. The important thing is to do. I can hear my mother, "An idle mind, James, an idle mind is the devil's workshop." I've always napped. When I was a kid, I napped. I love napping. And when I would visit my mother she'd fix lunch and after lunch I'd go lay on the couch in the living room and nap. And mother truly hated it. After five or ten minutes she'd come over and she'd shake me. "James, James, what's wrong with you? I think it's your blood. I'm going to call Dr. Stover right now. I think it's your blood. You must be anemic because what's a strapping young man like you doing sleeping from 2 to 4 on a weekday afternoon?" Those were her exact words and I pretended like I was asleep. I sat there ignoring her, not moving. "James, James." I'd think in my mind, "Fuck you, mom. Get outta here." And then you know what she'd do? She'd get out the vacuum cleaner and start vacuuming the carpet.

So *rajas* is really painful. In fact, later on the Gita is going to say that *rajas* is responsible for pain. *Tamas* is not responsible for pain. But *tamas* can be painful if you're basically a *sattvic* or *rajasic* person. The cause of the pain you feel when you have *tamas* is that you can't accomplish anything. It's ten times as hard for a *rajasic* person to accomplish some task when his or her mind is *tamasic*.

Student: Isn't Krishna encouraging Arjuna to use some *rajas* with a karma yoga attitude to overcome his *tamas*?

James: Yes, absolutely. He just said "Do your duty." It's like an athlete before a big game. He may have various personal problems, but when the crowds are cheering and the team gathers in the locker room waiting to run out on the field, he gets in a totally different frame of mind. All those competitive *vasanas* start kicking in and his mind clears out and that personal stuff disappears. In those kinds of circumstances you can't really have your personal thoughts. You are part of the whole crowd, part of the team. There is a whole set of circumstances determining how you behave. And so you surrender to the total.

In war, it's that way also. So when you identify with a cause or a group or a team, the actions, thoughts and feelings that are appropriate to that group situation will be determined by *Isvara*. *Isvara* just wants you to do your job and stop worrying about yourself. That's what Krishna's saying. Stop thinking about your own feelings in this situation. You've got a job to do, so do it.

The *gunas*—*rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*—are such an amazing model for self-analysis. It's all you need to manage your mind. I'm really surprised that my guru and Swami Dayananda—these are people that I owe everything to spiritually—don't talk more or teach more on the nature of the *gunas*. They know it, obviously, and they do teach it, but I think it should really be emphasized. It's such a practical way to manage your experience. When you understand these three energies and how they relate to each other, you can control them through your actions. Then you can build the kind of life and the kind of mind you want reasonably quickly and efficiently.

Student: You said that as a *sattvic* person you shouldn't spend time with people who are *rajasic* because then you will get *rajasic* too. My question is why doesn't the *rajasic* person get *sattvic*? Why is it that the *sattvic* person gets *rajasic*?

James: It's because *Isvara* has programmed you that way. *Rajas, tamas* and *sattva* are just *Isvara*. *Isvara* is also known as the Causal Body, the *karana sharira*. It is the three *gunas*. In other words, it's what generates experience and experience comes in these three flavors. There is the experience of pain, suffering, agitation and desire which is *rajas*. There is the experience of sleep, dullness and sloth which is *tamas*. And there is the experience of clarity, bliss and happiness which is *sattva*. And then as those *gunas* cycle, there are intermediate phases where you're a little *rajasic*, a little *tamasic* and a little *sattvic* and so forth and so on.

All of the *gunas* are available all of the time because the Causal Body is always there. If you are really looking at it very sensitively from awareness' point of view, you can see that *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* exist simultaneously. But at any specific time one of them predominates. When you are acting, you should try to act out of *sattva*. If you want to make a decision or do an action, you shouldn't just do it out of *tamas* or *rajas*. If you do it out of *tamas*, for example, you'll definitely make mistakes. Your timing will be wrong. *Tamasic* types are procrastinators. *Tamas* makes you not want to do anything. Everybody has that in them. There are certain things you just don't want to do and so you just keep leaving them, you just keep not doing them and they pile up. And when you do that, you don't feel good. And then you think, "I should do it" and when you do it, it doesn't work because the time is gone. You should have done it when it came up. You were supposed to do it at that time but you were too lazy. "Oh, I'm so tired. Don't bother me with that today." So you don't do it. And then when you finally get around to doing it, maybe it's appropriate and maybe it isn't. In *tamas*, you're not connected to *Isvara*. In other words, you're not connected to the world around you. You're just in this personal, depressing fog. And that's not a happy energy. If you are predominantly *tamasic*, then you just sit on the couch eating potato chips, getting fat, playing video games and sleeping a lot with the curtains drawn. You just don't want to move, you don't want to take care of anything.

You better not make too many decisions when you are *rajasic* either because your passion, desires and agitations will distort your understanding. There is a student here who is a trader. He was telling me since he's been in Vedanta his trading is getting better because he's managing these emotions, *rajas* and *tamas*. They are really tricky energies. You start watching a stock and you're *rajasic*, you start thinking, "Oh, everybody's buying and maybe I should get on now. Look at it go zip, zip, zip." And you throw your money on it without checking all the fundamentals and referring to your knowledge. Then suddenly, ten minutes after you bought it, it starts to tank. But if you are *sattvic*, you stick with the principles because you know that knowledge works. *Sattva* means you respect, honor and value knowledge.

Rajas and *tamas* are emotional energies. It means you value feelings more than you value knowledge. In this day and age, feelings are everything. Instead of being in charge, the intellect is used to justify all of your feelings, emotions, sensitivities and all of your attachments to your *vasanas*. Your intellect will provide all manner of rationalizations, justifications and excuses for emotional behavior. Not good. You can see why society is so dysfunctional, why we just lurch from one crisis to another.

Look, everybody has feelings. Everybody has anger, desire, slothfulness and depression. In western terminology those are some of the seven deadly sins. The seven deadly sins are all *rajasic* and *tamasic*: pride, arrogance, vanity, gluttony, lust, etc.

Ishvara is the experience generator. If you don't do anything, you will still have your experiences. *Ishvara* will still see it, he'll give you things to do. Those generated experiences, they demand responses. You need to respond to the experience that you're given by *Ishvara*. That's what we are saying here. When you are *tamasic* you avoid responding appropriately. When you are *rajasic*, you over-respond, respond with passion and respond incorrectly because your desires and your fears impact on your response. But when you are *sattvic*, you are aware of what an appropriate response is and you do it. That's why Krishna says "You've got to work on yourself, Arjuna." That's basically it. And this is a great model for working on ourselves.

Student: So Arjuna has to be *sattvic* in order to make the right decision which is to do a *rajasic* action?

James: Yes, that's right. If Arjuna was *sattvic* he wouldn't have his problem. His guru on the other side, Bhishma, was *sattvic*. He was an older man than Arjuna. He had gray hair and he was very highly respected. And he was there on the battlefield. He didn't want to be there but he owed a duty. He owed a debt to Dhritarashtra, Duryodhana's father. Bhishma followed dharma impeccably so he was paying his debt. He said "I don't really want to do this, but I will do it." And he was unemotional about it because it was his duty as a warrior to pay his markers. Bhishma had to do what was appropriate for him to do. But Arjuna, he had personal issues with some of the guys and he was very emotional.

Verse 18 – "Those who see no difference between a humble Brahmin endowed with knowledge and a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dog eater, are wise. When the mind is rooted in the self the cycle of births and deaths is neutralized. The wise abide in the self alone because it is free of defect and always the same. Those who are established in the self as the self by virtue of hard and fast self knowledge do not rejoice when their desires are satisfied nor are they disturbed by undesirable karma."

"Those who see no difference between a humble Brahmin endowed with knowledge and a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dog eater, are wise."

How does that work? They all look very different, but really, they're all just thoughts appearing in awareness and the essence of each one is awareness. It's your own awareness taking the form of a dog, an elephant, a cow, and so forth and so on.

Again, this goes back to the location of experience. Where is experience located? The Subtle Body is the instrument of experience, and where is the instrument of experience located? In you, in consciousness. *Ishvara* provides these three instruments. *Ishvara* is a power in awareness. So whatever *Ishvara* has to offer is coming from awareness. And whatever the *jiva* has is coming from *Ishvara*. All of your experiences are just your own consciousness shaped by the power of *Maya*, by *Ishvara*. You are just pure consciousness. You're not changing or doing anything. *Ishvara* keeps manufacturing different experiences for you: the experience of a cow, a dog, a humble brahmin, anger, and on and on. *Ishvara* keeps manufacturing those experiences out of you and a wise person knows that they are all just himself appearing in different forms.

What you are experiencing is yourself in the form of a thought. For example, when you hear a sound, you are not actually experiencing the sound itself. You are experiencing a vibration in the Subtle Body. And where does the experience of the Subtle Body appear? In you, awareness. So *Isvara's* just manufacturing that experience for you. And you just sit there and watch the experiences, that's all. You are the non-experiencing witness. Whatever experience comes, it doesn't leave any trace on you. But when you don't understand who you are you think "I'm changing" when the experience changes because of the association with the Subtle Body. If you identify with the experience, you think you change when the experience changes, but in fact, you don't. So the people Krishna is talking about in Verse 18 know the difference between the non-experiencing witness and experience.

"When the mind is rooted in the self, the cycles of births and deaths are neutralized."

"Neutralized" doesn't mean they don't exist. We define "the cycle of births and deaths" as the appearance of an experience or thought and the disappearance of an experience or thought. We're not going to interpret it to mean death and rebirth of the physical body. However, insofar as there is reincarnation, then that reincarnation is also neutralized when the mind is rooted in the self. "Rooted in the self" means when your knowledge that you are the non-experiencing witness is firm. Then the objects will appear but they will be neutralized, that is, they won't have any power to bind you. One example they use in the scripture is a burnt rope. It looks like a rope. But when you try to tie something down with it, it's just ashes. It falls apart.

"The wise abide in the self alone because it free of defect and always the same."

If "defective" means "limited" then everything in the apparent reality is defective, isn't it? All the things you chase here seem to be real, beautiful, perfect, whole and valuable in and of themselves but once you get them, you discover there's a defect: that for every gain, there is a loss; for every upside, there is a down side. That is the defect here. Because when you want something, you only want the upside, don't you? You want the object, whatever it is, to supply you with pleasure and joy forever. But none of these things can do that. When the *vasana* is satisfied, it may give you temporary little blips of joy. But then what? The experience ends. It's not a defect if a bad experience ends, is it? Then it's a blessing. But the end of a bad experience doesn't mean that you won't have another bad experience later. So whether you're waiting to get rid of a bad experience or gain a good experience, it's all the same. Any experience is defective. But the self is not defective. Its nature is bliss and it doesn't change.

We're not talking the bliss of experience. We're talking the bliss of knowledge. The bliss of knowledge is just confidence. When you know you're the self, you have total confidence that you can deal with anything life has to offer because you know for a fact that you're whole, complete and unchanging. But if you think you're the *jiva*, then sometimes life presents you with a problem and you lose your confidence, just like Arjuna. You don't feel you're up to the task.

"Those who are established in the self as the self..."

This means the *jiva* is rooted in awareness. In other words, all your thoughts, feelings and knowledge are rooted in awareness. You see that you actually are awareness and you actually experience things as awareness experiences things, not just as the *jiva* experiences things. You get both. You get to

experience things as the *jiva* experiences things and you experience things as awareness. And awareness experiences things with total, absolute, pure dispassion. Dispassion isn't a bad thing. It's not coldness or indifference. It's just seeing things as they are. That's why it's called knowledge. You experience things as they actually are. You're no longer projecting or denying. Your knowledge is not conditioned by *rajas* and *tamas*. So there's no mistakes from that point on.

And how do you establish yourself in the self as the self? By virtue of hard and fast self-knowledge. That means you just stick with inquiry until you're 100 percent confident and there are no more doubts. Even after I knew who I was and was confident, I kept on working on my mind. I thought, "I'm not going to have any doubts. I don't want one doubt about anything here." So I just kept patiently working. I knew I was the self. I didn't have to do the work but I didn't want even the slightest little agitations for the *jiva*. I like Jim. I want Jim happy. So whatever little problems Jim has, I'm going to be right on it to help him out because I love Jim. Jim's me. So you just keep at it.

What else are you going to do with your life? "I got enlightened. Oh, I think I'll go fall in love. I think I'll go start a business." You're going to see shortly here, one of the definitions of a realized person is somebody who doesn't initiate new undertakings. Why would you? You're happy. It doesn't mean you can't initiate them, but you won't be driven to initiate a new undertaking. For example, now that I'm getting a little, tiny bit famous, I could get ambitious. I could push hard. I could do more seminars, make everything very slick, chase the money and get bigger crowds and the whole business. But I just resist the whole damn thing. You know, there is already more to do than I know what to do with so I just take it easy. It's okay because what's to gain? That's the feeling. I've got nothing to gain here. I've got nothing to lose by doing it but I've got nothing to gain either. That's self-knowledge.

"...don't rejoice when their desires are satisfied."

When those who are established in the self get what they want they don't get high and go "Oh, wow. I won the lottery. Hurray!" Nor when things go wrong, do they get disturbed.

Verse 21 – "When the mind no longer tries to connect the sense organs with their respective objects it becomes permanently fulfilled. Pleasure arising from the contact of the organs and their objects is a source of pain because it begins and ends. The wise do not celebrate it. The karma yoga attitude brings happiness because it purifies desire and anger."

"When the mind no longer tries to connect the sense organs with their respective objects it becomes permanently fulfilled."

Why? Because when the mind turns away from objects, it starts sucking the bliss from the Causal Body. But as long as you're trying to hook yourself up with a sense object, sex, for example, then your mind is always going to be disturbed. If you are chasing sex you'll get your fun, but your mind will always be agitated. It'll be agitated before, during, and after. When sex goes, you want it back. While you're having it, what is happening? You know you're going to lose it so that takes the edge off it. And before, you're anxious about whether you're going to get it or not. Think about it.

The people we are talking about here know that *Isvara* already has everything hooked up. However it's supposed to be, it will be and they'll just be happy with it. It doesn't mean they don't have a connection with the sense objects. They do, but they don't try to connect their senses with the objects because they know that they don't lack anything. So when a *vasana* comes up, they don't feel that there is anything missing. They think "Things are fine. I'm whole. I'm complete. I don't need anything. I'm perfect as I am."

"Pleasure arising from the contact of the organs and their objects is a source of pain because it begins and ends."

We already said that the wise don't make a big story out of anything. The *jiva* makes a big story out of everything. It can't wait to tell you how wonderful it is and how wonderful its life is. Or how bad everything is and how awful life is. It's making a story out of everything. Whereas, wise people don't celebrate and don't make big stories out of anything. They know it's the way it is, it's all *Isvara* and they just let it be.

Verse 24 – "If you are awake to the self, revel in the self and are satisfied with the self alone, you are free. When your impurities are removed, your doubts resolved, and you are happily engaged in serving all beings you will easily gain liberation. A mind free of desire and anger is liberated here and hereafter. If the senses are shut down and inhalation and exhalation are balanced, liberation happens for the meditative person who is not a slave to the body-mind-complex and for whom freedom is the only goal. Know Me as the sustainer of rituals and disciplines, the Lord of all the worlds, friend of all beings, and be free."

"If you are awake to the self, revel in the self and are satisfied with the self alone, you are free. When your impurities are removed, your doubts resolved and you are happily engaged in serving all beings you will easily gain liberation. A mind free of desire and anger is liberated here and hereafter. If the senses are shut down..."

Here Krishna is setting up for the next chapter so we're getting a little preview. In other words, what's Krishna saying? "Enough karma yoga. I have exhaustively explained karma yoga." He's repeated himself about 50 times for a good reason and now he's ready to move on to the next topic. The next topic is meditation. Why is the next topic meditation? Why didn't they just start Arjuna on meditation right from the beginning? "You know, your problem is that you're agitated. Sit down and close your eyes and sit like this and visualize a god or goddess and start breathing." That's what they do these days.

Inevitably, almost all of the meditation traditions fail because they prescribe meditation for people who don't have any karma yoga. That's why Krishna is waiting. Unless you have some kind of life program for managing your *vasanas*, then when you sit to meditate, it's going to take you two or three hours to get your mind calm. Some people sit there for an hour—supposedly meditating—and then they get up. But they're still agitated. They can't figure out why meditation doesn't work. If it does happen to work and they go into *samdhi*, it's very lovely, beautiful and all that. But as soon as they get

up from meditating and their spouse starts nagging them, they get angry and say, “What are you doing nagging me, I’m in *samdhi*! How dare you!”

There was a woman like that in India. She had written a big, fat book that was a transmission from the other planes. She actually sold about 20,000 copies. It was one of these ‘ascended masters’ type of books. She was a lovely person, but really goofy. And she was totally experience oriented. She always used to dress in white and try to look holy. And when she walked around she ignored everybody because she wanted you to think that she was in some sort of high state. And she did get into high states.

She used to go to Ramana ashram. Every day there are always hundreds of people walking around and around his *samdhi*. And she used to stand where everyone could see her, with a blissful smile on her face and her eyes open really wide. She wanted everyone to know she was in a high state so she always stood in a prominent place. She couldn’t get in her *samdhi* state under a tree outside. No, no. “My *samdhi* doesn’t work out there. My *samdhi* only works when a lot of people are watching me.”

So, one day—and she told me this story herself—she went downtown to the local temple. It’s a big temple full of art and she was able to go into the inner sanctum. She didn’t get behind the curtain where the deity was but she was able to sit in the little anteroom just before the deity where the priests stand. During the *puja* there is always a handful of priests in that little anteroom. When you come up for your *darshan*, the priests make a ritual on your behalf. That’s how they make their money. So this little anteroom is really a work spot for the priests. Well, somehow, she got into that room and sat in a corner. Indians are really nice people and they’re really tolerant. The thing I like about Hinduism is the amazing tolerance these people have for idiots. They just say, “Oh well, that’s the way it is. He’s like this. She’s like that. So what.” They just ignore. So they ignored her, you see. And she’s sitting there and of course, she’s all in white with her legs crossed, that blissful, beatific smile on her face and she’s in *samdhi*.

It was okay for a while but as more and more people came for *puja*, it got really crowded in there. More priests came in because more devotees wanted service and she had virtually no room. They were all bumping into her. But while all of that was going on she was showing how deep in *samdhi* she was by not moving. Finally, the head *pujari*, the head priest, said to her, “Go!” He didn’t say, “Please go” or anything. He just looked at her and said, “Go!” because she’d been there long enough and she was interfering with business, the worship business. She ignored him. Again he said, “Go!” And she opens her eyes and says, “Don’t you know who I am? Don’t you know that I’m in *samdhi*?” She yelled at him, the head priest. So they just ushered her out of there. If you’re in *samdhi*, fine. If you have to get up and go, that’s also fine. But her ego thought it was wonderful that she was having a *sattvic* experience. She was so attached to it she wanted everybody to know how she was feeling and how amazingly spiritual she was. “See, I’m dressed in white and I’m in *samdhi*. Look at me.”

So meditation only works for you if you have a program of karma yoga because otherwise, as soon as you get back to your daily life, the *vasanas* will be driving you. Nothing has been done about your *vasanas*. Yes, you’ve calmed them temporarily and gotten a little bit of peace. But as soon as you go back home and your wife nags you, the anger comes up, your *samdhi* goes, and then you say, “Jesus, I’ve got to go meditate again to get calm.” So then you go and sit down and try to get calm again. But there is a basic disconnect there. That’s why the Gita says, “Get your program in place, work on your

likes and dislikes, and then you're ready for meditation." Meditation is not going to purify your mind. Meditation is going to steady your mind on the self, it's going to keep it focused inside. It's very nice, the reflection of the self in a pure mind and that is real meditation. Krishna is getting ready to explain this.

"If the senses are shut down and inhalation and exhalation are balanced, liberation happens for the meditative person who is not a slave to the body-mind complex and for whom freedom is the only goal."

Maybe it does and maybe it doesn't. Because what are we saying *moksha* is? Knowledge. So even if your mind is in a meditative state, it's anybody's guess whether you're going to get self-knowledge from it. In fact, Vedanta calls yoga a leading error. That is, yoga—meditation—can lead you to *moksha* because as a meditator, at some point you realize the experience of meditation is not what you want. You realize what you want is to know who you are. You want to know who is meditating. And at that point, you convert from an experiencer to a seeker of knowledge, an enquirer. Some yogis do get *moksha* through meditation, not because of the meditation itself—although meditation creates a really excellent mental environment for inquiry—but because they convert their desire to experience the state of *samdhi* into a desire to understand, "Who am I?"

I meditated a lot. And I had all these amazing *samdhis* and *satoris* and experiences but I could never control them, I could never get them to last. They always changed. One time I was in this really powerful, amazing state. And I decided, "I'm just gonna stay here forever. This is so good. This is it. I'm just gonna stay here." And it lasted two or three days. Then I lost concentration because a *vasana* came up and the high state just slipped away. It was just an experience that I was trying to hold onto, which was foolish because it's obvious that experience is not permanent. And that includes the so called high, divine experiences. But at that time, I didn't know that I was looking for myself. I thought I was looking for the experience of the self because I thought that experiencing the self was enlightenment.

Understand, we are not against meditation or experience at all. I have to come on kind of heavy in the beginning about the limitation of experience just to get people to understand that experience, any experience, is in *samsara*. Any experience whatsoever. *Samdhi* is in *samsara*. You're not zipping out of *samsara* like some people think, you're just in *samsara* experiencing *sattva*. And *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are part of *Maya*, which is *samsara* if you don't know who you are. It takes a long time to get over that attachment to experience, particularly if you're spiritual. Because those experiences feel so good, so nice, so lovely. They're really seductive. So you keep persisting in this technique or that practice in order to have these experiences over and over and over again. I get people who come to hear Vedanta that have been meditating for 20 years or longer. One fella who is now a very serious Vedanta guy had been meditating for 30 years. Finally, the penny dropped. He was a slow learner but hey, better late than never.

"Know me as the sustainer of rituals and disciplines..."

Meditation is a ritual and a discipline. It's an act of mind. Maybe this afternoon we'll meditate around four o'clock. That's a good time to meditate. *Sadhya* and *samya*—early morning and early afternoon—are two times that are best for meditation because the energy of the universe is switching at that

point. The *rajasic* energy is going *tamasic* in the afternoon and there is a balance period where you don't have *rajas* or *tamas*. It's *sattvic* time. It's easy to meditate then because you don't have a lot of external vibrations or mind noise. It's the same early in the morning when the night energy is changing to the day energy. *Tamasic* energy is shifting to *rajasic* energy. There is an in-between state and that's a good time to meditate.

CHAPTER 6: MEDITATION

Verse 1 – “If you renounce proscribed rituals but perform no other actions you are not a karma yogi. A karma yogi does action without attachment to the result. Renunciation is actually karma yoga because you can't become a karma yogi without giving up attachment to results.”

What you are renouncing is your apparent control over results. So renunciation and karma yoga are basically the same thing. Just renouncing rituals or activities doesn't solve the problem. It's certainly not *moksha*, as Krishna said earlier. That's not to say that you shouldn't simplify your life. If you have too many activities going on, you should get rid of the non-essential ones. Otherwise, you're not going to be able to meditate and you're not going to be able to discriminate.

Verse 3 – “For a discriminating person who wishes to obtain a contemplative disposition karma yoga is the means. For someone who is already contemplative, complete renunciation is the means.”

Complete renunciation is the renunciation of the doer, not the actions. My guru renounced the doer but you wouldn't believe the number of actions he could 'do.' But for all of those actions he knew he wasn't the doer. In other words, he put himself in a situation where he was constantly dynamic but there was little to no resistance or burden of doership.

Student: When you speak in that context of doership and the context of your guru, is it akin to you moving your hand over the chart? Is it like that?

James: Yes, it's like that. Doership is the feeling, “I have to do. I'm supposed to do. I should do. I need to do.” That's taking responsibility for the actions and when actually you're not the doer. When I think “the self,” my hand goes there on the chart. When I think “the Subtle Body,” my hand goes there on the chart. When I think “the Gross Body,” my hand goes there on the chart. I'm not thinking “James, you said 'the self.' Now make your hand go to the top of the chart.” The thought simply produces the action and there is no sense of doership at all. Understand this. Actually that is how it is all the time. You're never doing anything. You're being done. You're an instrument of *Isvara's* will. *Isvara* is using you. There's a beautiful verse we're going to see later that says, “*Isvara* is seated in the heart of all beings and makes them dance like a puppet on a string.” Actually, the phrase is closer to, “makes

them behave mechanically.” We’re just little instruments for *Isvara*. Once you understand that, no matter how much you do, you don’t really feel much of a burden of doership. There will be some. I mean, I get a little tired because I feel like there’s a part of me—the doer part of me—that feels like “Wow, I’ve done a lot today. Taught six hours and drove over and back etc.”

So there is a sense of doership insofar as when there’s activity, the ego has these particular feelings. But I, awareness, see it and it’s fine. The sense of doership is very, very faint. Swamiji used to get tired too. In fact, his argument with Swami Dayananda which caused them to break up was basically about that. Swamiji thought he was doing too much and he was. And he wanted to dump his doings on Swami Dayananda because Dayananda was capable of teaching and running the Chinmaya Mission. But Swami Dayananda said, “No. I can’t do this.” Swami Chinmayananda wasn’t just asking him to teach. He was asking him to assume the responsibilities of the head of an organization which involved all kinds of doings that a *sattvic* person like Dayananda wouldn’t want to do. *Rajasic* people, you can give them a job and they say, “Oh yes, I’d love that job. You bet. I’d love to take over the Mission.” But Swami Dayananda was very *sattvic* and he didn’t want to do it. So why would Swamiji ask that unless he was feeling the burden of doership, of being the head of an organization? A big organization like that, you have to talk to money people a lot. And you have all kinds of people underneath you and they’re always having problems. So you have to beg for money and you have to manage a whole bunch of people with their own doubts and problems and many of them want out.

Sometimes when I was at Swamiji’s ashram I couldn’t sleep in the afternoons because it was too hot or I was just so high with *shakti*, energy. So I used to sneak out. It was forbidden, but I found a way to sneak out where no one could see me and I’d go down to this little park where there was a chai walla, a little tea man. It was pleasant and I’d order a cup of tea and sit drinking it, just enjoying. Then I’d sneak back into the ashram for the afternoon program. One day when I was going out I heard Swamiji shouting, which was odd. He was supposed to be taking a nap but instead he was standing out in the hot sun with nothing covering his head. There was this young boy, a *brahmacharya*, all dressed in white. The boy was one of the *pujaris* in the temple. His parents had sent him there and he was fed up. It was a thankless job where he didn’t have any power and he had to do a lot cleaning and things like that. So he told Swamiji he was leaving. And it took Swamiji half an hour to convince this kid that he should stay and do his job. For Swamiji, these situations were frequent and many. So there was a sense of responsibility and doership even in a great *mahatma* like him.

With Abhedananda, my second guru, forget it. I could not find a doer, hard as I tried. It was impossible to find a doer there. It was absolutely empty. He was the most amazing human being I have ever met because when you zoomed into him, there was just an endless expanse of peace and bliss and light. There was no person sitting there. He was an incarnation of a famous 16th century saint called Sri Maha Chaitanya Prabhu. So he came in reasonably empty. In fact, he spent only 20 minutes with his guru, a famous guru named Chattampi Swami, sitting in a cave and that was it. He knew who he was and there was no doership there. It was just impossible to find any. He had no resistance to anything. There was no *rajas* or *tamas*, just pure *sattva*.

So doership is an attitude you take with respect to action. And it’s just the feeling that, “I’m doing.” We’ve analyzed all the factors that are involved in karma, action, and we’ve seen that it’s really the whole field that’s causing the action to happen, not us. So there’s no real reason for us to take this incredibly important responsibility for getting things done. As things come up you do them, but with

no feeling that, "I'm doing it." *Isvara* is just providing you with an opportunity to experience something, to do and to enjoy. And so you just leisurely do. That's the feeling these *mahatmas* have.

Off we go on the self-realized person again. See what an important topic it is? Why? Because you have all of these idiots who, after having some kind of *samdhi* experience or getting some *shaktipat* from a guru, claim they're enlightened or self-realized. Then they make websites, write books and travel around spewing out a bunch of nonsense. And even if they talk nicely, their actions and their statements don't always line up. So that's why we spend so much time here making it clear what these people should be and comparing that to what they actually are.

Day 4: Session 2

Chapter 6: Verse 4-35

The Bhagavad Gita is organized around the fundamental Vedantic mantra, "*tat tvam asi*" or "You are that." The first six chapters deal with "*tvam*", you, the *jiva*, the person or individual. The next six chapters deal with "*tat*", the self. The last six chapter discuss the identity between the two. So "*tat*," limitless, non-dual, ordinary, actionless, experienceless, unborn awareness is what you, "*tvam*," "*asi*," are. This statement indicates the identity between your personal consciousness and the universal consciousness. It's saying there is no difference between the consciousness in you and the consciousness in everything else.

In other words, we are all one. And we are not just talking about people. You have a connection with the bugs and the birds and the bees and the whales and everything else. All living beings, conscious beings, share the same consciousness, the same awareness. The differences between beings are accounted for by the *upadhis*. An *upadhi* is a limiting adjunct. For example, the three bodies are limiting adjuncts. A limiting adjunct makes something look like something other than what it is. So it makes awareness look like it's a doer when awareness is associated with the Subtle Body. That's an *upadhi*. Awareness is never a doer but when the Subtle Body is there, it looks like awareness is a doer.

So the Gita starts with an analysis of the *jiva*, the individual person. It's clear that the individual person is conscious. At first you think you're conscious as the Subtle Body when you're actually conscious as awareness but it doesn't matter because it's a starting point that the teaching can use to build a bridge between you and the consciousness in everything.

Student: Sometimes I think there's a differentiation between consciousness, wakefulness and awareness. If I understand correctly, you're saying awareness equals consciousness in this context, the Vedanta context.

James: Yes, we're using consciousness and awareness as synonyms. They have the same meaning. I tend to use awareness more often than consciousness because in the West, people tend to think of consciousness as the contents of the Subtle Body, meaning they think consciousness is the flow of thoughts, feelings, experiences and memories. But consciousness is steady and unchanging and thoughts etc. are actually inert objects that appear in it. The thoughts are just subtle matter and they

belong to the Subtle Body. But it feels like they are living things. Why? Because they're so closely associated with consciousness, their substrate. The mirror, the Subtle Body, and the reflection of consciousness in the Subtle Body are so close that when consciousness is shining on the thoughts in the Subtle Body, they seem to have a life of their own. You don't know that they're borrowing their light from awareness, the consciousness that is shining on them.

Sankara has a beautiful image in *Atma Bodha*. He's walking along the road and he sees a little hut with a blacksmith. And the blacksmith has a fire and a billows and he's pumping the fire up really hot. He's heating up a piece of iron so he can turn it into a spear or a shovel or whatever. Because of the heat, the iron ball is glowing. Now is the light coming from the iron ball? No, it's borrowing the light from the fire. So are the three bodies, are they actually alive, are they actually functioning? No. They are borrowing their energy from awareness, from the fire of consciousness. So the glow, the 'livingness,' the energy, the *shakti*, the radiance that we have, is all borrowed from the fire of consciousness. Consciousness is like a fire, like a light. It shines on us and makes us dance and move and feel and so forth. So going back to "*tat tvam asi*," "*tat*" is consciousness and "*tvam*" is the *jiva*. There is an identity between "you" and "that" or you could say, between you and consciousness and that is what we're trying to establish.

All of our teachings basically prove that one equation: the identity between you and everything. That's a difficult job. Why? Because experience tells us that we're separate from everything, that the subject and the object are actually two different things. That's how it appears. So to break down this conditioning, this huge resistance to the idea that everything is non-separate from ourselves, we need to start with karma yoga. Then once our mind is quiet, we keep our attention on the self.

I meditate all the time—even while I'm talking and teaching—because I've trained myself to keep my attention on the reflection of awareness in my mind. That's meditation; that's yoga. So here we're not talking karma yoga. We're talking yoga as meditation. And if you look at *ashtanga* yoga and Buddhism, their whole goal is meditation, isn't it? In Buddhism and *ashtanga* yoga, there are preliminaries. You have to learn how to live right. In *ashtanga* yoga, you have the *yamas* and *niyamas*, for example. That's all to take care of your dharma problems and your karma problems. Then you'll be capable of meditating. For Buddhism it's expressed as right living, right livelihood etc. All those things are there to get you clean and pure and ready for nirvana, for *samdhi*, or whatever.

Now, if you know who you are, why would you meditate? If you know who you are, then you're already in meditation, aren't you? People only meditate because they don't know who they are. When you know who you are your mind automatically goes to the self and you're automatically in meditation. But until that knowledge is firm, it's good to create the kind of inner environment where it's easy to lock your mind on the reflection of the self. Obviously you can't lock your attention on the self because it's the self that's locking its attention. However, you can turn your attention away from the objects and towards a pure, *sattvic* Subtle Body. It's easy to do that if you have practiced enough karma yoga to reduce your *vasana* load. That's the point.

The meditation that I teach is an old meditation, and it's called *pratyahara*. It has elements of all the different meditations. First we scan the body and relax it totally. I like to use a kind of visualization method where you imagine that your body is hollow or empty. Or you can fill your body with light and just generate a sense of peace and tranquility, releasing all of the tensions in the body. As long as you

have tension in your neck or in your back or feet or stomach or your head, your mind will always go to that agitation, that tension. So the first stage of the meditation is to relax your body completely.

The second stage is to turn your attention to the breath. Now, everybody's talking breath, breath, breath. In Buddhism they just tell you, "Just keep watching your breath." Well, I'm sorry to say, I don't know why you would just keep watching it because all you're going to get by watching your breath is breath-knowledge. But we want self-knowledge so we don't want to be paying attention to our breath for more than a few minutes. We're paying attention to our breath because it's a trick. Using the breath can get your mind very quiet. So you shouldn't have to observe your breath for more than a few minutes, maybe five minutes at the most. Or maybe a little more if you need to synchronize your mind and your breath. What we want to do in this meditation is synchronize your attention with your breath. So as the breath goes out, your attention rides on the breath and when the breath comes in, your attention comes in with it. Now that's going to be tricky. Why? Because *vasanas* are going to put thoughts in your mind and those thoughts are going to take your attention to the object of thought, isn't it? Suddenly you find yourself in Mexico on the beach drinking Corona because the *vasanas* grabbed your attention and sent it off in all sorts of directions. Or you think of your wife or your kids or your job or some emotional thing will come up, and off your attention will go.

We don't want our attention to go with our thoughts at all. We're going to restrain our thoughts by keeping the attention on the breath. When you see it zipping off, put it back on the breath. It can be a little tricky but after a while it gets to be a kind of rhythm. Breath controls the mind, in a way. If you stop breathing, you stop thinking, right? So, if you can get your mind to slow down a little bit and your attention riding with the breath, then what's going to happen to the mind? The mind's going to go still.

We know that for all of these emotional states there are corresponding breathing patterns. When you're angry, you breathe a certain way. When you're full of desire, you breathe a certain way and so forth and so on. All of these emotional states are related to your breath so we are going to use our breath. And you have to use your will power. There's a doer in this. Meditation is for doers. I don't have great luck teaching in meditation centers or yoga centers because they don't like the idea that you are not the doer. There are only one or two meditation centers where they're open to this idea that you are not a doer and that *moksha* is not *samdhi*.

So you have to use your will power to keep this discipline going. And you notice after maybe just a few minutes that things are changing. After you have your breath and your attention synchronized, you'll notice something, you'll notice the silence. Right now there's a silence but you're paying attention to me and maybe your mind's a little distracted and maybe you don't feel the silence as clearly as you will in meditation. But this technique calms the mind enough so you can feel the silence. The silence is awareness reflecting on a *sattvic* mind. And at that point we're going to switch our attention off of the breath and onto the silence.

When that happens we've moved from the *pranamaya kosa* to a subtler level of the Subtle Body, the *manomaya kosa*. We've removed most of the *rajas* and *tamas*. There's a little danger here when you're meditating because when the *rajas* goes, there's a tendency to fall asleep for some people. As soon as the thoughts start to leave and they dissolve into the silence, sometimes you go to the Causal Body and fall asleep. But you want to stay in the Subtle Body and observe or experience the peace.

It will appear to you in a certain way. I feel it as presence of silence. It can happen when we have a good satsang. We're all on the same wavelength, everything just gets dead quiet and everybody is peaceful and happy. It's the same thing. Knowledge will lead you to this. Meditation is just a different way of getting to the silence. When I was at Swamiji's satsangs the silence was awesome. He would work us all up and then BOOM, everyone's mind would stop and there would be this big explosion of peace and silence and light and bliss. Then he'd start the teaching again. Then he would stop suddenly and you would feel the silence coming down again.

The knowledge produces silence. In other words, it purifies the mind because you let go of your stuff when you're inquiring and you start experiencing awareness as it reflects on the Subtle Body. So when your attention is on the silence, what's going to be the obstacle?

Student: Vasanas.

James: Those pesky *vasanas*. You'll be surprised. They will start appearing. They'll arise in awareness and you'll want to follow them. Thoughts are associative; one thought leads to another. A whole chain of causation is produced by the *vasanas*, just like billiard balls rolling into each other. As soon as you notice that happening, what do you do? Bring your mind back to the silence.

Once you've locked on the silence, you release or relax the doer. You won't need to concentrate quite so hard. You will just feel the silence and melt into it, relax into it, bathe in it. And from there on, not to worry. Just remain alert and observe the silence and ask yourself some questions: "How do I know this? Who's watching this?" and so forth and so on.

This is just a time you spend alone with yourself, completely inside. It's pretty easy to understand the self in this situation. When you actually get it, you'll find that meditation is extremely pleasurable. It just feels really good. You can easily get addicted to it and not want to do anything else. It's like waking sleep. You get bliss, silence and peace.

Let's try it. You don't have to sit a certain way, just be comfortable. If you want to lie down, you can but the problem with lying down is that you tend to go to sleep. So it's good to just sit comfortably. See that your belt and clothing is not too tight so you don't have any tension or constriction in your body. Then close your eyes. Taking the karma yoga attitude, consecrate the meditation saying something like "Help me to meditate, Lord. Make this easy for me. Make it understandable." Just offer a small prayer to *Isvara* for a successful meditation.

Guided Meditation

Turn your attention to your feet. You can imagine them to be little hollow tubes of light radiating light energy through the flesh. Relax your feet. Now move up to your ankles. Work slowly up your legs to your knees and then your thighs. Then come up to your trunk and work around your stomach area, just letting all those muscles relax. Sometimes you carry a little emotional tension in your stomach chakra so it's good to totally relax the stomach. Imagine that it's hollow. Fill it up with warm, healing light.

Then come up and work around your chest, neck and shoulders. You hold a lot of tension there, so take your time. Then come out to your hands and fingers. Work up your arms. Just relax your arms, hands and forearms. Let your arms hang on your body naturally. Then check your neck and shoulders again.

Move up to your face and head. Don't smile. Don't frown. Just let the flesh hang on your skull. Nobody's watching you. Let your face be totally relaxed and normal. Work around the eyes and up around the forehead where you have a lot of thoughts zipping around. Just release those thoughts, let them go. You could imagine that you're dead. What would your face be like if you were dead?

Now, give the whole body a quick scan to check for any residual tension. Relax it completely and then turn your attention to your breath. Try to synchronize your attention and your breath. If your mind wanders, if your attention wanders, just pull it back to the breath. When the breath goes out, let all your attention just flow out with it. As you breathe out, release whatever tension is in you.

Now notice the silence. You can feel it. There's a kind of bubble of peace and silence; put your attention on it. It's right there with the sounds. As the sounds arise in the silence don't let your attention go with the sound. Keep it on the silence. As thoughts arise in the silence don't let your attention go with the thoughts. Keep it fixed on the silence.

Notice how the sounds and thoughts appear in the silence and how they dissolve back into the silence. See how everything appears in the silence, in you. Any thought that appears and then dissolves back into the silence will never create karma. It will just burn up. Notice how the silence accepts everything and how it doesn't react to anything. It just remains steady, manifesting thoughts and eating the thoughts. Just relax in the silence, like you're going to sleep. Just take a bath in the silence. Melt into it. Silence is the altar of your temple so just place everything on the altar. Let the silence eat it up. You don't need to relate to anything except the silence. There's nothing to do in meditation except sit still and enjoy. Enjoy your own inner self.

Now bring an image of someone you love into the silence and fill that person's image with love. Just love that person with your whole heart. Then bring an image of someone you don't love, someone you might be having a problem with. Bring that person's image into the silence and fill it with love. Then see the whole planet earth with all its beautiful rivers, mountains, lakes, sky, plants, animals and human beings. See the whole planet appearing silent, perfect awareness and fill that image of the planet with love.

See your body sitting in silence and fill every cell of your body with love. Just radiate love through your whole body. Just love yourself completely. Om.

Day 4 - Session 2

Chapter 6: Verse 4 – 35

Verse 4 – “You have attained liberation when you are no longer attached to the sense objects or to action and you have removed the cause of desire. Lift yourself up by yourself. Do not destroy

yourself. You are your best friend if you master yourself. If not, you are your worst enemy. The self-controlled mind is composed in the face of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, praise and criticism.”

Again, the topic is the self-realized person. Think you’re enlightened? This is your checklist.

“You have attained liberation when you are no longer attached to the sense objects...”

It doesn’t mean you don’t enjoy the sense objects. It means you don’t require a sense object for your peace of mind.

“...and you have removed the cause of desire.”

What’s the cause of desire? Ignorance. But when ignorance is removed, it doesn’t mean that desires go away immediately. When the man discovers that the snake is actually a rope, his emotions are not going to clear immediately, are they? No.

Desire doesn’t mean just wanting. Desire means not wanting too. Desire and fear, *rajas* and *tamas*—*rajas* is desire, *tamas* is fear—are the same thing, really. A fear is a negative desire and a desire is a positive fear because behind every fear, there’s a desire and behind every desire there’s a fear. You always have these two things going all the time. So when you say that ignorance is the cause of desire, you could also say it is the cause of fear.

When you’re no longer attached to sense objects and you’ve removed the cause of desire, you don’t want anything and you’re not afraid of losing anything. In other words, gain and loss are not what you’re worried about.

“Lift yourself up by yourself. Do not destroy yourself. You are your best friend.”

Arjuna’s not being his own best friend here because he’s not doing the best thing for himself. But it’s going to work out fine because he had the sense to surrender to Krishna. So Arjuna really has done the best thing but he doesn’t really realize how he’s helped himself. He actually would help himself best by getting up and doing his job. But that’s going to take a little while.

“You are your best friend if you master yourself. If not, you are your worst enemy. The self-controlled mind is composed in the face of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, praise and criticism.”

This means that you’ve got to work on yourself. If you don’t meditate, discriminate, or do karma yoga you’re not doing yourself any favors.

Student: In the business world, people work on themselves by following “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” or “The Five Ways of the Warrior.” But this seems like the ultimate human development program.

James: Speaking from the perspective of the self, you can never develop because you do not change. But speaking from the perspective of the *jiva* you could call spiritual practice a human development program because the purpose of spiritual work is spiritual growth. So if you're doing your spiritual work your life should be changing and moving forward in a positive direction. If your life is stuck, if you feel bored and restless and frustrated and so forth, it means you're not growing. If you surrender to this program, to this *sadhana*, then everything will flow for you nicely.

Although having your life flow nicely is a good thing, it's not really the purpose of spiritual practice. From the standpoint of self-inquiry, the purpose is mental purification.

Student: Purification is a great word.

James: What you're doing when you purify yourself is removing obstacles to your growth. You're here to grow and learn and evolve and change and realize who you are. That's the purpose. But there are obstacles to this that need to be removed. And it's purification because you're getting rid of something rather than getting something.

We call it *antahkarana suddhi*. The *antahkarana* is the Subtle Body. *Suddhi* means "purify." Something that's pure doesn't have any parts, does it? That's why the self is called pure consciousness. It has no parts. So as the self you can't purify yourself. But when you first start out on the spiritual path you take yourself to be the Subtle Body so your job is to remove the impurities from the Subtle Body. The two basic impurities are *rajas* and *tamas*, or in other words, all of the thoughts and feelings that come from fear and desire. *Sattva* is a kind of an impurity too but it's not a problem. *Sattva* should be cultivated but *rajas* and *tamas* need to be ameliorated. So purification is adjusting the relative proportions of *rajas* and *tamas* to produce a very *sattvic* mind.

During the meditation everybody could experience the silence and feel the peace. That means there was little to no *rajas* or *tamas* present. It means there was a predominance of *sattva* reflecting awareness. The silence is actually always present but because your attention goes to the *rajas* and *tamas*, you don't feel it or experience it. The meditation we did was a quick purification.

Swami Dayananda says meditation is not for purification because he defines meditation as steadying the mind. But if you steady your attention on the silence it is purifying because you're allowing your *vasanas* to burn up in the silence. The longer you meditate, there is less resistance and fewer thoughts. So gradually the mind is purified by meditation.

I like to think of it as a bug zapper, one of those blue lights that you have outside during the summer where bugs fly in and zzzzz, get burned up and die. Silence is like that. A thought comes into it and zzzzz, it just dies and disappears. When you were meditating you could see thoughts come into the silence and go right back out of it because you weren't engaging them. If you don't engage them they won't have a chance to create any karma for you. And the more you meditate, the less you're doing other stupid things. Meditation is a great part of a *sattvic* lifestyle.

And when your mind is steady it is "composed in the face of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, praise and criticism." In other words, it sits still. Did you notice how silence doesn't move? It's steady. And where's the self in all this? The self is the knower of the silence. You were there, aware of the silence,

weren't you? And you are here, aware of my words now. You, awareness, are present when there is noise or when there's silence. You're never not present.

Verse 8 – “You are self realized when you no longer try to connect the senses with their objects and the mind sits still because it knows that it is the self. This mind sees no difference between a clod of earth and a lump of gold. Exalted is the mind that sees no difference between a friend and an enemy, a saint and a sinner.”

“You are self realized when you no longer try to connect the senses with their objects and the mind sits still because it knows that it is the self.”

This is because the *vasanas* are not driving the mind to connect to objects so it settles down and enjoys the peace, bliss and silence. It says, “Ah, that's nice.” I mean, I don't know about you guys but I hated to stop the meditation. Maybe you were getting bored with it but I was enjoying it. I got an energy charge and started to feel really nice and peaceful. My mind just wanted to sit there but then it started thinking, “We have to do this and that...” and off it went.

Student: So you're awareness but the mind doesn't know, “I'm awareness”?

James: When awareness is under the spell of ignorance, the mind doesn't know that it's actually awareness. But the scripture says that when the cause of desire—ignorance—is removed, then the mind knows that it's awareness. In other words, the understanding, “I'm awareness” arises in the mind. It's not that hard, is it? If you just think about the experience of silence that we had in meditation, you can determine that you are the knower of the silence.

Student: And when you don't know who you are?

James: You keep investigating the knower of the silence. The silence is an object that is known, so there has to be a subject that knows it. Are you the subject that knows or the object known? If you are the subject that knows you can never know yourself as an object. But you can come to the firm conclusion that you are the subject that knows the objects. That's the knowledge, “I am the knower of the silence” or “I am awareness.” The technical term for that understanding is *akandakara vritti*.

Student: You just said you received energy from the meditation. Is it fair to say that in the silence one derives energy as a result of calming the *rajas* and *tamas*.

James: Yes. *Rajas* and *tamas* are painful kinds of *shakti* called *vikshepa shakti* and *avarana shakti*, respectively. *Rajas* causes desire and *tamas* causes fear, both of which drain your energy. But when you're in pure *sattva*, what happens? Awareness reflects off the mind, burning up those negative energies and balancing out the *prana* system. After a while you start to feel energetic. I can still feel the bliss from the meditation. It's a kind of heavy, blissful fullness. It's a narcotic kind of feeling, actually, and it's nice.

The unreliable internet connection we have here has been irritating me all along. I want people out there to be able to hear these teachings on the web but *Bhagavan* is frustrating me. See how *rajas* is? But now that the meditation is working, *rajas* is gone and I don't have those agitations. Speaking as a *jiva*, I'm feeling more peaceful and happy. That's what we're doing here. We're still addressing the *jiva*. From that perspective, the scripture says the mind/intellect should know that it's awareness. And what kind of knowledge is this?

"It sees no difference between a clod of earth and a lump of gold."

When you look at any thought in light of the silence, what's the difference between one thought and another? There is no difference, is there? They are all just thoughts. So in meditation you should be able to see what I mean by the location of objects. You should be able to see that those thoughts are not arising independently of consciousness. They have to be coming out of consciousness. Where else could they be coming out of?

Their value as thoughts is exactly equal. But if you have *vasanas* around them, then one thought or feeling may be more important than another. But if you've purified your *vasanas* you'll see all thoughts or feelings as equal because it's the interpretation of what you're experiencing—which is dictated by the *vasanas*—that's causing the duality, causing the sense of relative importance. You add value to thoughts but that value doesn't belong there because thoughts are value neutral. They're just coming from *Isvara* and going back to *Isvara*. So it is this kind of mind, the self-realized mind that "sees no difference between a clod of earth and a lump of gold."

One of the verses in the *yoga shastra* says a *yogi* in *samdhi* sees no difference between a lump of gold and the excreta of a crow. To him, crow shit and gold are the same. Now that doesn't mean that the *yogi* takes a pile of crow shit to the bank and tries to deposit it. "Here, I want to put this in my safety deposit box. It's gold." No, it just means that he understands that both of those things are just made out of his thoughts. The gold only means something because he sees it and the crow shit only means something because he sees it.

You're not here because the world is here. The world is here because you're here. This is why you don't want to look outside of yourself for any kind of validation, because no object can validate you. Money can't validate you. People can't validate you. You are what validates everything because without you, there aren't any objects. So, speaking from the point of view of the self, not the *jiva*, you're the boss here. You're free of all these things. They don't validate you, you validate them.

"Exalted is the mind that sees no difference between a friend and an enemy, a saint and a sinner."

When you meet a realized person, you really feel inspired. I remember when I met Swami Chinmayananda the first time. I thought, "That's one amazing person. What a great example of this knowledge and how wonderful it is to be free." I knew what freedom was when I saw it operating in Swamiji; I could just feel his freedom.

Verse 10 – The meditator who is free of longing for objects should remain relaxed and alone and constantly unite his or her mind with the self. To meditate for the purification of the mind one

should keep the senses in check, sit in a clean quiet place on a firm seat and focus the mind on the self. When the mind is pure, fearless and focused on the silence, continually contemplate on the self. Liberation happens when the mind is completely absorbed in the self.

“The meditator who is free of longing for objects should remain relaxed and alone...”

Alone with what? The silence.

“...constantly unite his or her mind with the self.”

“Constantly unite” means you bring the mind back to the silence over and over again. The silence eats the mind; it sucks up thoughts and eventually the mind empties. Then it sits still in the silence and just sips the nectar of awareness as it reflects in a clear, *sattvic* mind.

“To meditate for the purification of the mind one should keep the senses in check, sit in a clean quiet place on a firm seat and focus the mind on the self. When the mind is pure, fearless and focused on the silence, continually contemplate on the self.”

Ask yourself, “How is this silence known?” It’s not that you have to say that to yourself continually. But look for the knower. You are the knower, that’s all.

“Liberation happens when the mind is completely absorbed in the self.”

This doesn’t mean you have to meditate in that way. Most people, just from hearing the teachings, get liberation. Why? Because the mind becomes completely absorbed in the self. That’s what we’re doing here. My job is to continually keep your attention going to the self. That means getting you to look at everything in light of the fact that, “I’m awareness, I’m okay, I’m whole, I’m complete,” and permitting yourself to lose notions to the contrary. You let go of those negative ideas about reality and yourself. Then the mind becomes totally absorbed in awareness. At some point, it’s becomes clear that, “I’m awareness.”

Verse 16 - Meditation does not work for gluttons, fasters, insomniacs and excessive sleepers. However, it destroys the sorrow of a person with moderate habits who does not work too much or is too lazy. The mind of an accomplished meditator does not long for objects because it has gained composure through its contemplation of the self. Just as a candle protected from the wind does not flicker, the mind of an accomplished meditator does not waiver.

“Meditation does not work for gluttons, fasters...”

Going to either extreme with your eating habits is not helpful. Gluttony dulls the mind and too much fasting can agitate it. And both hurt the body. When the body is not properly cared for, the mind also suffers.

“...and excessive sleepers.”

In other words, dull, *tamasic* people.

“However, it destroys the sorrow of a person with moderate habits...”

Moderate habits are what I’m referring to when I say, “sin intelligently.”

Verse 20 - When the mind is mastered by the practice of meditation it abides in the self. It rejoices in the self alone. And when the happiness that is beyond the senses is recognized, the intellect becomes rooted in the self and never moves away from it. After gaining this happiness, if you do not try to attain a greater happiness and are even unaffected by tragic events, this transcendence of sorrow is yoga. Pursue this yoga with unflinching clarity of purpose.

“When the mind is mastered by the practice of meditation it abides in the self. It rejoices in the self alone. And when the happiness that is beyond the senses is recognized, the intellect becomes rooted in the self and never moves away from it.”

What is the happiness that’s beyond the senses? It’s not a dramatic, mind-blowing, explosive, cosmic thing. You just feel content, peaceful and quiet. Your desires go away. You realize, “Hey, this is better than chasing stuff so I’m going to stick with this. I’m going to keep my attention always on the silence.”

“After gaining this happiness...”

During the gay mecca I knew a guy who claimed he got enlightened. Afterwards, he was out there running around and hitting the bath houses and so forth. I said, “Why are you doing that? I thought you were realized.” He said, “I am. I’ve got the bliss of awareness but I’m adding a little extra bliss on top.” Just throwing on a little extra? Not possible. That’s what it’s saying here. It’s just like the people who say, “I’m extremely happy” and then go off chasing stuff.

“...if you do not try to attain a greater happiness...”

You’ll stop trying to look for more when you’re satisfied in yourself. If you’re not, you’ll keep looking for more satisfaction. Those who are satisfied in themselves are “unaffected by tragic events.”

Verse 24 - With all thought-motivated desires renounced and the senses restrained by the mind, hold the mind on the self with great perseverance and think of nothing else. Gain control of the mind by bringing it back to the self over and over again.

Verse 27 - Indeed, the most exalted happiness arises in the meditator who becomes the self through self- knowledge. All impurities are reduced to ash in the fire of self-knowledge and life is seen to be free of defects. If you remain free from conflicts produced by improper contact with the world and constantly reconnect the mind with the self until you realize the non-separation of the mind and the self, unconditioned happiness arises.

Verse 29 - One whose mind is resolved by the contemplation on the self sees the self abiding in all beings and all beings in the self. The one who sees Me in all beings and sees all beings in Me is Me. This vision remains no matter what you do. With this vision you will regard pain and pleasure equally.

Verse 33 - Arjuna said, “My mind is a mess and I do not see this yoga of non-duality you speak of. The mind is nothing but agitation, Krishna, an entrenched tyrant. It is impossible to control.”

Verse 35 - “Yes, yoga is difficult” Krishna replied, “if the mind is not mastered by repeated practice and objectivity.”

“One whose mind is resolved by the contemplation on the self sees the self abiding in all beings and all beings in the self. The one who sees Me in all beings and sees all beings in Me is Me.”

In other words, it's not the *jiva* that's realizing who it is, it's awareness realizing. In other words, it's not an individual. The one who sees and knows is always just awareness.

“This vision remains no matter what you do.”

Why? Because it's your nature. To understand the nature of awareness is to understand that it's you and that you're never not present. This vision remains no matter what you do. In other words, the vision of non-duality is unaffected by action. This topic is a little dangerous. “That's why I'm picking your pocket, because I'm unaffected by what I do, see? I have crazy wisdom so I'm unaffected. It's good for you that I rob you and cheat you and generally abuse you. It's good for your *sadhana*. It teaches you humility. Hee hee hee.” People read passages like this and they think it means that if you're self-realized you can do anything.

But if you really see no difference between one thing and the next, are you going to exploit anything? No, because you're only exploiting yourself, and you won't exploit yourself because you love yourself. So you'll treat all the objects as yourself because you love yourself. The idea of breaking dharma is not there for those with non-dual vision. They're happy to conform to dharma because they know that as whole, complete and limitless awareness, they don't have anything to gain by non-conformance.

Day 4: Session 3

Chapter 6: Verse 37 – 45

Verse 37 - Then Arjuna said, “What happens to me if I have faith in the scriptures but am unsuccessful in keeping my mind fixed on the self? Am I not lost if I can neither understand who I am through self-knowledge or am unable to keep my mind fixed on the self? You are the only one who can eliminate this doubt.”

“Then Arjuna said, “What happens to me if I have faith in the scriptures but am unsuccessful in keeping my mind fixed on the self? Am I not lost if I can neither understand who I am through self-knowledge or am unable to keep my mind fixed on the self? You are the only one who can eliminate this doubt.”

Rajasic people always want to know what’s in it for them and what the advantages and disadvantages are. So Arjuna’s checking this whole thing out. He’s probably thinking, “Krishna, this is all very lovely but what if it doesn’t work? What if I die first?”

Verse 40 - You are not lost, Arjuna, because anyone who performs actions for yoga never reaches a bad end. Such people go to the world where such people go and enjoy until they are reborn into families of cultured people committed to dharma. Or they are born into a family of wise yogis. Such a birth is difficult to gain in this world. In the new life the *vasanas* from your previous efforts at yoga will sprout and you will strive for success in yoga once more. The momentum from your previous practice will carry you smoothly along, just as someone who sees the limitations of ritualism is led to self-knowledge.

“You are not lost, Arjuna, because anyone who performs actions for yoga never reaches a bad end.”

In other words, there are no unpleasant or unwanted outcomes if you have this attitude; whatever happens is good.

“Such people go to the world where such people go and enjoy until they are reborn into families of cultured people committed to dharma.”

When you do a good action, a *dharmic*, righteous action, you get *punya* karma, which is meritorious or good karma. When you do a self-centered action or violate dharma, you get *papa* karma. Those karmas stand in your karmic account and when you die, they cause you to reborn. After you’ve dropped the body but before you’re reborn, if you have a lot of *punya*, you’ll go to a heaven state; in other words, your mind will be very blissful and happy. Those good vibrations of your mind in that *punya* state will cause you to be reborn in the womb of somebody who has similar vibrations. In other words, because you’ve got *sattva guna*, you’ll be attracted to a mother and a father who have *sattva guna*. So you won’t lose your evolutionary status.

If you have *papa* karma, you’ll go to what’s called *naraka* or hell. Hell isn’t a physical location. Hell is just a state of mind between incarnations where your mind is disturbed. It’s angry, it’s depressed, it has problems. You’ll be attracted to the kind of womb that’s similar to you, so you’ll get a bad birth. Your mother and father will meet in a bar on Saturday night, have sex and you’ll be born nine months later. The father is a drunk, the mother is a whore etc. You get abused and neglected from the beginning and those circumstance are produced by your karma. This is how people are reborn, according to their *punya* and their *papa*.

Obviously, you guys sitting here have got lots of good *punya* karma or you wouldn’t be sitting here. This grace that you get by being qualified to listen to Vedanta is the result of *punya* karma and the

wombs that you were born in, the families and the circumstances that you had. All of that led you to this point. That's why Krishna said, "If you do yoga, don't worry."

Now, this all sounds very interesting, but what's the problem with the teaching I just gave you? The next person doesn't remember who he or she was previously. So it doesn't do them any good. The next person is just inheriting your *vasanas*. In other words, the *vasanas* are what transmigrate, not the person. A person is just a notion that associates itself with a certain bundle of *vasanas*. And that's why nobody knows who they were in their last life.

I had some visions and made some inferences so I can pretty much tell what I was as a person in my last life, or what kind of a person it was that became this person here. But it wasn't the same person. It wasn't the same life, it wasn't the same time. The circumstances were different. The parentage was different. Everything was apparently different, including the name. However, the inner experience is going to be the same as it was before. In this dharma field, everything is continuous process of flow of energy.

"Or they are born into a family of wise yogis."

Meaning it's a spiritual mom and pop, people who have those spiritual *vasanas* to start out with. Lucky for your kids if you know who you are and you're a Vedanta person. If you walk the talk, those kids will have a lot easier life. I mean, they may not chase spirituality right away but they'll imbibe by osmosis your spirituality.

"Such a birth is difficult to gain in this world."

Why? Because most people are *rajasic* and *tamasic* and don't practice yoga, that's why.

"In the new life the vasanas from your previous efforts at yoga will sprout and you will strive for success in yoga once more."

This happened to me. I was—I think I was, let's put it that way—a pundit in Kashmir. I had a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge and when I died there were a bunch of *vasanas* that I still had to work out. I was reborn in America to work them out in this life. The money, sex, and all that stuff. And by the time I was 25, I'd worked all that out. I wasn't interested in it anymore and then out of the blue came this big epiphany from *Bhagavan* and my whole life just turned around 180 degrees. My whole energy and my whole life had gone in a completely different direction. In other words, the *vasanas* that I had cultivated for yoga, they sprouted. They were dormant and overwhelmed by the *rajasic* and *tamasic vasanas*. But once those had been worked out and I understood that I didn't want to live that kind of life, that worldly life, then those spiritual *vasanas* came out and within a short time I met Swamiji, and so forth and so on.

"In the new life the vasanas from your previous efforts at yoga will sprout and you will strive for success in yoga once more. The momentum from your previous practice will carry you smoothly along, just as someone who sees the limitations of ritualism is led to self knowledge."

There are people who do ritualism, who seek to experience *shakti*. But at some point you have to see the limits of this energy stuff. Yes, it's lovely and it's fun. You have a nice time and you get high from the energy. But as you get a little older, the *shakti* just becomes, well, *shakti*. And eventually you say, "So what?" You become dispassionate with reference to these spiritual experiences. Then you start to ask questions. "What's going on here? Is this really doing what it purports to do?" In the *shakti* world they believe that the guru will show them the state of pure consciousness by giving them a *shakti* experience and then establishing them in that state. We know very well you can't establish yourself in any state because the states are not under your control. *Isvara* is producing these states. *Isvara* is the controller, regulator and governor of the states. But the *jivas*, they have this experience and they think, "Well, I've got to get control of this state so I can be in it all the time. But I can't do it by myself." So they think that the guru can do it for them. In reality, the guru can't do it, but they think if they just hang around in the *energy* where the guru is or where the practices are going on, somehow, someday it will happen. In those kind of ritualistic ashrams, they always have rituals going on which are producing *shakti*: chanting, *pujas*, meditations, maybe even people dancing around. And that keeps people's *shakti* up. But as soon as they step out of the *shakti* bubble, they're a mess. They have no idea what to do.

At Ammaji's, it's like that. They have all these people hanging around Ammaji because Ammaji's a *shaktipat* guru. They're fine as long as they're in the *shakti* but when they're out, they're not fine. Many are afraid to go out into the world. It's a scary place because there's no big mama or papa *shakti* figure taking care of them. Generating that kind of energy on your own is just really not possible. You need to be in a group because it's basically a group energy that you're experiencing.

So, Krishna's just using that as an example of what happens when you practice yoga. In other words, nothing's lost so stop worrying about whether you're going to succeed or not. Get on with it!

Student - If somebody has achieved *moksha* but still has some unburned *vasanas*, do they then become reincarnated as an enlightened person from birth with some residual *vasanas*?

James - Well, yes, it's possible. If your *vasanas* have been neutralized or they've been more or less ameliorated by your knowledge and they aren't enough to cause you to be reborn, then, you could be born on the basis of the desires of others. It's called the *samaṣṭi vasana* theory. In other words, *Isvara* can say, "I need this. I need you here. You're a valuable person. We'll bring you in now for that reason." I met one of those, apparently. But that's extremely rare.

Remember, if you are the self, you're going to say, "I was always enlightened." And that's what Krishna says. "I've been around forever. I know all my incarnations. You don't." It just means I know all the thoughts and feelings and experiences that appear in me over endless time. He's speaking as *Isvara* there, not as the person, Krishna. But we don't need to worry about all that stuff. Is anybody worried about their next life? Got enough problems in this one, right? Let's sort out this life and we won't worry about the next one.

Verse 45 - If you persevere in your practice your mind will become pure and you will eventually realize the self. A yogi is superior to those who live a life of meditation, superior to the scholars and superior to those who perform action. Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi! The one who has faith and whose mind is absorbed in Me is the most exalted yogi. This is My vision.

“If you persevere in your practice your mind will become pure and you will eventually realize the self. A yogi is superior to those who live a life of meditation, superior to scholars...”

That is, superior to people who just have intellectual knowledge.

“...and superior to those who perform action.”

He means worldly people, *samsaris*. The next verse is an interesting statement.

“Therefore, O Arjuna, be a yogi!”

Krishna just told Arjuna that he's the self. Now he's telling him to be a yogi. He's giving him a limited identity, that of a yogi, because Arjuna needs a transitional identity. This is why people take spiritual names and so forth to identify themselves with yoga. So Arjuna should no longer think, “I'm a warrior.” He should think, “I'm a yogi” and do what yogis do, which meditate on the self, live a disciplined life etc.

Student: Once you said the *vasanas* are impersonal and once you said the *vasanas* are personal. Can you explain the difference?

James: This is the difference between the microcosmic *vasanas* and the macrocosmic *vasanas*. Now, the *vasanas* are all macrocosmic but when I identify myself with a particular *vasana*, then it becomes mine. Our whole point here is to show you that the *vasanas* all belong to *Isvara*, so you don't have to identify with any of those *vasanas* because they don't belong to you. Why do you choose to take this particular *vasana* to be real? Why do you choose to do that? You don't have to say, “That's mine.” You say, “*Isvara* gave me this. What does it have to do with me?” It means that *Isvara* is the doer and when you realize that *Isvara* is the doer, then all your personal *vasanas* are handed over to *Isvara*. In other words, they're neutralized and they no longer belong to you so you don't care. If you don't have one set of *vasanas*, you're going to have another set. So what difference does it make what *vasanas* you have? *Isvara* is using you for a certain purpose and if that doesn't work, he'll use somebody else for that purpose. I take the experiences, the feelings that I have to be real and I think they belong to me. We call that superimposition. I superimpose “my-ness” on something that “my-ness” doesn't apply to.

Student: When a *jiva* is born, he identifies with certain *vasanas*, so the *vasanas* come from the impersonal *Isvara*?

James: He would identify with a certain *vasana* because he already had that *vasana*.

Student: You just explained that *vasanas* are not personal.

James: They're not personal for *jnanis*, but they're personal for *samsaris*. For *jnanis* they're not personal and it doesn't matter. Any *vasana* is okay with them because they know that they're awareness. With *samsaris*, the *vasanas* are personal. Now, if a *jiva*'s reborn, why would it choose particular *vasanas*? Because it already has that tendency. You know, why am I attracted to brunettes

and not to blondes? I don't know. Why did I like blondes when I was 7 and brunettes when I was 10? I don't know. That's *Isvara*, isn't it?

Student: Does this *jiva* have certain *vasanas*, or do I identify myself with certain *vasanas* and I pick them from the impersonal *Isvara*?

James: What's the difference? If you've got *vasanas*, they come from *Isvara*. Did you invent your *vasanas*? "Oh, I'm just a pure *jiva*. I decided to be reborn but I have no idea who I am or what I'm doing. I'm just a pure *jiva* shining here, and to live here, everybody's got *vasanas* so I think I'll get some *vasanas*. Well, what *vasanas* should I choose?" Well, if you're just a pure *jiva* without any *vasanas*, how would you know what *vasanas* to choose? *Vasanas* are the basis for your personal preference, so without any, how would you choose to identify with a particular *vasana*?

Student: It's not a choice?

James: There isn't any real choice because those *vasanas* are given to you by *Isvara*. Nobody chooses them. Did you choose your body? Did you choose your mind? Did you choose your *vasanas*? No.

Student: So there are personal *vasanas* and impersonal *vasanas*.

James: There's only impersonal *vasanas* but they become personal when you're ignorant of *Isvara* and yourself. Then you say, "These are my *vasanas*." That's how they become personal.

The *vasanas* are all impersonal but owing to ignorance we think we own them. We said earlier today, that the ego is that part of the self that owns action and its results. We say there's nothing you can own here. That's why he says a realized person has no sense of "I" and "mine." So, if they have no sense of "I" and "mine," they can't own any of the *vasanas*, can they? They can't say "my *vasana*." All *vasanas*, the bodies and all that stuff, all belongs to *Isvara*.

And those people have done everything that needs to be done. In other words, they've realized that they're free of what? *Vasanas*. So, it's up to you. Whatever you identify with, that's your *vasana*. Food, sex, power, love, you name it. There are an infinite number of *vasanas* you can identify with, and you will identify with them when you don't know that you're complete. If you know that you're complete, you won't identify with a *vasana*. Why? You won't gain anything by identifying with one of these *vasanas* because you know that you are already whole and complete. That's all we're saying. You're OK. Take it easy.

That's what Swami Abhedananda said to me when I had to leave. It was the last time I saw him. I said, "Swami, any advice for me?" He was the most beautiful person I ever met, beautiful smile. He just put his hand up like this and said, "Take it easy." Every last bit of desire and ambition that remained in spite of self knowledge went out of me at that time. It just went poof! Right, take it easy. Don't sweat it, baby. It's got nothing to do with you. It's all *Isvara* just generating this big magic show and you just watch it. Enjoy. Take it easy. Sit back, eat your popcorn and watch everything play itself out.

But when you feel incomplete, then this looks like a real juicy, sexy, little place. And I need to get this and I need to avoid that to be happy. That's the samsaric mentality. We're explaining it so carefully because we've all got that samsaric mentality in us. We're pointing out the problems with that particular mentality. You don't have to think like that. You're trained to think like that and so it seems like you have to think like that. But you can undo that conditioning and learn to think completely differently. You can think from the point of view of the self. You have a choice. So why do you keep hanging on to the point of view of the *jiva* and saying, "*I'm incomplete. I'm inadequate. I'm insufficient. I want validation. I want love. I want this. I want that.*" Why do you talk like that? It's a choice. You're not forced to do that. Nobody's got a gun at your head. "*If you don't think like that, you're dead, buddy.*"

You're free, you know, even if the NSA is spying on you. They may look in your internet account, but they can't look in your brain. There's no software that can spy on your thoughts or your thinking. They infer certain things from things you say but if you keep your mouth shut, no one knows what you're thinking.

If you have faith in this teaching, you will reorient your thinking around the principle, "*I'm full,*" rather than around the principle, "*I'm empty.*" When you change the way you think, then those personal *vasanas* burn up. Same thing will happen when you assimilate this teaching on *Isvara*. This is why I keep saying that understanding *Isvara* is the key for *moksha*. When you realize that *Isvara* is the doer, the regulator, the governor, the controller of everything and the giver of the results of the action, then you realize, "*Hey, I'm nothing. At best I'm just a little devotee of Isvara. At very best.*" And that's a nice thing to be. If you're a *jiva*, just worship *Isvara*. *Isvara's* your mother in the sky. Just be happy because everything's coming from *Isvara* and just hug *Isvara* and love *Isvara* and you'll be fine. None of it is yours. That's what he's trying to say.

We're not trying to ask you to believe it, just analyze the situation. Think a little, use your own logic and just ask yourself what you created. Did you create your nose? Did you create your toes? Did you create your mind? Did you create any part of yourself? Did you create the sun, the moon and the stars? No. Did you create the air? Are you digesting your food right now? No, you're not. *Isvara's* digesting your food. Are you breathing? No, you're not. *Isvara's* breathing for you and you're listening to *James* talk Vedanta. Are you assimilating this knowledge? No, *Isvara's* assimilating it. It's hard, I understand. It's difficult to come out of that personal self. But there's nothing personal here. *Isvara* is just pure knowledge. Everything here is just made of knowledge. It's nothing personal but it looks pretty personal sometimes.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 5 - Session 1
Chapter 7, Verses 1 - 8

Chapter 7

Verse 1 - O Arjuna, if you wish to know Me without doubt, commit your mind to Me, surrender to Me and take refuge in yoga. I will teach you indirect knowledge and immediate knowledge, knowing which there is nothing more to know. Among many thousands of people, only a rare person seeks freedom. And among those who make an effort to be free, an equally rare person comes to know me in reality.

Here's the chart again. Krishna's going to talk about the two natures of the self as it appears as *satya* and *mithya*. Indirect knowledge means knowledge of the self. Arjuna obviously doesn't have direct knowledge. He has indirect knowledge: Krishna has told him about the self.

If you look at the modern teachings, almost all of them teach about the self, about awareness. They present awareness as something to be experienced or gained. That's indirect knowledge, and it isn't wrong or bad, it just excludes the knower. To whom is this indirect knowledge directed? It's directed to the self. But, it makes the self look like it's something other than you, leaving you as a *jiva* or Subtle Body trying to experiencing it. That leaves the individual apart from, or separate from, the knowledge which is why it's called indirect. You talk about something.

In teaching Vedanta we give direct knowledge (while using indirect knowledge also) because we teach the self. We don't talk about the self. Teaching the self is very different from talking about the self, which renders the self an object. But Vedanta teaches the self in the sense that we address the self. We don't address you as this person that's going to learn. We address you as awareness. We know that you're actually awareness and not this person you think you are. So, 'direct' means we don't tell you that you need to experience something, or even that you need to know something. If you say, "*I know the self;*" so what? Anyone can read a book and know the self is pure consciousness. Big deal! Does that free me and take care of my *vasanas* and destroy my sense of doership? No. It leaves my doer exactly where it was and keeps my *vasanas* in place. Now I'm just a regular person who knows the self.

So, how do we teach direct knowledge? We use these teachings called *prakriyās* to take away your ignorance because you're actually always experiencing your self. There's only one self to experience, so if you're experiencing anything, you're experiencing your self. However, you believe that you're something other than your self. That's called ignorance. So we need to destroy the beliefs that are standing in the way of your appreciation of yourself as awareness. The result of this teaching is direct knowledge, i.e., "*I am awareness.*" There's no separation, there aren't two things, an ego and a higher self; there's just "*I am awareness.*"

That's easy to teach, and hard to teach. It's hard to teach if you're not qualified. If you are qualified, it's easy to teach because you are awareness and you actually know that you're awareness. Once we clear away the belief, it's clear that you actually know who you are. You know that you're limitless awareness and not this person.

So, when you're reading and studying these texts on the internet and going to these satsangs (heaven forbid), always look and see how the self is presented. The direct path - Greg Goode, Rupert Spira and Francis Lucille - is about trying to give you direct knowledge. They're somewhat successful if a person

is highly qualified, but they don't have the whole arsenal of weapons that Vedanta has, and they don't apply the teachings in as skillful a way that we do because they weren't trained in the tradition.

When you're studying the knowledge, look and see how it is presented and how you're relating to it. Because all you have to do if you're qualified — and Arjuna isn't qualified obviously, or maybe he is becoming qualified now — is to be taught directly. In other words, Arjuna is ready to have his ignorance about himself removed. Krishna is going to no longer explain the value of action, karma yoga and the psychological attitude toward action. Krishna is going to wield this means of knowledge on Arjuna so he hopefully gains direct appreciation of himself. Krishna starts the teaching with Verse 4. This is for the purpose of discrimination, to discriminate your self from the objects. He keeps this simple.

I just received a nice email yesterday with a teaching from Swami Dayananda. It's a beautiful teaching called *kārya karana* meaning 'cause and effect' teaching. It explains how *Isvara* is both the substance for the creation and the intelligence for the creation. The creation is made both out of awareness (the substance of the creation, for example these bodies, is made out of awareness) and awareness is the intelligence that creates and shapes all of the different forms and beings and makes everything work together. But, in that teaching Swami Dayananda presumed that you understood that awareness is just your own consciousness. I make it very clear that this is not something that is mystical, or faraway, or unknown to you. It's just your own awareness and everybody knows that they're aware. So we're just getting clear about whether awareness is limited by the thoughts and feelings in it or whether it's limitless.

The purpose of this is to facilitate discrimination. It's a very simple teaching although it's not necessarily easy to apply it. There are two aspects or categories of awareness or existence: the subject Me, pure awareness and the objects that present themselves to Me. That's what your life is. There's Me, awareness and the various objects appearing in Me; gross objects, subtle objects, feelings, thoughts, circumstances, etcetera. Any experience is an object; experience itself is an object known to me.

The problem I have is that I confuse myself with objects. We call that superimposition. I superimpose or project on the object an 'I'. In other words, my awareness goes to associate itself with a particular object. A good example would be feelings and specifically, how easy it is to have 'my feelings' hurt. If I insult you, you'll ask "*Why did you hurt me?*" You won't ask "*Why did you hurt my feelings?*" You make it clear that you know the difference between yourself and your feelings and you don't take offense when somebody hurts your feelings. They're your feelings, they are not you.

There's one more factor you need to know. It's very hard. It sounds too simple; the subject is never the object. The object can be the subject, but the subject is always free of the object. These teachings are meant to identify objects and by default, reveal awareness. If you can negate all the objects as 'not self,' then what will you have left over? awareness. Me. Can you throw away your self? Your self is that which cannot be negated or destroyed or removed. You can get rid of every single thing in the whole universe, but you cannot get rid of you. It's impossible.

So we start off negating the objects, which is just understanding that they are not me, they are not real. My problem is I think objects are real. That's why I pursue them. If you knew an object wasn't

real, you wouldn't pursue it; like a relationship or a job or anything like that. It doesn't last and it's not real. But I believe that certain objects are real and therefore, I pursue these objects. When that happens, I develop the tendency to identify myself with the objects. This whole teaching is to dis-identify with the objects, to remove myself from the objects. So, even though reality is non-dual consciousness, at Arjuna's level, at the beginning level, Krishna teaches Arjuna that everything below the line is not me. Every object is not me; I am the knower of the objects. You'll see this teaching in chapter 12, the knower and the field.

Verse 4 - Earth, water air, space, mind, intellect and the sense of doership constitute the eight principles of my lower nature. Other than this is my essential nature... which is also the nature of the individual... by which this world is sustained. All beings and the insentient elements come from the union of these two natures. Therefore, I am the one from whom this entire world comes and I am the one in whom everything resolves. O Arjuna, there is no source other than Me. Everything has its being in Me.

"Earth, water air, space, mind, intellect and the sense of doership constitute the eight principles of my lower nature."

The material world is not me. Does anyone have a doubt that they are any one of these material elements? Nobody has that doubt. I know very well I'm not this chair. If you have a doubt and think you're this chair you have a few problems and we can't help you. It's clear that the material world is an object to me.

"Mind." Your mind is your emotions and feelings. The mind is called the doubting function. Everybody doubts, that's normal. Whenever something happens, a doubt arises in the mind. If you say *"I'm confused"* that means a doubt is there and you don't know what to do. If you say *"I'm confused,"* is that the truth? No. Because the confusion is an object. If you say *"I'm angry"* or *"I'm sad"* these are emotions coming from the mind, from manas. Is that true — are you angry or sad? No, you're not. But owing to ignorance I identify with the feeling like Arjuna, who's confused. His emotional sheath is a mess. He says *"this pain that disturbs my senses"* and *"I'm confused, I don't know what to do."* Arjuna has identified himself with his feelings. It's so easy to do; somebody you love says one tiny thing that makes you doubt whether they love you and immediately, emotionally you'll feel unhappy. You'll think *"I'm unhappy"* and immediately you will join with the feeling. Then you'll suffer and enjoy until you can climb out of that feeling and look at it objectively as awareness.

"Intellect" is the thinking function. That's your thoughts; *"I think."* Does the I think? No. The I, awareness doesn't think. If it thinks, it thinks by virtue of *Isvara*, the creator of this field. But in and of itself it doesn't think, there's no mind up here in awareness no mind, no intellect, no material elements. So awareness is not a thinker. It's capable of thinking when *Maya* is operating; it can identify with the intellect and think.

"And the sense of doership." You say, *"I did, I walked, I talked, I ate, I slept."*

"Constitute the eight principles of my lower nature." That's your lower self.

“Other than this is my essential nature...which is also the nature of the individual...by which this world is sustained.”

So there are only two natures. Obviously, if reality is non-dual one is not higher or lower. For the purposes of discrimination we're seeking to break our identification with objects. We need to identify this as not-self and we need to know what awareness is. What does it say awareness is? That ***“by which this world is sustained.”*** What does 'this world' mean in this case? Whatever you perceive or feel or experience. 'World' is essentially a psychological term; it's what I perceive, feel and experience; that's my world. Everyone has their own world. We call it *jiva sṛṣṭi*, the creation or world of each individual. What sustains that world? Sustains means makes that world seem to be real; supports that world. Obviously, it can only be awareness. If you take awareness out of the equation, where's your world?

It's similar to deep sleep. In deep sleep, where is your world? This is your life, your world — but where is it in deep sleep? It's gone. So what sustains my world? awareness. My world includes deep sleep, waking and dreaming. These are three states that I experience in my world. What supports them, what makes these three states possible? Only awareness because you can't sleep unless you're Aware, you can't dream unless you're Aware and you can't be awake unless you're Aware. And you means — not the person, but pure awareness.

You don't cease to exist in deep sleep do you? Your world ceases to exist and the person you think you are ceases to exist but you don't cease to exist, do you? If you cease to exist, how do you get back to being a person again? How do you know where to come back to when you leave you? When 'you' disappear, how do you know where or when to come back to yourself? You have no idea, but in the morning there you are again, your life and all your karma's laid out for you completely in line. You weren't doing it. When you were sleeping you weren't thinking *“Oh, I'd better keep all my stuff in line, I'd better make sure everything's set up because tomorrow when I wake up I want everything to go smoothly.”* You don't think like that. So, what is supporting me, supporting my world? Just awareness. What keeps my karma straight and keeps me waking, dreaming and deep sleeping? *Isvara* and *Maya*.

So, nothing exists without You.

Student - I'm reflecting on intuition and I'm wondering if one could say intuition is an accurate discrimination of awareness in *Maya*?

James - No. Intuition is subject to correction and error. We're talking discrimination not intuition. Intuition can be wrong. About the same topic you can come to two different conclusions at different times. Like when you fall in love and say *“I feel that you love me”* that's an intuition, then later on when things change *“I feel that you don't love me.”* Now which is it? Maybe the person loves you and maybe they don't, but the feelings and intuitions are projections of your conscious desires and fears.

I'll tell you a funny story. I was in India and met this lady who was quite a spiritual type. She wore white and fancied herself as a spiritual teacher. One time she had a dream about Sai Baba and in that dream she believed that Sai Baba told her to come and see him and that they were going to work together to enlighten the world. So she went to India, to Sai Baba's place and sat there for four or five

months. Sai Baba didn't even look at her. She had her envelope with her question on it and she did everything she could to get his attention, but he totally ignored her. She couldn't believe the dream was wrong. She just thought Sai Baba hadn't got the message yet.

So I met her and she told me the story and she said, *"Well do you know any other enlightened people that I could go and see?"* I said there's a very interesting mahātma in Tiruvanamali but he's an old style mahātma, a very simple man who is usually naked but since he's become better known they put underwear on him. His name was Thuli Baba. He was a beautiful man, a realized person but he had no teaching; he was a really great presence. You walked into his room and you would just feel happy for no reason. He had a sense of childlike mirth and he was a strange-looking guy. He was very handsome and had long hair all piled up like a śiva baba, and he wore no clothes; he was an avadhut. He had a big belly and beautiful, long elegant arms and fingers and stick-like legs, kind of like *Bhagavan* Nityānanda. He did a satsaṅg everyday. Someone built him a beautiful ashram. It was subsequently burned down by a jealous swami. I don't know what possessed me to tell this woman because she was a lady; very proper and respectable. I said you should go see Thuli Baba. Quite a few people came to his satsaṅg and everyone sat on the floor and he had no clothes on. He had a funny little penis that was half white and half black; it had pigmentation disease. He had a big belly, long arms and a funny penis and he has handfuls of cookies and he hands them around while the women are sitting at penis level. He doesn't see it as a penis.

So, she went to Thuli Baba and I'd forgotten about it. Two or three weeks later I was sitting in a cafe and she came walking in and came over to talk to me. I asked, *"Did you go see Thuli Baba?"* Immediately her face got dark and she said, *"He's evil."* She intuited that he was evil because that circumstance tweaked one of her unconscious ideas. Everyone else was all blissful and high and happy, but she intuited that he was evil.

So, you can't trust what you feel. What you feel, may be or may not be true. We're not talking intuition here, we're talking discrimination. We're identifying very clearly what isn't us. So my thoughts, feelings and body aren't me. I am the awareness because of which, these objects are known.

"All beings and the insentient elements come from the union of these two natures."

This is creation. There are no beings or elements here in awareness. But when awareness illumines this you get the material world and the *jivas* and the conscious beings living in it. Creation is the union of awareness and the objects. The elements follow their own nature and dharma (fire is hot, water is wet, etc), but none of them can do what they do and be what they are, just like all people or Subtle Bodies have their own nature, dogs, cats, microbes, humans, birds, fish, etc., and those natures don't exist or work until awareness is shining on them.

"Therefore I am the one from whom this entire world comes and I am the one in whom everything resolves."

Remember in our meditation, the silence was there and you could see the thoughts and feelings and sounds coming out of the silence and falling back into the silence. The silence was always present.

Silence means awareness and objects arise in it and fall back into it by virtue of *Isvara, Maya*. *Maya* takes awareness and creates objects.

“O Arjuna, there is no source other than Me. Everything has its being in Me.”

He is speaking as awareness now. He’s going to tell Arjuna where you should look in this world. It’s a beautiful verse.

Verse 8 - I am the taste in the water. I am the light in the moon and the sun; I am Om in the Vedas, I am sound in space and the vitality in human beings. I am the sweet fragrance in the Earth and heat in fire. I am the very life force in all beings. I am discipline in the ascetic, and the result of discipline. Know Me as the eternal seed in all beings. I am the capacity of discrimination in the intellect and the brilliance in a brilliant mind. I am the strength that is free from desire and attachment. In all beings I am the desire that is not opposed to dharma.

What he means is that whenever you see an object, the essence of the object is awareness; yourself. What does that mean? You only experience objects in yourself, in awareness. Whatever you think is out there is actually in here: in me. It looks like it’s out there but the objects are inside; are in you and are manufactured out of you.

When you are with a person, the body is not the person. You’re not relating to the body, you’re relating to the idea or thought of that person in your mind. So it shows that the person is just your own thought. Ten people can be experiencing ‘person A’ and they won’t all experience the same thing unless their mind is clear and free of *vasanas*. Even then, they will still experience that person in their mind, in their consciousness. This is why we say that *‘as the mind, so the world’*; whatever is in the mind appears as an object in the world but it’s not actually out there in the world. What you experience when you experience a person is your own sensation of personhood. When that idea disappears, you’re only experiencing yourself.

The location of objects teaching is an important teaching. Where are these glasses? People will say they are in my hand. Is that true? Yes and no. How can I say yes? What puts the glasses in my hands as far as we are both concerned? My identification with my body. If I’m my body, then the glasses are here; if you are your body the glasses are here. You would say *“I see the glasses in your hand.”* For most people, particularly new people who haven’t heard Vedanta, they almost always say the glasses are in my hand. That’s understandable and natural, because everyone identifies with the body.

But, I say *“No. They’re not in my...(hand).”* Where are you experiencing the glasses? Are you actually coming over here to experience the glasses? And which part are the glasses: the glass, the rim, the plastic, the shape, the color? Can you experience all of the glasses by being over here? The people in the front row will experience it, but the people in the back won’t because the front row is in front of them and they are stuck behind trying to experience the glasses.

You don’t experience an object out there, it just looks like you do. You actually experience an object in here (*James* points to head). Stimuli or light bounces off the object, passes through my eyes and the experience and knowledge of the glasses takes place in my Subtle Body, in my mind. Where does my mind exist? What’s the location of mind? Is it outside, like the glasses are outside? If you say no, the

mind is in awareness and if the mind is in awareness it's made of awareness. If the mind is made out of awareness and the glasses are known and experienced in the mind, then the glasses have to be awareness too, don't they?

The glasses have to be me, don't they? I don't have much trouble seeing that the mind is me, do I, because it's more subtle. Where is the mind coming from? Do you have to call up God: "*Hey God, I need a mind, can you send me a mind*"? No it comes from me. The mind isn't floating in from the outside and sticking in this body and thinking for me and experiencing for me. I'm here, present as awareness and awareness takes the form of a *vṛtti*, a thought. That thought is always of an object: a feeling, thought, emotion, physical object, memory or desire, etcetera. So what is my knowledge and experience made out of? Me. And what's shaping my experience? What's causing these thoughts to arise in me and produce my experience? *Maya*. *Ishvara*. awareness doesn't modify when an experience happens in you. You don't change, but the mind changes by virtue of *Maya*.

The Creator, or *Ishvara*, is causing the things to take the form of these various objects. Take the form of the air... what does air mean apart from your knowledge of air? What does earth mean apart from your knowledge of the earth? And what is your knowledge apart from your consciousness because can you have knowledge without consciousness? You can't know anything without consciousness, so knowledge depends upon consciousness and the objects depend upon the knowledge. So, the objects depend upon consciousness and the objects cannot be separate from consciousness.

Did you ever experience anything apart from yourself? No. You never did. So Krishna says "*Everything is in Me*." "*In Me*" means experienced in me and out of me, shaped by *Ishvara*, by *Maya*. Then Krishna says, "*I am not in them*." Why? Because I don't change when my experience changes, do I? We're talking to you as awareness not as this person. If you think you're this person then that statement makes no sense and you'll say "*This guy's talking nonsense*." Vedanta addresses you as awareness. We can do that, because you are awareness.

Student - *Ishvara* shapes everything and so I have a question about choice. You think you choose to say yes or no to a *vasana*, but is it actually *Ishvara* that makes you say yes or no or do you say yes or no to a *vasana*?

James - Well, it depends on who you think you are.

Student - So, if I think I'm a *jiva*, then I say yes or no.

James - That's right. But in reality, why do you say yes or no? What makes you choose to say yes as opposed to no? There's some other factor and that factor is *Ishvara*. That's why there's free will as long as you think you're a *jiva* and have the faculty of choice. But, when you look at reality from *Ishvara*'s point of view, there's no free will. *Ishvara*'s already determined that you're going to say yes. But you don't know that, so when you choose you think "*I said yes*," but *Ishvara* had already decided and you just confirmed *Ishvara*'s decision. In other words, everything is driven from here. Nothing is initiated from here. It looks like it's initiated from here but everything, all the objects, are generated and driven, created, sustained and destroyed from here. And *jivas*, and the thoughts and feelings and so forth, are down-line.

Student - We're just puppets?

James - We're just puppets on a string here. This is why, when you understand that, you can't blame yourself for or feel bad about anything. In fact, you have the most wonderful compassion for yourself, your *jiva*, and you have the most wonderful compassion for other people. Because you understand, they're not doing it. Those poor people in the Sudan, for example. I don't like to think about all the evil that's in the world, it makes me depressed. But nobody is to blame for it. In the Christian world they say wealth is a sign of spiritual attainment and poverty is a sign of spiritual poverty. It goes way back to the Middle Ages; if you're poor and you have been denied all these things it means God doesn't love you. If you have all this God stuff it means God loves you.

So, understanding *Isvara* is the key to this problem of identification with the objects.

Student - I've heard you say before that we can say no to *Isvara*. So, is that *Isvara* saying no to *Isvara*?

James - Yeah, *Isvara* is saying it to *Isvara*, but if you know you're *Isvara* then you don't say yes or no, you're fine with everything. But, if you don't know what *Isvara* is and you take yourself to be a *jiva* then you have to use your discrimination. If you take yourself to be a *jiva* then you have the choice, apparently. You don't actually have a choice, you apparently have a choice because you're living in an apparent reality here, a seeming world. It's not an actual world, it's a virtual world, you could say. As long as you're in this dream world, this seeming world, things seem and look real to you. So, you have to take them as real to you and there's a way out of this. But, we have to assume that you have this choice between alternatives.

What's the choice that Arjuna has? Either he can become a yogi or go back and fight the battle. He's got a choice. Krishna's encouraging Arjuna to fight the battle as a karma yogi because of the *vasanas* Arjuna is still identified with. So, Arjuna needs to do karma yoga.

In these verses 8 to 11, where do you look for awareness? You don't look for it in the water, you look for it in "**the taste in the water.**" The property, the essence of water is taste as far as we're concerned. Water doesn't taste like anything to any of the other elements. Water makes taste possible.

Space, if you want sound, "**I am sound in space**" and so forth.

The essence of all these things, the property of these things which gives rise to these sense organs... well he's saying, look for the essence of these things. He's saying "**I am the light in the moon and the sun.**" He's not saying you're the moon and the sun. He's saying I'm what gives light to the moon and the sun. In other words, I'm the awareness of physical light. I'm not physical light, I'm the awareness of physical light.

"**I am the Om in the Vedas.**" Om is the essence of the Vedas. Everything in the Vedas starts and ends with Om. Om is the sound syllable for everything that is. The first mantra of the Mandukya Upaniṣad says "*Om, the word is all this,*" meaning all the objects are created out of vibrations, energy, *shakti*, sound, which creates all of this. The Om encompasses all the sound; Om, covers all the sounds. Om is the essence and what is Om? awareness.

“I am sound in space.” You can’t have space without sound so the essence of space is sound.

“And the vitality in human beings.” I’m not the human beings, I’m the energy, the *shakti* that makes them dynamic. I am not the body but the *shakti*, that light; human beings have light, they’re alive. If a person dies there’s no light or vitality, they’re not even a person anymore, their body is just gone. When the body is there it’s vertical and it shines so that light, that energy that keeps you alive is awareness.

“I am the sweet fragrance in the earth and heat in fire.” Heat is the essence of fire.

“I am the very life force in all beings. I am discipline in the ascetic...” An ascetic is somebody who is a disciplined person. So that power to discipline yourself is where you see *Isvara*.

“And the result of discipline. Know Me as the eternal seed in all beings.” Seed means the cause; creator.

“I am the capacity of discrimination in the intellect.” What is the essence of the intellect? Discrimination.

“And the brilliance in a brilliant mind. I am the strength that is free from desire and attachment.” In other words, I am what gives you the strength to stand up to your desires and attachments and leave them aside; that power to say ‘no’ to these attachments and desires; that’s me, awareness. Why can I do that? Because, I know that nothing is to be gained by my desires and attachments.

I love this one, this is a really important verse...

“In all beings I am the desire that is not opposed to dharma.” This is the notion in the spiritual world that you have to be desireless, that enlightenment is desirelessness. The Buddhists have that one, nirvana; I have to get ride of all of my bondage, all of my desires, all my passions, etcetera, and then I’m enlightened. Wrong! Desire itself is awareness. But, that desire is always in harmony with dharma, in other words that desire does not cause you to break any of the rules or go against your nature or injure yourself or others. Look at the amazing things that have been created by desire, beautiful things that have blessed us so much. There’s nothing evil about desire at all. It’s only evil when the desire is under the spell of ignorance. When I’m ignorant, I take my desires to be real and I create pain and suffering. But this desire is pure desire and it’s perfectly in harmony with awareness; it is awareness.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 5 - Session 1 Continued
Chapter 7, Verses 8 - 16

That last sentence in verse 8...

“I am the desire that is not opposed to dharma.” It means that you don’t have to get rid of your desires, you just have to see that your desires are in harmony with dharma. There are two kinds of dharma: *svadharmā*, and *visheshā* dharma. *Svadharmā* means your nature; if you want to go against your nature, against the way you’re programmed, you’re violating dharma and that desire is adharmic. *Visheshā* dharma is how you interpret universal values or you could say, situational ethics. You have to determine on a daily basis what the right thing is to do in a given situation. And what is the standard by which you determine what is to be done? That’s *sāmānyā* dharma, the universal values. Will this help me and other people? Will this injure me or other people? Can I tell a white lie here? Sometimes people say you should always say the truth. But compassion often trumps honesty and where you’re unnecessarily going to hurt someone’s feelings it’s better for you to keep your mouth shut and not tell the truth; not necessarily lie, but dissemble a bit to protect people’s feelings.

Verse 12 - These things and beings that come from *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* come from Me alone. They are in Me but I am not in them. The entire human world is deluded by the modifications brought on by these three changing qualities. Consequently, I am not known to be separate from them. My projection, the *gunas*, is difficult to penetrate. Only those who seek Me can remove it. Undiscriminating people of limited capacity deluded by my *Maya* become conditioned to negative behavior, revel in the pleasures of the senses and consequently do not seek Me.

Everything is ***“in Me but I’m not in them.”*** Remember the clay pot? The pot is in the clay, but is the clay in the pot? No, the clay always remains free of the pot. The golden ring: the gold is free of the ring, but the ring is not free of the gold, is it? It’s a very simple, practical way to understand this. When something happens, you don’t change. You, awareness doesn’t change. It remains the same. The objects appear, you don’t appear with them. The objects are maintained by awareness and then the objects disappear but you don’t disappear with them.

Sattva, *rajas* and *tamas*, or *Isvara*, generate a constant stream of objects appearing in you, and the presence of an object doesn’t bring you into existence and the absence of an object doesn’t take you out of existence. In other words, you are the same before, during and after an object appears. Which means you are free of objects (objects means experience). It’s very simple. If you think you’re the Subtle Body, then when it changes you change. But if you’re awareness when something changes in you; you don’t change at all.

What’s the problem? Why is it so hard to understand this?

“The entire human world is deluded by the modifications brought on by these three changing qualities.”

What kind of delusions are we talking about? We’re talking about denial, inadvertence, sloth, projection, passion, anger, goodness, knowledge and truth.

Student - What does sloth mean?

James - Sloth means laziness. *Tamoguna* means *āvaruṇa shakti*, cloudy mind, dull mind. *Āvaruṇa* means a cloud, *shakti* means energy... so when *tamas* is active the intellect and mind become dull and sleepy. You can’t see things clearly, you misunderstand things and you deny what’s there, you don’t

want to confront reality; you're dull, lazy, stupid and can't think clearly. It's like clouds in the sky, the sun is always shining but when it's cloudy you can't see things well here, it's depressing and dull, and so forth. So, people that are predominantly *tamasic* are in a state of delusion the whole time.

Sometimes they become *rajasic*. But *rajas* will delude you too, by projections. *Rajas* is your delusions and it's called *vikshepa shakti*. That's the mode of passion or desire and because I want things, my wants color reality and I don't see reality as it is; I see my wants, my fears and desires. I see them outside and think the world is what I fear and desire, I don't see the world clearly. So I'm deluded when I'm under that energy.

And *sattva guna*, what is that? *"Oh everything is lovely, sweetness and light, it's all pure and holy and lovely" ... you know some of these spiritual people who get caught in this state of smarmy fake bliss and they wander around thinking, "Enlightenment is all about loving everything, I'm just loving everything all the time; I'm really holy and pure, I'm good."* You know when you follow dharma and live the right kind of life and feel righteous and better than other people, you feel you can tell other people what's wrong with them. Big delusion, thinking you're holy, spiritual and pure; that's when *sattva* dominates. So, all these *gunas* delude me.

"Consequently I am not known to be separate from them."

This means you'll say *"I'm sattvic"* or *"I'm rajasic"* or *"I'm tamasic,"* but 'I' is always free of the *gunas* because I is the knower of the *gunas*. You won't say *"I'm tamasic,"* you'll say *"I see that the guna of tamas is making my mind dull."* I've got pain in one of my teeth; that pain is in my tooth, not in me. I'm the seer of the pain. The pain is an object. Remember, whenever you have pain, it's *rajas*. So there's an infection in my tooth, it's causing pain. I won't say, *"I'm in pain"* if I say that I think I'm the *rajas*, I'm deluded by the *rajas*, I think the 'I' is in pain. But, I'm the one that sees the pain, so I can't be the pain. I'm the knower of the pain. The pain is an object and the subject is never the object. There's no pain without me, true, if I'm not here to see it, there's no pain, but pain is appearing in me.

"My projection, the gunas, is difficult to penetrate."

It's not easy to get out from under the spell of these *gunas*. *Gunas* means experience. Your experience is always that you're either clear, *sattvic*, or you're full of desire and projecting, *rajasic*, or you're dull, slothful, lazy and ignorant, *tamasic*. Those are the only three states of mind you have or some combination of the two. When you say 'I' and associate it with your experience, then your goose is cooked, you're here in *samsara*, you're not free.

That's hard, isn't it? It's very difficult to separate yourself from experience because you think you are your experience. Someone asks, *"What's going on?"* and you immediately say *"Well, I did this and that and I want to do that, etcetera, etcetera"* and the I is just talking about experience as if it were nothing but an experiencing entity. See how natural and quick it is because *Maya's* hiding or clouding awareness from you: awareness from itself? That's really weird isn't it, that *Maya*, that *Isvara* can delude awareness into thinking that it's a *jiva*? But if *Maya* can't do it, then awareness is limited by its inability to delude itself so it won't be limitless and scripture tells us it's limitless. So, it has to have the power to forget what it is. Fortunately, it's only an apparent forgetting so it can re-remember who it is through discrimination and understanding.

“Undiscriminating people of limited capacity deluded by my Maya become conditioned to negative behavior, revel in the pleasures of the senses and consequently do not seek Me.”

“Limited capacity” means limited knowledge, limited intelligence. They get fooled and deluded by these unconscious energies. The Causal Body is unconscious. It’s hidden from the conscious mind. So this is the stuff that’s subliminally affecting you that you’re not aware of. We try to make you aware of it by unfolding this teaching on the nature of the *gunas*, of *Isvara*. So, undiscriminating people become conditioned to negative behavior, chase sense objects and do not seek freedom. Actually they seek freedom but not consciously; they seek it in the objects, but there’s no freedom to be found in the objects. Whatever freedom they find quickly goes away because it’s associated with a desire, the appearance of a desired object. Everybody is seeking freedom — the self’s nature is freedom — but these people who are under the spell of the *gunas* and don’t have discrimination and can’t separate awareness from the objects, these people think that the object will make them happy and free. And it seems to do so for a minute, day, week or month; and then the sense of freedom and joy goes away and they go back and try to get another object, or the same object. That’s one of those definitions of insanity.

Like me and this internet connection: it doesn’t work and I keep going back trying to make it work, I’ve been trying for three days. But I won’t give up, will I? I won’t say *“To hell with it!”* and teach this class. No. I go back over and over the same thing trying to make it work when it’s not working. That’s an undiscriminating person. If it doesn’t work, it doesn’t work, forget it — move on! That’s discrimination.

Student - May I ask a question of clarification about that instance? Thank you for sharing that. What I would observe, wonder or inquire is; yes, that’s true that possibly there’s indiscrimination but at the same time there’s a commitment to contribute to *Isvara* and assist others in receiving this knowledge. So what I observe is patience, forbearance and some other qualities you also say are required to cultivate? Is that fair?

James - I don’t quite understand the question.

Student - You categorize the efforts of trying to get on the web as...

James - Yes, that’s just an example. I’m not really bothered. I’m just using the *James* fool, the *James* idiot, the guy that wants, doesn’t want things, as an example. I know full-well that I’m not actually frustrated with this thing. But *James* is an idiot, he’s *rajasic*. I’m not *rajasic*, *James* is *rajasic* — he wants to enlighten the whole world, that’s what he wants to do. I want to help *Isvara*, and *Isvara* isn’t giving me help and I’m getting pissed off at *Isvara*. *“God damn it Isvara, here I am doing your work day and night, I’m your biggest devotee and you won’t make the internet work, what’s wrong with you?”* I got that out, that’s good. Was that me? No.

Student - I guess my question remains that I hear what you said and your ongoing attempt to deliver this message is sourced in awareness.

James - It's a delusion; *sattva guna*. I think it's my job to enlighten the world. I'm a fool, an idiot. The world is already fine and everyone is already the self but I'm attached to helping people, that's *sattva guna*. So when I can't help...I'm speaking as a person here, I'm not that bothered whether I get love or not but I'm not happy unless I can give love. And if I get frustrated in my giving of love, then I get deluded. That's all. The *gunas* affect the *jiva*. That's not good or bad. I'm following my nature. It's my nature to think that way, it's the way I was built and I understand that and I'm not bothered by it. I don't get excited when everything goes well or disturbed when things go badly (for *James*). I know very well it's not me. So therefore, I love *James* and let him pretty much be what he is.

This is about experience and the experiencing entity. When you talk about yourself (meaning the person) it means you know that person is an object to you. When you say "*I did this or that*" and so forth, when you're speaking about this (*jiva*), you have to be this (awareness). Because you know what happens to you; you're just simple knowing, simple knowledge. You're the one that knows. What is known is not you. That's our discrimination. What's the problem? This I has been superimposed on this I. These are your enlightened people, they think that this I has become enlightened. So, they are superimposing awareness on themselves. They don't realize that this I is inert. They imagine that this I is aware so they superimpose it on this. Or awareness gets confused with this, that's called superimposition also. There's a confusion. So all these teachings do exactly the same thing in slightly different words and ways. They are trying to remove our identification with the experiencing entity.

There's only one object you need to get rid of and that object is the experiencing entity. You don't rid of it by killing *James*, you get rid of it by seeing *James*.

People ask me to tell them about my life, but to tell you the truth I don't find it that interesting. I'm so bored with *James*, I don't really want to talk about *James*. I'm dramatizing it here to make a point, but actually this person is so boring. This person in front of me has been hanging around me for 72 years. He's been babbling nonsense for 72 years. Now that I've got new pipes I'll probably get another 15-20 years to keep babbling. And I won't change, but hey, it's just a puppet on a string — it's not me. If you look through your ego and body you'll think this *James* is an interesting character or not; you'll think whatever's in your mind about *James*. Maybe you'll see me as I am, maybe you won't, I don't know.

So, if you can separate the experiencing entity, the person, from the awareness of the person, then you're home free. You don't confuse them. There's nothing I can do about *James*. I didn't create *James*, I don't know how I even got here. I was born in Butte, Montana and now I'm in Spain talking Vedanta. How did that happen? I didn't make this body or mind or create that weird life and end up here, I didn't do that. I know that some other force, power, factor, created that *James*, made *James* go through all those things and now *James* had ended up here talking Vedanta and one day in a week or 10 days or so this will all be gone and who knows what *James* will be doing, I don't know. *James* has all these ideas, but I don't get to do them, because *Isvara* is in control here.

And how do you get rid of the *gunas*, this attachment to your experience and to the person that you think you are? You seek me. He says, "**Only those who seek Me can remove it.**" What does that mean? Only those who know they are awareness can remove it because that's the only thing that is free of it.

Verse 16 - However, four types of good people come to me: the distressed, those seeking security and pleasure, those who want to know Me and those who know Me as I am. Among them, the one with non-dual devotion who knows me as I am is always united with Me. We unconditionally love each other. All are exalted but the one who knows Me is Me alone. With a mind absorbed in Me he or she reaches me, the end beyond which there is no other end. At the end of many births, the one with self knowledge reaches Me by knowing that I am everything. Such wise people are very rare.

“However, four types of good people come to me: the distressed, those seeking security and pleasure, those who want to know Me and those who know Me as I am.”

Didn't this whole spiritual quest start for you because you were suffering? When you have a happy life and everything is going okay generally you don't start seeking the Lord: it usually takes pain and suffering. And then some people realize that they want security and pleasure in this world and they realize that to get the edge they need to have that spiritual factor working for them. That's what the karma khaṇḍa section of the Vedas is about. It's for people seeking security and pleasure but they want *Bhagavan* on their side, that's why it's called a dharma shastra. So they follow dharma in life and they get security and pleasure. That's what karma, action, is for, for gaining something in this world, so they propitiate and pray to God. Those are your religious types; they know there's something else and they want it on their side, so they pray to it, invoke it, they live a life that puts them in harmony with dharma more or less and they feel secure and good about themselves. They get security and pleasure from their pursuit.

And ***“...those who want to know Me.”*** There are some people who aren't suffering and who aren't chasing wealth and so forth, but are curious. They've got *sattva*; they just want to understand things. They're not looking to feel good or to feel secure, they just want to know things. That's the kind I was. Most of us Vedanta people are like that. We're knowledge seekers, not pleasure, power or security seekers. Those things don't really interest us, we want to understand who we are and what reality is.

“Among them, the one with non-dual devotion who knows Me as I am is always united with Me.”

In other words, these *jnanis*, these wise people, they know what? Always united with Me means they know they are whole and complete and free.

“We unconditionally love each other.”

When you seek freedom and take these teachings on board with a full heart and complete understanding, your self will love you like anything and you will love yourself like anything. Because that's what you really want; that's what everybody really wants. Everybody wants freedom.

“Always united with Me.” means always knows that I'm free, whole and complete.

What's the relationship between whole and complete and free? Something that's whole and complete doesn't need anything to complete it; it doesn't lose anything, it's not made up of parts, so

you can't lose anything or gain anything. That means you're free. Because everything in this life is made up of gains and losses. For everything you gain there's a loss, for everything you lose there's a gain, that's what this life is about; getting and losing, getting and keeping. Why do I try to keep? Because I know it's going to go. But these people know they can't get anything and they can't lose anything so they are free of *samsara*. That means you will love yourself unconditionally if you pursue this knowledge and if you accept the truth of this teaching. It's all just a matter of accepting it, and you will accept it when you see it's true.

"All are exalted, but the one who knows Me is Me alone."

That means that awareness knows itself, not this person named Jim knows awareness. I, awareness know Jim, but Jim doesn't know me. Does Jim know me or not? Is there a Jim to know me? No, there can't be a Jim to know me. That's why he says "***the one who knows Me is Me alone***" which means only awareness knows itself, there's nobody else to know awareness. That becomes clear when you discriminate the experiencing entity as an object. Because if I can see it — I can see Jim, I can tell you pretty much his whole life — it can't be me, can it?

This is why people say "*I'm not enlightened*" and I say if you know you're not enlightened, you're enlightened, it means you're the self. Because you can't know you're not enlightened unless you're something other than the ignorance. They say that's not right because they want this one (*jiva*) to be enlightened. But we say you're already enlightened, you're already awareness and if you know that you're not enlightened then you have to be something other than not enlightened, you have to be the knower of not enlightened, so you don't even have to get knowledge to remove your ignorance, all you need is to know what knowledge is and what ignorance is. That's all. I can let Jim be as ignorant as he wants. It's fine with me because I know Jim's ignorant. I can let him get all the knowledge he wants, it's up to him, if he wants to be ignorant then it's fine with me either way, because it's not me!

Student - If the Subtle Body is the instrument of enlightenment but it's inert, how does that work?

James - Because the ignorance is enshrined here. Is ignorance intelligent or conscious? No. So the ignorance is here in the intellect and what knowledge does is it knocks the ignorance off. What's the basic ignorance? That I'm a *jiva*. That's actually the self that's got that ignorance but it looks like it belongs to the *jiva* and it looks like this *jiva* is conscious but it's not.

Krishna is saying here "***the one who knows Me is Me***" so he can't be the *jiva* because the *jiva* is inert. This whole structure here is just inert. That's the interesting thing about *Isvara* or *Maya*. Even though everything is conscious, *Maya* strips the sentiency out of some part of itself. That's weird, isn't it? Sentiency means it doesn't know, like the mind doesn't know it's a mind does it? The doer doesn't know it's a doer because it's just a thought. The thinker doesn't know it's a thinker. It's not sentient, it's just a function. When thinking happens you think, "*I'm intelligent, I'm thinking*" but actually *Isvara's* doing the thinking here. The 'I' is not thinking either, is it? So, this is not thinking, and that's not thinking. The 'I' is just shining the light on *Isvara* and that's causing thoughts to arise here mechanically, but the thoughts don't know anything. And the thoughts are either ignorance or knowledge. The self is confused about what ignorance and knowledge is, when *Maya* is operating. We call that avidya. Then the *jiva* thinks that it's real and needs to figure out what knowledge and ignorance are. It's very tricky. Did that help?

Student - So the self is the knower of the ignorance and the knowledge?

James - That's right. If you say I have knowledge then how do you know? Because you're the self.

Student - So the thought "*I have ignorance*" is just a thought?

James - That's right, it's just a thought. "*I don't know who I am*"; "*I know who I am*" — those are just thoughts. They are not known by themselves. What's happening is awareness is just identifying with a thought: "*I don't know*" or "*I do know*." If you say, "*I don't know*" we say you are a saṃsāri, you are ignorant, and if you say, "*I do know*" then we say you've got enlightenment sickness! Why do we say that if this person says, "*I know I am awareness*"? Because it can't know it's awareness. Why? It's just a thought. Only awareness can say I'm awareness. We have to make clear what knowledge and ignorance are. Once I'm clear about that I can let Jim be ignorant; Jim is ignorant, look at him, what a fool. He gets all excited because he can't get his webinar going, he's such a petulant little fellow. He's so vain, he always wants what we wants when he wants it, the way he wants it. And look at him ranting and raving about something stupid like this. He's an ignorant little boy. But it's fine because he's not me.

Sundari - It's true in a way that we need a Subtle Body. Without ignorance there is no Subtle Body. There's no creation.

James - Well that's right, but who's the 'we' that needs it?

Sundari - awareness.

James - Well, does it need? I mean, yeah, if awareness wants to see itself in form, in matter.

Sundari - In order for it to have contact with objects.

James - Yes, in order for it to know anything it needs to have a Subtle Body. That's correct. But in the absence of the body, it's fine. It doesn't need a Subtle Body, that's why I took issue with the word 'need' because it doesn't need to be here.

Sundari - And ignorance only covers a small portion.

James - That's an excellent point, because ignorance only covers a little bit of awareness. That's why I can say I know what I know and I know what I don't know. That means I am beyond knowledge and ignorance because what I know is an object known to me, and what I don't know is also an object known to me. So, I have nothing to do with knowledge or ignorance. They're just objects. The problem is when I am deluded I confuse knowledge and ignorance. That's the weird thing about *Maya*, it casts a veil over the Subtle Body and the Subtle Body is no longer clear about what it is, that's the snake and the rope. You know the story of the snake and the rope? A person mistook a rope for a snake. It can do that, in the evening time. It actually happened to me recently. There was a small piece of rope and it was curved and one evening I saw it out on my walk, near the wood shed and I

didn't want to step on it. Then I realized what I'd done. That's superimposition; I project one thing on something that's not there.

Student - Fear is called *tamas*. When you see the rope it is fear but it looks like *rajas*, this energy.

James - Sure, the *rajas* and *tamas* are there because of the twilight. If it had been daylight, I would have been able to see it was a rope but I couldn't. That's why we say when awareness is under the spell of *Maya* that awareness should make its Subtle Body very *sattvic* and clear, then it won't tend to make those bad discriminations, confuse one thing with another thing. We're always confusing knowledge with ignorance, that's the problem. We take what we know personally, to be knowledge. Well, maybe it's knowledge and maybe it's not. On the basis of your experience you can come up with what you think is knowledge. You think because something happened to you that you have knowledge and therefore you draw some conclusions from that experience and think it's knowledge; maybe it is and maybe it isn't. We have to point out what knowledge is and what it isn't. Once that's clear, it's fine.

There are people who already know they're awareness but they think they've got to get rid of all their ignorance. So every time a little bit of ignorance comes up — and it's going to keep coming up — they say I'm not enlightened because I've got ignorance. What's the problem there? It's not that they have ignorance, it's that they own the ignorance. They haven't just seen that it's ignorance. If it's ignorance it's not me because ignorance is an object known to awareness. *Maya* is beautiful, intelligent ignorance, that's why it's so hard to get out from under because it makes everything look so juicy, sexy, and desirable. There's nothing actually here to look at. When you see something juicy, sexy, and beautiful here, what is it you're seeing?

Student - Yourself.

James - Yes. Remember what he said here: ***"Wherever you look in the world, I am the light in the moon and the sun."*** It's not the sunlight and the moonlight that's beautiful, it's the I that sees the light of the sun and the moon. ***"I am the Om in the Vedas, the sound in space, the vitality in human beings. I am the essence."***

And how do you do this, how do you get there?

"With a mind absorbed in Me..." Which means, keep discriminating. Keep that knowledge foremost in your mind. Keep it there all the time if you can and just flick off the objects; *"that's not me, that's not me, I don't need this, I don't need that."* When a desire comes up, think about it: do I need to get the object of this desire to be complete? No, no. Why? Because I'm already whole and complete. Do I need to avoid that object to be happy? No, I don't need to avoid it because I'm already full and complete. Can I gain anything here? No. Can I lose anything here? No. This is the knowledge. You just apply that every minute. We're talking knowledge here because we're out of the karma yoga business. We're not worried about the results of our actions, etcetera. Karma yoga is knowledge but this is direct karma yoga; this is just discriminating the objects from the subject.

"Absorbed" means 24/7, guys. This happened to me when I met Swamiji, I just sold the farm. I got rid of my car, told my girlfriend *"ta-ta"*, and I got so absorbed, I was like a fanatic, I couldn't wait for the

satsangs. I couldn't stand being apart from Swamiji. One time I felt so close to him I slept in the garden outside his little hut because the closer I was to him physically the more intense my inquiry was, and my inquiry was so intense I wanted to be close to him all the time. I became totally absorbed in it. All kinds of things were happening around me, but I wasn't interested. People thought I was arrogant because I didn't want to talk to anyone. *"Oh that Ram he thinks he's hot, he's American, he gets to go with Swamiji here and there,"* they were thinking like that. It wasn't that I was arrogant, I was only interested in this and all that chit-chat and small talk didn't appeal because my mind was so absorbed in this I could see that if I could crack the code now I'm going to be happy the rest of my life. Because I saw the happiness, the fullness standing in front of me in the form of my guru, I could see and feel it. He was saying *"the reason I'm like this is because I know who I am."* I knew he was an honest man. You can tell when somebody's got integrity and when they're talking the talk but not walking the walk. Unless, of course, you've got too much desire, or you're too *tamasic* then you won't see that, you'll believe the words only. You won't connect the words to their radiance and their actions and so forth.

"With a mind absorbed in Me, he or she reaches Me, the end beyond which there is no other end."

In other words, what are we doing here in this life? We want to know who we are. Because these people who discovered they are whole and complete, what did they do? They've done everything that needs to be done, they've stopped seeking. In fact enlightenment is just the end of the search, that's all. It doesn't mean life changes, it means your seeking stops. Do you want to be a seeker all your life? I always thought that people worked so they could retire? But you find people who get so conditioned to working that they don't retire. There was a woman who owned a restaurant in Boston, and she started it out as a little greasy spoon and it became an extremely popular restaurant and she was really rich. You know something? Ninety-two years old and she's still showing up at work and putting on her apron and serving the tables. That's really cool in a way but you think, *"Hey, I'm doing this so I can relax."*

Swamiji said to me, *"The reason we're sannyasis and enlightened is because we don't want to work. We want to stop doing, we don't want to feel that burden of doership."* So we want to stop seeking. That doesn't mean your life ends. A lot of people don't want to find, you'd be surprised how many people say they want to be free but when they're asked to call off the search, they don't want to do it because they've developed a really nice cushy *sattvic* lifestyle around seeking and they think, *"Now what will I do? I'm going to have to reinvent myself, it's easier to pretend I'm not enlightened and keep seeking."* Because you get an identity as a seeker and we say no, you stop seeking. It isn't that you stop seeking, it's that seeking stops when you understand you're okay. The only thing that's driving all this activity and seeking is insufficiency. I feel inadequate, insufficient, I feel I'm not up to it and I want to be up to it, that's confidence, I want the confidence. When you see these *jnanis* you see this tremendous confidence, not because of anything they did, it's confidence in who I am, because I understand I'm fine. Part of that understanding is understanding that this little *James* person is fine too, with all his little weaknesses and foibles, etcetera, etcetera. That one is fine too.

In Japan they have this concept called wabi-sabi. Wabi means what's perfect, and it means the self, and sabi means what's imperfect, means this. Wabi-sabi is when you understand that what's perfect is perfect and what's imperfect is also perfect. Therefore, you no longer try to fiddle this to make it

work for you. When you think you're incomplete you're always trying to fix things and change things to make your life work better for you.

I'm happy with who I am as awareness I'm happy with who I am as a person. I know this isn't a bad person and all this stuff that happens here is fine because I appreciate *Isvara*. People think *Isvara* and *Maya* will just be gone and I'll walk around in infinite bliss all day long. The *jiva* is going to go right on, good stuff and bad stuff and all that stuff's going to happen and it's fine with me. I've got my toothache, it's fine, what can I do? It doesn't do me any good to get unhappy because I have a toothache does it? Because it's out of my hands. *Isvara* has given me that toothache and the best I can do is just be cheerful and soldier on and enjoy myself as I am and enjoy the bliss of my own nature and wait until *Isvara* changes it.

"At the end of many births, the one with self knowledge reaches Me by knowing that I am everything. Such wise people are very rare."

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 5 - Session 2
Chapter 7, Verses 16 - 25

Student - An online question. Ian from Japan says "*Regarding the three states: waking, dreaming, deep sleep. Why is the waking state seemingly continuous, you know I come back to the same basic lifestyle, yet the dream state isn't?*"

James - Well, the dream state is actually not random. It does appear to be random. *Isvara's* psychological laws are operating in the dream also, but the language of the dream makes it seem like it's chaotic. In other words, the language of the dream is pictorial, pictures, feelings and so forth. And it's quite logical actually if you study dreams over a long period of time you'll see that they're like little stories from *Isvara* telling you or teaching you certain things. But because the duration of the dream is short, the dream state seems to be chaotic. Another reason it's chaotic, apparently chaotic, is this... In the dream state the sense instruments are not functioning. It's the sense instruments that structure the waking state and make it seem logical and well ordered. The instruments mean the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. They're in the body. The instruments are in the body, the physical body. But the actual organs are in the Subtle Body, so in the dream state the instrument, because the physical body is asleep, the instruments are not there to structure your experience and make it seem logical and consistent and so forth and so on. So the *vasanas* just are no longer structured, they just come up and express without having to work out through the physical body. Consequently, you can do all sorts of weird things in a dream that you can't do in the waking state, apparently. But it's only because the senses are not there structuring reality, that is, the apparent reality.

Student - OK. We are rolling.

James - Good. Let's finish what he says. Remember this one is a big one here. Everyone who's seeking is exalted. They're good people. And your self loves you no matter what. You are loved by

yourself or you wouldn't be what? You wouldn't be seeking. But one of the best ones is Chapter 7 Verse 16: "***But the one who knows Me is Me alone.***" Now, what that means is that it's the self that knows the self. Understand. That's the highest state or the highest form of knowledge. Indirect knowledge is these first three kinds, they see the self as an object, they see awareness as an object, like as god you could say. God is a common word for the self. It's a projection. When you say God, you tend to think that it's something or somebody somewhere else, don't you? So, when you think like that, when these people think of the self like that as being something other than them, away from them, apart from themselves, they see the self as something to be understood, to be known, to be gained. They're good people, there's nothing wrong with them and that's a natural stage. But the final knowledge is direct knowledge. And what is that expressed as? "***The one who knows Me is Me alone.***"

In other words, you never are the person that you think you are, even when you say, "*My name is James.*" *James*, the word *James*, points to awareness. There's only awareness remember. Non-duality means there is only one principle and that principle is awareness. There's only one substance here, one intelligence and one substance, and that's awareness. So, there's not somebody else to know awareness. But, because of *Maya* or ignorance, I believe that I, awareness am *James*. Why? Even though I come in as a baby, aware and existent, I come like that into this world, my mum and my pop and everybody around me tells me "*You're James.*" Now how am I to know any different? I, my, intellect is not working, until I'm about three or four, and I'm totally dependent on my parents. To survive, I have to trust my parents. And if my parents tell me that I am *James*, and that I'm the son of so-and-so and I have a brother and this-and-that and I was born in Montana, blah-blah-blah, they tell me all this. And I believe all of it. I just believe it. And so what? My name always refers to a set of circumstances; a set of objects that actually don't refer to me at all. Or, they teach you that your body is you. Isn't it? So, no matter what you think you are, you always are just awareness. You're never this person. Yes.

Student - I'm trying to own this notion of limitless awareness and earlier this morning you said that awareness is only partially covered by *Maya*, so how can I make this my own?

James - Well, the word limitless, it's a very interesting word, it's a very important word. It's throughout our scriptures 'param'. P-A-R-A-M, it means limitless. And when I say limitless what do you think? What's the first thing that comes to your mind?

Student - Infinite. Everywhere.

James - Big, wide, isn't it? In fact the word Brahman, which is another word for consciousness, means big, expansive. That's one of the meanings of Brahman. So when you hear the word Brahman, Brahman means awareness. What is the meaning of limitless? Understand. Limitless means you, awareness are not modified, are not changed, not affected by whatever experiences happen in you.

But, that's not how it feels, is it? It looks like and it feels like everything that happens changes me. When your friend calls you up and asks "*How are you doing?*" "*Oh, I'm going through lots of changes.*" Isn't it? When you're limitless, nobody calls you up. There's no news. (Laughter) People, they stop asking me how I am because I'm always the same. I was the same yesterday, I was the same then and I'll be the same tomorrow.

Why would you ask this question? Because people think that whatever has happened to you between the time they saw you last and now has somehow changed you. And that's a very strong feeling that everybody has, isn't it? But in fact, that's not true. Yes, the Subtle Body has changed. The Subtle Body, your mind and your emotions have changed, so they're not the same today as they were yesterday. Understand. So the reason I say I've changed is because I'm identified with the Subtle Body.

Student - So even when you identify with your thoughts and emotions, you're still awareness?

James - That's right. You cannot identify unless you're aware prior to the identification. Which means you're never hidden, you're never totally covered by *Maya*. Think about it. Isn't it? Tell me, tell me, when are you not aware? When?

If you say you're partially unconscious it means you're partially aware. You can't be unconscious unless you're consciousness. You can't be conscious or unconscious unless you're consciousness. Understand. You're never not aware, but when *Maya* is operating it focuses you on this narrow little pencil-like ray of awareness called the Subtle Body, because that's how it feels isn't it? It feels like consciousness is in here (*James* points to head) and it's peering out and it only sees so much doesn't it? That's what a *jiva* feels like. *Jivas* feel like they're in the body and the body focuses their consciousness on objects. Isn't it? Whatever you're paying attention to is what you're conscious of. So, *jivas* feel very limited simply because the Physical Body is narrowing or focusing your consciousness on specific objects.

And a *jiva* can only pay attention to one object at a time. If I'm looking at you, I'm not looking at her. If I look at her, I'm not looking at you. If I'm thinking this thought, I can't be thinking that thought. I can only think one thought at a time. So I have this feeling of being very limited. And ignorance causes me to look at this limited consciousness as myself and I'm also told the same thing by mother, and father and society; everybody tells you you're just this little limited unit, this little bundle of consciousness. It's a terrible, terrible delusion.

Krishna says "**By my Maya I delude all these beings.**" These *gunas*, this *Maya*, really, it destroys your sense of limitlessness, of freedom. When we say limitless we mean free. Free of what? It's very simple. Free of the *gunas*, free of experience. If I take myself to be this person, I'm never going to be free am I? Understand. People think that this person is going to get free, but this person is never free, ever. This person is always stuck in the whole web, is dependent on a whole web of objects in order to exist, isn't it? You depend upon the air to breath, you depend on the material elements, you depend on other people, you depend upon feelings and thoughts. If you can't think, if your intellect isn't working you can't function here. You need emotions to accomplish things and you need desires. That person is never free. It's one little tiny blip in this great big picture of existence. So you're not getting free for this person. We're telling you that you're free of this person already. In other words, you know the person. I know *James*. That means, I know it sounds silly, I know it sounds so moronic a kid would say this, but I can't be *James* if I know *James*. Understand. Think that through. No? You have to think about it. Okay. You're not this book. That's right. You know you're not this book. You can see how natural it is to say I am *James*. Ignorance is learned. Ignorance is taught.

The problem in the world is what? That society tells you that ignorance is knowledge. The people who are teaching you ignorance think that they're teaching you knowledge. Consequently I get this identity, I get this feeling that I'm limited. But awareness is never covered or hidden. It's never hidden. That's why we say *Maya* only covers a tiny little speck of awareness.

Now, if you study yoga and these things they tell you that you have to get rid of all this, you have to get rid of all these sheaths, these five sheaths that are hiding awareness. They think that awareness is inside me and there are these layers like an onion around it and to get to awareness what do I have to do? I have to peel off this layer, I have to peel off that layer, I have to peel off the physical layer, then I peel off the prāṇa layer, then peel off the emotional layer, then I have to peel away the thought layer, then I have to get rid of the bliss layer or bliss sheath. I have to get rid of all those things, and then the self is going to shine.

Student - Would it better to say that *Maya* apparently partially obscures?

James - That would be a very good way to say it. *Maya* apparently partially hides or obscures awareness. Apparently, partially hides. Now when a person is getting rid of all these layers, in other words, when they're getting rid of their Physical and their Subtle Body and their Causal Body, aren't they there to be able to do it? To say that I'm covered means what? I'm not covered. To uncover, I would have to be there prior to the uncovering wouldn't I?

So yoga people, they're not looking at the self as themselves, they don't have direct knowledge. They don't start from the point of view of awareness. We start from the point of view that I am awareness and then we explain everything afterwards. But the yoga people say "*No, I'm not awareness.*" awareness is to be found in this particular state of consciousness called *samdhi*; *nirvikalpa* or *sarvikalpa samdhi*. And to get there, I have to get rid of all my thoughts and feelings. So they think the self is always covered.

The reason we say it's apparently, partially covered is because you're always Aware. Even when you're totally ignorant, you're Aware. So awareness is always available, it's always present, it's never hidden. But it seems to be hidden when *Maya* is operating. Limitless means, that whatever happens doesn't limit me. Experience is just like water off a duck's back. You know water flows on the back of a duck and the duck dives down in the water, is completely covered in water, but when it comes up there's no water on it. Experience is like that. Every experience I dive into nothing of that experience actually sticks to me.

Aren't you the same awareness you were when you were knee-high to a grasshopper? That's an old saying. 'Knee-high to a grasshopper,' you don't hear that anymore. When you were little, weren't you aware? And when you were a teenager, weren't you aware? And when you're a young woman or a man, aren't you aware? And when you're a middle-aged woman or man, aren't you aware? And when you're an old man, aren't you aware? And when you're very old, aren't you aware? Yes.

So the awareness hasn't changed, only what? The body and the mind have changed. This is why we say actionlessness in action and inaction in action. Inaction in action, and action in inaction. When you listen to music or you go to a symphony, what makes the music meaningful? The silence in which the music appears. You notice when you go there everybody insists on silence. Why? Because it's

that silence that allows you to appreciate the movement of the notes. If there's no silence and you just go with every movement of the notes, you won't have any music, the music won't mean anything. But the fact that there's a constant presence of silence, allows me to track the melody. And the melody of my life is what? It appears always in this constant background of awareness.

So anyway, this is a big, big topic but we didn't finish Chapter 7 Verse 16.

“At the end of many births, one with self knowledge reaches Me.” How do you reach it? See it's an interesting language. It makes you look like you're going somewhere. This is the language of experience right? This is the language of knowledge masquerading as the language of experience. It looks like you're reaching to grab something but then he explains. And how do you reach there? By knowing I am everything. In other words, there's no reaching, there's just what? Knowledge. Because you're already free. All we're saying is you're already free.

And it says ***“Such... people are very rare.”*** Why? Because of the power of *Maya*. Because I'm conditioned to think of myself as the small person.

Verse 20 - When you are driven by your lower nature desire destroys your discrimination and you worship the gods. If you worship a god with faith I will fulfill your prayers to make your faith firm irrespective of your motivation. What comes through the gods comes only from Me. Worship with limited understanding brings limited results. But if you worship Me you will definitely get Me. Although my nature is limitless, changeless and formless and there is nothing other than it, the indiscriminating only see me in a form.

When you are driven by your lower nature, desire destroys your discrimination and you worship the gods. Like iPads and cellphones. Those are gods too, have you noticed? People are totally fascinated with them and they talk about their gods all day long. I'm surprised on Google News and in the New York Times, how many articles there are about these devices every day. It's unbelievable. People worship these things. Worship means 'pay attention to and invoke by using'. And it says here, this is so beautiful: ***“When you are driven by your lower nature desire destroys your discrimination and you worship the gods.”*** In other words you worship objects, god's objects. The word 'god' means something that controls something else.

In vedic times, the gods were air, fire, water, earth and space. Agni is fire, Vayu is air, like that. These were the big gods, they were the elements you could see. Now, why do you worship air? Because you depend upon air totally. We're really messing ourselves up. Our worship of the elements is really awful. Look at the pollution. The things that we depend upon totally, completely, we're not worshipping, we're not honoring them. We're actually doing the exact opposite of what we should be doing. We're not worshipping the elements, we're what? Utilizing the elements for our own pleasure, not putting things back. Water, look at the water. You can't drink the water out of the earth anymore; you have to buy a bottle of water. We have to clean our pollution out of the water so we can drink it. People are not worshipping the water; they're polluting the water. They're throwing all kinds of chemicals in the water and so forth and so on. So God is something that controls you. Something that you need, that you depend upon.

“When you are driven by your lower nature, your desires, desire destroys your discrimination and you worship the gods.” You’re a materialist, you go for stuff.

But ***“If you worship a god with faith I will fulfill your prayers to make your faith firm irrespective of your motivation.”*** That’s a weird one isn’t it? Even if your motivation is bad and you worship an object by doing something, every action you do is a worship. Understand.

Worshipping. This is an interesting word isn’t it? Whatever actions you do mean you’re worshipping that object. When you kiss your wife, you’re worshipping your wife, you’re worshipping that object because you depend upon your wife or your husband for your emotional satisfaction. So, when you do worship on an object what happens to them? That object responds in some way to you.

Okay. I want six-pack abs. I need six-pack abs. I’m chubby. Even though I’ve lost a bunch of weight, I’m still chubby. So, I want six-pack abs. Now, how am I going to get six-pack abs? By doing sit-ups. That’s my worship. I do my sit-ups and then what? I keep doing them and then *Ishvara* gives me six-pack abs. But the six-pack abs won’t come unless what? Unless I do my sit-ups.

How are you going to get self knowledge unless you study the scripture and subject your mind to the teaching? This is worship. How do you get anything here, gain anything here? *Ishvara* is what gives you the results of your actions, your worship. So karma yoga is what? My work is my worship. I what? I offer my actions in the field and then I get results back. It’s called karma yoga. And the results come because my actions are interpreted by the field and then they’re returned to me. So what? So in other words, *Ishvara* is what? The one that gives the results of my actions. Actually, *Ishvara* causes the action to happen and gives the results of the action. *Ishvara* is the author of the action and the giver of the results of the action.

It doesn’t matter what you think. Understand. What *Ishvara* responds to is your actions, not your thoughts. You can think all day long that I want to win the lottery. Hey, you can want to win the lottery, so why doesn’t *Ishvara* just listen to my desire and give it to me? Does *Ishvara* do that? No, that’s not how it works. *Ishvara* listens to my actions. So I have to go and buy a lottery ticket, enter the green pool and then maybe *Ishvara* will give me what I want. But unless I’ve got a lottery ticket it doesn’t matter how badly I want it, it’s not going to happen.

You want a relationship with somebody? You can’t just do it in your mind. You know in the spiritual world, you find these people, they have these deep meaningful relationships with the guru, but they never talk to the guru. And then nothing ever happens for them, they just imagine. They think enlightenment is going to happen but they never had a communication with the guru.

I’ve been teaching a woman who was seventeen years with one mahatman and about ten with another, so she’s about twenty-seven years with two gurus and she just worshipped them in her mind only. And what? She never had a proper conversation with them and what? She didn’t learn anything. Then for some reason, one of those guru’s died, and then she came to Vedanta. We don’t let you do that. We don’t want your worship, we want you to listen. For us, all we ask of your worship is listening.

You get this knowledge by what? Listening. It's called śrāvaṇa. That's how you worship here. Because we're delivering knowledge. By listening you're saying I want knowledge. So what's *Isvara* going to have do? Give you knowledge, because that's what? That action of listening is appropriate to what? The result. That is, knowledge, self knowledge in this case. Or complete knowledge, obviously self knowledge is complete knowledge because it says here the self is everything that is. Verse 16 says ***"by knowing that I am everything."***

"Worship with limited understanding brings limited results." If you worship an iPad you'll get iPad knowledge. If you worship your country, you'll get knowledge of your country. If you worship your family, you get family knowledge. If you worship your car, your automobile, you get automobile knowledge. And if you worship the self, you'll get self knowledge. Understand. So worship with limited understanding brings limited results. Our understanding is what? I'm everything that is.

"But if you worship Me you will definitely get Me." Why? Because you worship me, because you inquire into me, and because you are me in the first place. In fact you already have me. Isn't it? You already are the self. Are you something other than yourself now? I don't think so. You're always only You. You can never get you. The language is tricky.

"Although my nature is limitless, changeless and formless and there is nothing other than it, the undiscriminating only see me in a form." So, sometimes I'm sitting here and what do you see? *James* babbling away. That's all you see, is *James* going *"blah-blah-blah, Vedanta means you're the self, and blah-blah-blah."* *"That man he just doesn't stop talking."* And you think that's what I am, you think I'm this puppet who's blabbing all these words. You see the form, you don't see me. I'm the one that shines behind the words. I'm the light that illumines the words. If you're discriminating, you'll see that.

Otherwise, you're just taking me to be a person. That's okay. If you take me to be a person, I'll act like a person. I don't need to tell you I'm enlightened. You want to talk to me as Jim, I can be Jim. I know how to play that game. I've played Jim for years and years. I can dig Jim up and make him talk and walk like a person. I can pretend I'm Jim, so you can talk to me, it's fine. But I don't see myself that way. I see myself as this knower, this radiant awareness this shining presence because of which Jim is known. Understand.

Verse 25 - Because *Maya* covers the intellects of nearly everyone, I am not known as unborn and changeless. I know all things that have happened, are happening and will happen, but almost no one knows Me. Desire and aversion create the opposites. The opposites delude. But those committed to freedom seek Me. Bring your negative tendencies to an end through karma yoga and you will be released from the spell of the opposites. If you seek freedom from change and take refuge in Me you will come to know me as your own self. You will also understand karma in all its nuances. Even nature lovers who see Me in the physical world... or those who invoke Me through rituals aimed at other gods... eventually come to know Me.

"Because Maya, meaning ignorance, covers the intellects of nearly everyone, I am not known as unborn and changeless. I know all things that have happened, are happening and will happen, but almost no one knows Me." Now, okay what does that mean? Now we're going talk about this a little bit. People think, when they read this verse, that when they get enlightened, when they realize who

they are, then they're going to know all the facts. They think they will know everything that happened since time began, they'll know what's happening now, and they'll also have knowledge of the future. It's possible to believe that isn't it because of what Krishna says?

So we need to give you the teaching about omniscience. There are two kinds of omniscience. Omniscience means all-knowingness, knowing all. So there are two kinds. One kind of knowing is *Isvara's* knowing. And the other kind of omniscience is paramātmā, or awareness's mind. Now, *Isvara* is awareness plus *Maya*. When awareness is added to *Maya*, then all of the facts of the past, present and future, and all of the knowledge of all of the forms and all the processes in all the beings, in other words everything, that knowledge becomes known to awareness and that's called *Isvara*. But without *Isvara*, what does awareness know? Itself.

Now, since you can't know anything without awareness and everything that you do know is made of awareness the omniscience of a *jnani* of a realised person is what? Simply knowledge of awareness because everything is awareness. So, I don't need to know all of it, all of the facts and figures. I just need to know the essence of everything. What's the essence of a lake? Water. What's the essence of a river? Water. What's the essence of rain? Water. What's the essence of steam? Water, H₂O. Now I don't have to drink the seven seas to know what water is, all water, any kind of water. I don't need to understand all of the rains that are going to happen and have happened and so forth. I don't need to visit all the lakes to understand what the essence of water is, do I? All I need is one little drop, and that one little drop of water, understanding that means I understand everything.

Everything is consciousness and all I have to do is know consciousness and then I see all the forms are what? Nothing but consciousness appearing as forms, as limited objects. What is it, knowing which everything else is known? awareness! There's only one. There's only one principle here, awareness and that's me. So if I know me, I know everything and I don't have to worry about all the facts and figures and so forth and so on.

Look at the freedom. Look at the freedom! I'm not stuck with the relative knowledge. *Isvara* has all the knowledge of the relative world. *Isvara* has all this knowledge plus knowledge of awareness because *Isvara* is awareness plus *Maya*. But *jiva* is never going to become *Isvara* is it? *Jiva* is awareness plus the Subtle Body. *Isvara* is awareness plus the macrocosmic Causal Body. So this Subtle Body is what? It's always going to have limited desires, to do limited actions, and to have limited knowledge isn't it?

That's a *jiva*. A *jiva* is awareness plus the Subtle Body. *Isvara* is awareness plus the Causal Body, in other words the total knowledge. What's the common factor between *Isvara* and *jiva*? awareness. So, awareness is beyond what? Both *Isvara*, the total, all knowledge, and the individual.

Isvara and *jiva* are upādhi's. This is a really lovely teaching. Okay, this is a clear crystal right? Okay, now let me turn this on. Now it's green, blue, purple, and oh there's yellow. My god, all the colors. Tell me, what color is the crystal now? No color. It's clear, isn't it? Because if we turn off the light the crystal hasn't been contaminated by the color at all, has it?

An upādhi is something that makes the crystal look like it's something other than what it is. This is what we said about experience and awareness. When you stop experience, awareness is just free of everything. And so this has never been contaminated by the experience, by the color green, or blue,

or red. So there's no contradiction between awareness and experience. In other words, experience doesn't hide awareness.

So *Ishvara*, the total mind and *jiva* the individual mind are what? They are just upādhis. They make awareness look like the totality of everything or they make it look like these little, tiny, individual beings. But awareness is neither the total nor is it an individual. It's the light. It's the crystal that's always clear. In other words, it's the knowledge that's unaffected by experience.

Okay. So when I realize I'm awareness I don't take over *Ishvara's* job. I don't become *Ishvara*. A lot of people want to become *Ishvara*, right? Spiritual people, they all want to be like Sai Baba. But Sai Baba was not *Ishvara*. I hope there aren't any Sai Baba people here. But, Sai Baba was not *Ishvara* because Sai Baba had limited knowledge. Sai Baba could make ashes come out of the air, or so it seemed. And, Sai Baba could produce a big stone out of his stomach, he could do that. But Sai Baba didn't make the sun, the moon, or the stars. *Ishvara's* always *Ishvara*, and *jivas* are always limited.

A *jiva* is conscious. You can't operate your life unless you're conscious, and *Ishvara* can't create this universe unless it's conscious either, can it? This is a conscious creation, in case you haven't noticed. The Christians are right, it's intelligently designed. awareness plus *Maya* makes an intelligent, self-aware universe. Did you read the book by Amit Goswami called 'self-Aware Universe'? That's the idea. The universe is conscious. This is why if you act, you're going to get a result. When you go to sleep at night you wake up in the morning and you still have the same life. Who's keeping track of that? "Oh Jim. Let's see. What did he do yesterday? I have to get everything lined up, but I can't remember what he did yesterday. Oh never mind, I'll just give him Joe's karma. Joe's got lots of karma, so we'll just push a bunch of Joe's karma over on Jim, and then when Jim wakes up, Jim can do Joe's karma."

Hey, it isn't like that is it? Even though you're not there, the person that has the karma is gone, when you wake up tomorrow, your karma is all laid out right there just for you. Is that beautiful or not? How beautiful is that? Think about it. You can purposefully continue living and pursue what? Your goals, and hopefully get to know who you are. You won't strive for *moksha* or anything else in the world unless this is a conscious lawful universe.

The only problem with gaining success here is what? Lack of knowledge of the laws, and lack of appropriate and timely action. You understand the laws that are operating here, and you act in an appropriate and timely fashion. You can succeed here in whatever you're doing. You can become a great artist, you can become a great poet, you can just become a good businessman, you can gain success in any field. How? By appropriate and timely actions. Why? Because the field is constant. It's constantly changing but what? It's steady, it's constant, it's conscious and responds to actions and produces results based upon the nature of the action that you put forth.

"Desire and aversion create the opposites." There are no opposites here mind you. This is just one seamless whole, one partless whole. Nothing is opposite anything else but because of ignorance I have fear and desire, and fear and desire create the opposites. Fear is what? It's *tamas*. Desire is *rajas*. When *Ishvara* creates this universe, this world here, everything's fine. First comes *sattva*. Everything's fine. You just have this luminous idea of reality. And then what? *Rajas* and *tamas* come

in, fear and desire come in, and the Subtle Body appears and then what? *Jiva* finds itself caught up in the opposites.

Rāgas and dveṣas. Desires and fears. I want and I don't want. If you know who you are, you don't want or you don't not want. You're fine. If you want, it isn't going to change you. If you don't want, it isn't going to change you. It means you're beyond duality. But because of ignorance I what? I want things and I want to avoid things and therefore, I find myself in this world of opposites. It's not a world of opposites. Non-dual reality becomes dualistic because of ignorance.

And you can't blame *Isvara* for the bad stuff here. People want to blame *Isvara* for the bad stuff. Rather, you can blame ignorance of *Isvara* for the bad stuff. But, you can't blame *Isvara* because *Isvara* is pure *sattva*. *Isvara* is awareness plus pure *sattva* or in other words, the pure knowledge of the creation. This creation is perfect. It's beautiful and it's perfect. Always. But what? When *tamas* and *rajas* come in, those other two *gunas*, *Isvara* becomes a *jiva*, and then *Isvara* suffers duality, apparent duality. And what? Desire and aversion, this fear and this desire, what do they do? They create a sense of duality. And this sense of duality deludes me. Means what? It keeps me from appreciating my what? My non-separation from everything. Because your desires and fears what do they do? They separate you from life.

“But those committed to freedom seek Me.” It means what? They don't pursue their fears and desires, they seek to understand the nature of reality. I want to understand, I want to know what reality is, what life is, who I am and what the relationship is between me as a person and life. The whole topic of Vedanta is *jiva, jagat, Isvara*. *Jiva* means the individual person. I want to know this person and I want to understand. Vedanta's not about understanding all your neuroses and problems and that sort of thing. It's just understanding what you are. *Isvara's* just your environment. So I'm a person, and this is my environment and then the third factor is what? The knower of those two. The knower of *jiva* and *Isvara*, that is, the *jagat*.

Isvara creates the whole field. So what do we do? We just seek to understand. See, there aren't a lot of individual *jivas*, understand this. All *jivas* think they're special *jiva's*. I'm the Jim *jiva* and you're the Joe *jiva* and she's the Diane *jiva* and I'm different from you. No two snowflakes are alike. I'm really special. I'm unique in all the world. All the *jiva's* just think that they're special and unique and different, don't they? But they aren't. There's only one *jiva*. What is that *jiva*? It's awareness plus a Subtle Body. That's our definition of an individual. All the differences are what? Accounted for by the Subtle Body, not by the *jiva*. The *jiva* is *Isvara*, is paramātmā, is awareness.

When it has a Subtle Body it thinks it's unique because different thoughts and feelings are coming up in it, well apparently different thoughts and feelings. But tell me this, does any *jiva* experience anything that no other *jiva* has ever experienced before, or is not experiencing now? No. Every *jiva* experiences what? Fear, desires, pleasure, pain, memory, blah-blah-blah, you name it. Thoughts, all the thoughts, do you have any special thoughts that nobody else thinks? No. You're thinking a thought now and you think it's unique? There are four billion other people thinking the same thought.

Are you doing any special action when you're walking? Oh yes, I walk differently from everybody. No, you don't. If you're walking, you're walking. Walking's eternal. Walking is not specific. It's

impersonal. Every *jiva* walks, assuming he's got legs. Talking, walking, eating, sleeping, thinking, feeling, willing, desiring, all of those things are what? Nothing but *Isvara* appearing as what? The Casual Body. Causing what? *Jiva* to act. And there's nothing unique about this person at all.

So, we don't have to worry about all of the details, my mother this my father that, and my husband this and my wife that, and on and on like children. We don't care. It doesn't matter. We just know we're this person and we want to understand our relationship to our environment and to what? To the factor that is beyond what we know. There's some factor beyond me as a person and this environment. That's called awareness and we want to understand what these three factors are and how they relate one to another.

Understand. That's what seeking me means. If you want to know about that special *jiva* that you think you are, then go to a shrink. They believe that everybody's unique and special and so they'll talk to you like you want to be talked to. And they'll pander to all of your beliefs in your specialness and your uniqueness and they'll make you feel very good being a little, unique person. But, you're not. There's just one person here. One *jiva* and one awareness. There are all kinds of apparently different behaviors, none of which are unique. In other words, since day one, since this whole creation began, there's only one thing happening always. *Jiva, jagat, Isvara* and that's all.

But, *"Oh you see, we're advanced people now, this is the 21st century. We've gone to the moon and we fly in aeroplanes and we have iPads and internet. We're very special. We need a special spiritual knowledge for this day and age."* No, you don't. You're just a *jiva*, you're just in the world, and you're just like anybody was five thousand years ago or ten thousand years ago. You have the same problems. There's nothing special about you.

This knowledge has been around for maybe eight- or ten-thousand years, and probably before. In fact in our tradition we say it's always present, it was always here. So why does this work on us today? I mean why does this work? Because we're not any different today than they were ten thousand years ago, that's why. It's the same person. It's just one eternal individual, one eternal consciousness and one eternal world, behaving according to what? These eternal principles and laws. And self knowledge means I just want to understand that 'I' and how everything works, that's all.

"Bring your negative tendencies to an end through karma yoga and you will be released from the spell of the opposites." Karma yoga neutralizes your likes and your dislikes.

"If you seek freedom from change and take refuge in Me you will come to know me as your own self. You will also understand karma in all its nuances. Even nature lovers who see Me in the physical world... or those who invoke Me through rituals aimed at other gods... eventually come to know me." Means everybody's what? Seeking the self, and the human heart will not rest until it's discovered its limitless nature. Okay, that's chapter seven. Take a break and we will soldier on after the break.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 5 - Session 2 Continued
Chapter 8, Verses 1- 3

Student - I was saying to Dave that, well I can't have a Subtle Body in the sense of self, as *jiva*, unless I have a physical body. My sense of individual self comes from having a body, is that correct?

James - What about the dream state?

Student - Well that's the Subtle Body which is attached to my *vasanas*.

James - Yes, but there's no physical body in the dream state. Are you saying that you can't have a Subtle Body unless you have a physical body? Is that what you're saying?

Student - I'm saying when my Subtle Body is feeling like it's a separate self it's always in reference to the physical body, no?

James - Not particularly. If you're in love with somebody and they say something hurtful, how is your physical body involved? It's just your emotions.

Student - Yes, but my emotions are tied to my physical body like through my adrenal glands, right?

James - Well, yes you could argue that.

Student - I know I can't have a thought without a corresponding physical sensation.

James - Well, maybe. I don't see my thoughts very closely connected to the physical body. Not at all.

Student - If I think *James* is beautiful I can't say that without having a warmth.

James - Maybe the way to think about it is that the distinction between the Gross, Subtle and Causal Body is purely intellectual. In other words, all of it's just one body-mind sense complex.

Student - Yeah, that's a useful way to look at it.

James - In fact, where is the line between your mind and your body? Exactly where does the mind end and the body begin? So, think of it like awareness is the substrate and then on top of that I have a Causal Body. In other words, out of awareness comes this Causal Body. That's called *Isvara, Maya*. Now, that means what? Even though this is apparently separate from this, this is nothing but awareness. So, where is the actual line between these two? So, in other words awareness pervades the Causal Body. Now, out of the Causal Body comes the Subtle Body, this is another layer. It's manufactured; the Subtle Body is manufactured out of the Causal Body. The Causal Body is the cause and the Subtle Body is the effect. Now, what's the difference between the cause and the effect?

So, the Subtle Body's the cause of the Physical Body. In other words, it's your karma your desires and so forth that produce the physical body for you. You need a physical body to work out your desires and fears and so forth and so on. So the physical body is an effect of the Subtle Body. This is the cause-and-effect teaching. And, the basic idea is that the effect is not separate from the cause, it just appears as something separate from the cause. So at the same time, all of these bodies are nothing but awareness aren't they?

Student - The five elements are coming out of awareness.

James - In the Vedanta world, the *jnanis* refer to the body as the five elements. Because what is your body but the food you eat? It's called *annaMaya* kosha. Kosha means a sheath or a body. It's in the state of change and it's made out of *anna*, which is food. Now what's food made out of?

Student - The five elements.

James - Five elements. So food is just air, fire, water, earth, and space. That's all it is.

Student - I understand thoughts are objects that appear in awareness and knowledge is structuring past memories of thought. Like my mother told me that that's a tree, it has a name, so I have a memory of a thought about a tree. So I believe thoughts are made out of me, but created by *Ishvara*.

James - That's right.

Student - So now I have the thought I am awareness and it's made out of me, but *Ishvara* created it?

James - That's right.

Student - How can I be awareness if it's a thought appearing in me?

James - The thought refers to awareness. The thought is a sign, it's pointing to awareness. Isn't it? The thought's not you, but the thought points to you. That's what this teaching is. It's a pointer; these are indicators that point to awareness.

The thoughts appear in the Subtle Body and the Subtle Body belongs to *jiva*. So, when the thought I'm awareness appears here, if the *jiva* understands and grasps that thought, that's called *moksha*. That's called direct knowledge. Normally the individual thinks I'm Sally or Pete or whatever. That I'm limited. But sometimes when you have an experience, usually an epiphany, an experience of oneness or wholeness or completeness, very often the thought I am awareness or I'm god or I'm non-separate from everything appears. There is a thought produced by an experience. Everybody's probably experienced oneness with everything. Most everybody in here, well maybe, maybe not. When you fall in love with somebody, don't you feel non-separate from them? One with them? Usually you do at least for a minute or a second, hopefully.

Student - Is that an apparent reality, or awareness?

James - That's awareness. I mean that's a realization of the non-duality of awareness and your non-separation from reality. But because you're so conditioned to duality, thinking that the subject and the object are different, when you have that kind of thought it doesn't last. It's overwhelmed by a whole series of other thoughts that you've cultivated or built up over time.

James - Any other questions while we're getting this sorted?... Okay. We haven't got a lot of time but we'll plug along here.

Chapter 8

Verse 1 - Arjuna said, "O Krsna, What is the self and what is the individual? What is karma and how does it relate to beings? What are the gods? What is the object of religious rituals? And how are you known at death by those with steady minds?"

"Arjuna said...." Now he's going to get into these definitions. He was asking questions about action before, now he wants to know, he wants knowledge.

"Arjuna said, "O Krishna, what is the self and what is the individual?" Has Krishna so far mentioned what the self is? Has he actually defined the self? As what? As *caitanya*. *Caitanya* means consciousness, or awareness. We are using the word awareness. awareness and conscious are synonyms in this teaching. Synonyms mean they have the same meaning. So maybe it has escaped Arjuna that what Krishna's talking about is awareness. Why? Probably because Krishna has been presenting the self as an object, right? Arjuna's seeing Krishna as his friend so he doesn't know what Krishna's saying when he says Me.

See the problem? In the fourth chapter, Krishna said, *"I've known all my births. I was here when the first person came and the great kingly sages and I know all these births but you didn't know any of them."* You don't know your births. And Arjuna says, *"Excuse me, it seems to me that that's not a correct statement because Visvasan and Manu they came way before you ever existed."* Which was true if Krishna was this body, right? What Arjuna's seeing is Krishna as that body standing in front of him. So, it doesn't make sense that that body could know Manu and Visvasan who lived thousands of years ago, which means what? That Krishna is speaking as awareness as *Isvara*. He's not speaking as that body standing in front of Arjuna. But Arjuna's taking Krishna to be the body. He thinks he's his friend.

Consequently, Arjuna is wondering what the self is. Krishna's talking about 'Me' and it's not making a lot of sense to Arjuna because evidently Krishna hasn't explained to him what awareness is, so now Arjuna wants to know what is the self. He's had indirect knowledge, he's been told about it, but now he needs to know what it is.

"What is karma..." he wants to know what karma is. **"And how does it relate to beings? What are the gods? What is the object of religious rituals? And how are you known at death by those with steady minds?"** This is the theory of *moksha* called *vidaya mukti*. So he's going to discuss these topics.

Verse 3 - Krishna replied, "The self is limitless and unchanging. Associated with a body it is called an individual. Karma is an offering that creates bodies for beings. The individual is subject to change but the gods are relatively eternal. I alone am the object of all rituals."

"Krishna replied, "The self is limitless and unchanging." Now, what would that be? awareness chaitanya. Chaitanya means consciousness, means you, awareness. It doesn't change and it has no limits. We've already discussed that. When awareness is associated with a body, the Subtle Body, it's called an individual. We've just discussed this. The Gross Body belongs to *Ishvara*, and *Ishvara's* not an individual. *Ishvara's* the total. It's awareness plus the total. So the body we're talking about here, the *jiva*, the individual, is called the Subtle Body. And the Subtle Body is just all your subjective stuff, your inner life. Everyone has an inner life: thoughts, feelings, memories, all of that. All of those thoughts and feelings and memories and desires and fears and la-de-da-de-dah, all of it, that's the Subtle Body. We'll see even more later on when we talk Panchadasi because that text describes it in even more detail. Not that it's that complicated really. It's just all of your stuff. It's just what you experience. It's your thoughts and feelings and so forth.

"Karma is an offering that creates bodies for beings." You can't have a body without karma can you? Karma means in this case action, and action is what? Preceded by desire. You don't do an action without a desire do you? So you have a desire and that causes you to act, and that action what? Produces a body. It was just explained to you how the Subtle Body, out of desire becomes the Physical Body. So there's no actual separation between the Subtle Body and the Physical Body. But karma, the actions that I do, eating, walking, talking and so forth, that creates a physical body.

The materialists have it backwards. They can't explain desire and anger and fear and love and all these sorts of things. They just don't go there because they start from the premise that you are a Physical Body. And they think that the Subtle Body evolved out of the Physical Body. Is that possible? It's not possible. Because you can't get consciousness out of matter, because matter is inert. You have to have consciousness prior to matter. Which means that if you could see matter you already have consciousness present. The scientists don't see this. They don't see that consciousness precedes matter. In other words, matter is an effect of which consciousness is the cause. If that's true, then the thoughts and feelings and so forth can arise in the Subtle Body and the *jivas* can appear because consciousness is already present.

But the scientists don't know that, so they think there's this great big bang. But out of what did it bang? I don't know what they think, but out of what did it bang? Anyway, there's this great big bang and space comes and all these gases come. Then it all wriggles around, cooks a bit and one day some elements appear, water comes and then fire and then what happens? I guess a couple of these little gas substances or elements rub together and that makes a mind. And matter becomes Conscious. I mean, I hate to say it that way because it sounds like I'm making fun of it, but I am making fun of it. It's stupid. How can you get consciousness out of matter when matter is inert? You can get matter out of consciousness; but you can't get consciousness out of matter.

So karma, action, based upon desire creates these bodies. Why? Because I need a body to act out my stuff. I mean I'd just as soon not have a body, I could act it all out in my mind. It would be a lot faster, I could accomplish a lot more but I've got to what? To accomplish anything, to work out my desires, I have to do action. And, I need a body for that. That's why karma is creating these bodies.

“The individual is subject to change but the gods are relatively eternal.” By gods we mean the twenty-four tattvas or cosmic principles. *Isvara* has structured this field of existence, this apparent reality in a certain way. Five gross elements, five perceptive senses, five active senses, that makes fifteen; plus mind, intellect and ego, that makes eighteen; plus om makes nineteen, the Causal Body. Oh, I forgot five. Which five did I forget? Prāṇas. Nineteen plus five is what? Twenty-four. Prāṇas are your physiological system: digestion, excretion, respiration, circulation, and the power to eject the Subtle Body from the physical body at the time of death. These are powers. They’re in everything. I mean every being has these powers. They all come from *Isvara*.

And these are the gods. We define gods as something we depend upon. For consciousness to function here in a meaningful way, it needs to what? Have a structured field of existence. And so the field is structured in this way. These are the principles operating here and they’re relatively eternal. Now what does that mean? With reference to an individual, they’re always here. You’re born and you die and somebody else is born and they die. Everyone is born into the same structure, into this same world, into *Isvara*’s world, this apparent reality. And this apparent reality remains generation after generation, hundreds of years, thousands of years, tens of thousands of years. This same structure remains in consciousness all the time. We know it’s created, because it’s dying. Entropy is working in the system and it’s gradually losing energy. We know very well at one point it’s going to die.

That’s why we say relatively eternal. It’s not actually eternal because at the end, once this whole creation is finished, what happens to it? It starts again. We know that it started. It was born, which means it’s going to die. It lives for a long time, for 464 billion years or more, we don’t know. It’s a long, long, long time. But once the energy that went into this projection is dissipated over time, it dies. Time is always winding down, winding down, winding down, just like your own life is winding down. You were born, you had a lot of energy, you came out then you reached your peak and then what? You start to decline and you’re going to die. All the objects here do that but the whole field, the whole structure of reality, also is the same. It’s like ‘BOOM!’ it explodes out and then it slowly, slowly dies. And when it dies, what happens to it? It goes back into awareness and remains like a seed. It’s a seed for another 485 billion years, and then it sprouts again and recreates again.

It’s very similar to waking and sleep. When you go to sleep at night, where does the world go? Where does it go? It goes un-manifest. It goes back into the Causal, it becomes a seed. Now, the whole world is contained in the seed but it’s not manifest, it isn’t visible. You can’t see it, you can’t experience it. But in the morning when you wake up the seed sprouts, the Subtle Body comes out, and then what? Then you have the whole world coming out again, projecting once again.

When *Isvara* goes to sleep, it’s called the night of Brahmin. *Isvara* goes to sleep for 400 billion years and then *Isvara* wakes up for 400 billion years and then *Isvara* goes back to sleep for 400 billion years and then it goes back and so forth. The same cycle that we know as individuals on a small scale is replicated on the big scale by *Isvara*. Why? Because there’s only one principle operating here. So, what applies to *Isvara* is going to apply to *jiva* and what applies to *jiva* is going to apply to *Isvara*.

The seed state, creation goes back into the seed. And all of the beings and all the forces, they’re dormant. They’re just dormant. And then after they’ve rested for all that time, then they come out again. So these are the gods.

This is a cool chapter. I love this chapter.

And then ***“I alone am the object of all rituals.”*** It means what? Everything you’re doing, you’re doing for yourself. Can’t be any other way, can it? Because there’s only you. Why do you do everything for your own self? Because you love yourself. Which goes to show what? That the self is the highest, it’s of the nature of love. We call it parama prema svarupa. Your self is the source of all love, and because you love, because yourself is love, you love yourself the most and therefore you do everything only for yourself.

And there’s only one self. If you say, *“Oh, no, no, no I’m not selfish. I’m not selfish, I’m doing it for other people.”* You only help other people because why? Because it pleases you to do so. If it didn’t please yourself to help others, you wouldn’t do it. So, when you’re helping someone else, you’re just doing it for yourself.

In society of course, it makes you look good to say *“I’m doing it for you.”* I’m a big saint and I’m really trying to make you happy, but actually, I’m doing it because it makes me happy. You see? It looks like I’m doing it for you, but I’m actually doing it for me. And even if I’m doing it for you, I’m doing it for me aren’t I? Because you’re me.

So, there is no otherness and everything is done for the sake of the self. It’s so beautiful. You love yourself.

Okay, spaghetti time. We didn’t get very far on this one did we? We’ll be back for those of you out there in cyberspace around seven.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 5 - Session 3
Chapter 8, Verses 3 - 24

The only way it works is if you just stick with it. Just steady. Once I realized who I was, I was just hooked. I said, *"I'm never going to walk away from this."* People criticized me years ago when I was younger for not showing any interest in any other traditions, in other paths. They said I was conceited and elitist and various things like that. But, if I read a book by somebody, there just wasn't anything serious there. There was no real substance to it.

Verse 3 - Krishna replied, "The self is limitless and unchanging. Associated with a body it is called an individual. Karma is an offering that creates bodies for beings. The individual is subject to change but the Gods are relatively eternal. I alone am the object of all rituals."

"The individual is subject to change but the Gods are relatively eternal." The structure of the dharma field is relatively eternal, it outlasts generations and generations of people.

And *"I alone am the object of all rituals."* Everything you do is done for the sake of your self. Because there's only your self! And if anything's being done, it's being done by the self for the sake of the self because there's nothing else but You. *"That sounds pretty egocentric, James!"* It's not egocentric. It's just a fact. There's only You. But the you is not individual, the You is everything. It's the consciousness in anything. A student was sharing with me that he was watching a fly walk across the windowsill and he had an epiphany: he realized that the consciousness that was animating the fly was exactly the same consciousness that was animating him. Just that one awareness; that one life. Yes the program is different: there's the fly body, and the student's body, two different upādhis, but the same awareness the same consciousness.

Verse 5 - If an individual dies thinking of Me, he or she realizes non-difference from Me. There is no doubt about this. But if at the same time something else enters the mind, he or she goes there.

So that means, what? I should just eat, drink and be merry and party-hearty while I'm here and then when I die I'll think of *Bhagavan*, get my *moksha* and get the best of both possible worlds? That's called a *videha mukti*. We are *jivan muktas*; we believe in *jivan mukti*, which means liberated while alive. 'Deha' means body and 'videha' means without the body. When the body dies, if you are meditating on *Bhagavan* or the self, then you'll go to the self and get *moksha*. You won't be reborn. But if you're thinking of something else at that time, the *vasana* in play at that time will cause you to be reborn according to the nature of the *vasana*. Maybe that's true and maybe it isn't. But really, is it reasonable to assume that if you've thought of money, sex, and power all your life that at the end you're going to think about *Isvara*? You're not going to think about *Isvara*. You're going to think about money, sex, and power! You're going to think about whatever *vasana* has dominated your consciousness during this lifetime.

This is why everyone gets reborn, basically. Not that anybody gets reborn. This is why the *vasanas* get reborn. So, I think it's reasonable to interpret this idea of birth and death in this way: if you die to the thought in your mind at the time and turn your attention to awareness you will realize your non-difference from awareness from your self. But you have to die to the thought that you're meditating on. This is what we call discrimination. I have to see that whenever there's a thought there's awareness and that if I meditate on the thought that thought is going to create a world for me for as long as it exists, or until I die to that thought. When I'm born to that thought I'm born into it because I identify with that particular thought. So you can 'die' at any time; that is, you can die to the thought that's in your mind.

Very often I'll be talking to someone and I will be about to say something and then the conversation changes and I realize that what I was going to say wasn't appropriate. So, I just die to that thought. I don't put that particular thought into the conversation so I won't get 'born' into the communication that would be engendered by that thought, so I'm free of it.

At any time you can disassociate yourself from a thought because you're already disassociated. In other words, you can be aware of your self and the knowledge and awareness of the self is as good as the self. As soon as you think of the self you are the self — not that you weren't the self before you thought. But when you think of something else you think that you are the thinker. You don't think that you're the awareness of the thinker. So, by just simply paying attention to what you're thinking and taking your attention away from the thought, your attention will immediately go back to who you are and you'll be free of that thought. And that freedom is *moksha*.

Verse 7 - Offer your heart and mind to Me at all times and fight! There is no doubt that you will reach only Me. If you reflect on the teachings of non-duality with a mind fortified by yoga... a mind that does not wander to other objects... you will realize your limitless self-effulgent nature. If you contemplate on what is all-knowing, most ancient, the ruler and ordainer of everything, subtler than the subtlest, of inconceivable form and beyond knowledge and ignorance you will realize your true nature. If your mind is steady with the devotional strength gained through yoga and you place your breath properly between your eyebrows, you will reach the limitless effulgent self.

"Offer your heart and mind to Me at all times and fight!"

"Fight" means live on. Keep your mind and your love flowing to this quest for truth. Keep your mind thinking and discriminating about who I am, about the teaching, and live on. *"It's a struggle here with the internet and my toothache but I have to sit down and teach Vedanta. I'm fighting on, living on!"* That's what it means. It means do what you need to do with your thoughts and your heart and love all going to *Bhagavan*, to your self.

"There is no doubt that you will reach only Me. If you reflect on the teachings of non-duality with a mind fortified by yoga... a mind that does not wander to other objects... you will realize your limitless self-effulgent nature."

Yoga is just bringing your mind back to awareness over and over again. It's reconnecting to awareness. That's all. It's an effort, an action. Just continually bringing it back because it'll continually be pulled

out by the *vasanas*, but you bring it back until you've broken the hold of those *vasanas* and the mind just sits still on awareness the whole time, enjoying the peace and bliss of awareness.

“self-effulgent nature” means you shine on your own. You shine without effort. There's nothing you need to do to shine. Your nature is light; it is shining and no effort is required for you to shine.

“If you contemplate on what is all-knowing, most ancient, the ruler and ordainer of everything, subtler of the subtlest, of inconceivable form, and beyond knowledge and ignorance, you will realize your true nature.” ***“All-knowing...”*** means everything is known in the light of awareness in light of you. ***“Most ancient...”*** means you can't find a beginning; it's not actually in time, this is a way of pointing out that awareness was not born, that it's always been here. You go back as far as you can go and you can never find the beginning of awareness because it never began. It was always here. Not that there's a 'here' for it to be here. It always is.

“The ruler and ordainer of everything...” means that without consciousness, nothing exists. It rules, ordains and governs everything. You have to take awareness into account when you have any factor operating here because it's controlled, regulated and governed by awareness.

“Subtler than the subtlest.” What's the subtlest thing? The Causal Body, your tendencies and karma. And what's subtler than that? Me, the Knower, the seer of the karma. What's subtler than the subtlest is the Knower.

“Inconceivable form...” means it has no form. ***“And beyond knowledge and ignorance...”*** I know what I know and I know what I don't know. Which means I'm beyond knowledge and ignorance. ***“Beyond”*** means ***“other than,”*** limitless. You can get the wrong idea here. You need to make sure you understand these words correctly. Beyond doesn't mean 'over there'. Beyond is right here; there's only here, only awareness. ***“Beyond knowledge and ignorance...”*** means other than knowledge and ignorance, what knows knowledge and knows ignorance. That knower is always here. It's not somewhere else.

We are limited by words. Because they come out of the *Maya* world they are all conditioned by time and space; they're all action words, time words and space words. So trying to talk about something that's beyond time and space and action is difficult using words. Because words are difficult we can't go by the direct meaning of the word. 'Beyond' just means 'not here', so we have to go by the implied meaning of the word, which is 'other than'. We have to explain that to you or you think you have to 'go beyond' and you'll have to be involved in some action and you'll think that the self is the result of some action (i.e., of 'going beyond'). The Buddhist ***“gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha”***; ***“gone gone, gone beyond the beyond, bodhi svaha”***. People imagine that they're going to zip out of here and I don't know where they're going to go, when they hear that. I've never heard the Buddhists actually take the piss out of that idea. It's action words and action words are very dangerous unless they're used in a very clever and sophisticated way like Atmananda does, using the language of experience to convey knowledge.

“If your mind is steady with the devotional strength gained through yoga and you place your breath properly between your eyebrows, you will reach the limitless effulgent self.”

Your breath is supposed to go between your eyebrows? My breath is already between my eyebrows. This just means concentrate on some spot in yourself that symbolizes or reminds you of the self, that takes place in the self and contemplate on the self. Some techniques are useful. Ramana said the self is on the right side of the body. He said, *“This is the physical heart and this is the spiritual heart.”* Why did he say that? He later said it wasn’t true. But it was to give you some place to meditate, to put your attention on, just a physical symbol of the self to focus your attention.

Verse 11 - I will tell you briefly about the self which is the topic of the Vedas and which is realized by renunciates who pursue a life of self study and discipline.

Verse 12 - Shut down the sense organs, withdraw the mind into the heart, place your breath at the top of your head and hold it there by yoga while chanting the syllable OM... which is the self. If you then let go of the body you will realize your identity with Me. A mind that constantly sees no other easily realizes Me. If you successfully realize Me you will not take another miserable limited birth. Up to the level of the Creator you will come back to earth from any world in which beings exist. But you will not be reborn to self ignorance if you know who I am.

“Shut down the sense organs, withdraw the mind into the heart...”

Heart means essence. In other words, start to think about awareness about yourself. Look for your self. ***“Shut down the sense organs...”*** — quit thinking about objects outside and start thinking about your self.

“Place your breath at the top of your head and hold it there by yoga while chanting the syllable Om... which is the self. If you then let go of the body you will realize your identity with Me.”

Well, if you do that or not, if you let go of your attachment to the body, then you will realize your identity with your self, because that’s the only other thing left - your self. And what’s preventing it is attachment to the body. This is some yoga practice, I don’t know what that is.

“A mind that constantly sees no other, easily realizes Me.” Well, how can you see no other unless you’re realized? Doesn’t make sense does it? But you have to consciously try to understand — this is your ‘fake it till you make it’ — you have to assume that everything you see is your self, before you understand, then you’ll realize it. But, actually it’s a contradiction, isn’t it?

“If you successfully realize Me, you will not take another miserable limited birth. Up to the level of the Creator, you will come back to earth from any world in which beings exist.”

Wherever you go in *samsara*, you’ll come back to where you started. Whatever endeavor you undertake will lead you right back to where you started. It’s a zero sum; you cannot get out of this.

“But you will not be reborn to self ignorance if you know who I am.”

Now he’s going to explain the Causal Body, *Isvara*.

Verse 17 - One of the Creator's days lasts a thousand eons, as does one of its nights. At the beginning of the day all things and beings arise from the Unmanifest and become manifest. And when night begins they are again resolved into the Unmanifest. But eternal consciousness is beyond the manifest and the Unmanifest. It does not change when all beings are destroyed. It is what is to be known. When you realize it you no longer see yourself as a limited being. The self is limitless and can be obtained by a devotion which knows no otherness. It is that in which all beings are rooted and by whom all are pervaded.

One of the Creator's days lasts a thousand eons, as does one of its nights. Who knows how many years there are in an eon? Let's say billions. There are billions of years in an eon and one of *Isvara's* days lasts a thousand billion years. Means a long time.

"At the beginning of the day all things and beings arise from the Unmanifest and become manifest."
From the seed, they sprout out and become manifest, become seen.

"And when night begins they are again resolved into the Unmanifest. But eternal consciousness is beyond the manifest and the Unmanifest." It's beyond the Causal Body and beyond the Gross and Subtle Bodies. The Gross Body and the Subtle Body are manifest; you can see them. But, you can't see the Causal Body. It's un-manifest, it's hidden. But I am beyond both.

"It does not change when all beings are destroyed. It is what is to be known. When you realise It you no longer see yourself as a limited being. The self is limitless and can be obtained by a devotion which knows no otherness." Which means just get yourself one hundred percent thinking and working on this all the time. You just become a fanatic. Don't quit. That's devotion. We call it *mumukshutva*, that's another word for it; that intense burning desire. You just keep at it.

It is that in which all beings are rooted and by whom all are pervaded. We are born out of consciousness and we are pervaded by awareness all the time. It's awareness that sustains us.

Verse 23 - Oh, Arjuna, I will explain to you the paths of return and no return by which yogis go.

Verse 24 - Meditators on the self travel for six months through the lands of the god of fire, the god of light and time, the god of the day and the god of the light fortnight and arrive at the abode of the self. But the yogi whose mind is elsewhere travels for six months through the lands of the deity of smoke, the deity of night, the deity of the dark fortnight, when the sun is in the south. He or she gains the world of the moon and returns to earth. It is well known that both the dark and the bright paths are eternal. By the bright path one gains liberation and does not return, by the other one returns again to bondage. Knowing these two paths, be not deluded.

Means choose the path of liberation. The dark path is just the path into objects. Just chase objects and you'll keep coming back to objects over and over again and you'll stay in bondage. But choose the path of knowledge and it'll take you out of this world of *samsara*.

Therefore at all times may you be in yoga, Arjuna. The one who knows this no longer needs to follow the injunctions of the Vedas concerning the results of actions, rituals, disciplines and charities and attains my supreme abode.

Means you don't have to do anything anymore. You've done everything that needs to be done.

Student - Could you explain what the six months deity of smoke is?

James - Those are just symbols. The south and dark and night symbolize ignorance.

Student - The deity of smoke is *āvaruṇa shakti*?

James - No, it's just a symbol of the materialist path, the path of objects. The other path is the path of the light. It's just contrasting these two paths. The path of matter is the path of darkness. They say it's in the south because that's where it's hottest and everything decays and changes. In the north is *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* which is Śiva in the form of knowledge. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is the one who's facing south, but he's sitting in the north, where things don't change, where it's frozen and crystal and still and permanent. So they are symbols for these two states of mind: the person who's looking for the truth and the person who's chasing objects in *samsara*. It's just a poetic way of expressing it.

Student - If this *jiva* is only a construct in the mind of *Isvara* and essentially only awareness I don't understand who will not take another miserable limited birth.

James - No one will take another miserable limited birth if you understand that you're awareness. The *jiva* is awareness but until it understands that it's awareness it will be reborn. But not as the same *jiva*. If you think that you're the *jiva*, you're the *jiva* and you get reborn. We don't have to worry about next lifetimes, it just means you'll get caught up in the next desire that you have. That's rebirth. The desire that comes up, is that new? No, you've had that desire before. So when that desire comes up you go for it again and again thinking it will work for you and make you happy. That's rebirth, just continually involving yourself with your desires and the actions that are implied by following those desires.

Student - So, it's from the point of view of the *saṃsāri*, right, but not after *moksha*?

James - That's right. The person that you are now is not going to be the same person in the next birth if you look at reincarnation in this way. The presupposition is that when you say you are reborn you'll think that '*James*' is reborn or '*Katy*' will be reborn, but *Katy* won't be reborn. What will be reborn is the *vasanas* and since those *vasanas* are manifesting at a different time and place it will be a different person with a different body, different parentage and different circumstances and will be given a different name. When you're reborn *Bhagavan* wipes out your memory for good reason. You get cleared of this person but the new person has those *vasanas* that were left over, that's all. So it's a different person with a different name in a different time and place.

Student - Would you say it's a child of this person, sort of?

James - The tendencies are reborn. So the next person will have the same tendencies that you had here but those tendencies will operate in a different environment so it'll produce a different kind of individual for that incarnation. Now we are unique in that sense because only once is this set of *vasanas* that you've got and this environment in which you find yourself going to exist. So you're

going to be unique with reference to this. But as soon as this dies then you get to be totally unique as someone else. And what good does that do you? None. Except the vanity of thinking you're special.

So, think of rebirth in this way. But who cares? We've got too many problems here and now to worry about what's going to happen in our next life. We're worried about what's going to happen tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, much less about the next life. And all of our problems today are created by being born into desires and fears here, in other words, identifying with desires and fears here. So, why not solve the whole birth question by not associating yourself with your fears and desires; by knowing they come from ignorance, that when I act on them I just reinforce my sense of ignorance and separation. I just let them slide; appear, and disappear, but don't attach to them and do actions that will reinforce them.

This is knowledge. Karma yoga is going to do the same thing, but knowledge will do it much quicker. So I don't have to worry about results of actions or anything. All I have to do is dismiss the gratuitous fears and desires that arise in me; desires and fears that will send me into this dark fortnight, into this dark world of objects and activities, into this world of desire and suffering. If you think about when you want something and think through it carefully you probably won't do it. If it's a positive desire then maybe you'll see that the results will be beneficial but most of these desires we have are only sustained and maintained because we don't logically determine what the outcome will be.

Say I'm lonely. It's Friday night and I want love. So I go to the bar and pick up a girl. And then I have to chat her up and convince her to come home to my house. And then we have our little fun, and then the following morning it's kind of embarrassing and awkward getting out of there and I feel a little uncomfortable because I was just using that person for my own pleasure. I didn't really care about her at all. I feel rotten and think "*What a chump you are; this poor girl is a nice girl and wants to get married and have a proper relationship and you just want to have a good time with her.*" So you think through the whole thing and realize that at the end of the evening and the next morning you are going to feel bad about yourself. So why should I do this? You can figure out the consequences and karma because you've been through it many times before. All of these sorts of things — telling a lie, cheating, chasing some useless object, where's it going to lead you? When I'm too *rajasic* and too empty spiritually then these desires seem to have a power over me and I tend to chase them. So think of rebirth that way, which makes it very practical and immediate.

Student - But if you're not the same person in your next life, who cares about *moksha*?

James - The person in this life cares about *moksha*. Whoever's suffering cares about *moksha*. Because if you look at people, what's everyone doing? Trying to get free of the fear or desire that's limiting them. Now, I'm going to go and take another painkiller (for my toothache). Why? Because I feel limited by this pain and if I take the pill then the pain will go and I'll feel limitless again. So I'm going for *moksha* from pain. And everything is like that all the time. If you're hungry you eat to get free of that feeling of hunger. You feel emotionally insecure you want to get a relationship to feel free of the sense of insecurity. You don't want the relationship, you want freedom from insecurity. If you feel weak and small, you'll chase power to be free of that feeling of weakness and smallness. So everything we're doing here is to get free. Everything, all the time. Which shows freedom is the nature of the self. And when you feel free do you try to become limited again? Nobody thinks like that because when you're free you cling onto that freedom tooth and nail and as soon as you're

limited in some way you want to get rid of that sense of limitation which shows that suffering and limitation is not the nature of the self. The nature of the self is freedom. So that's who searches for *moksha*. The self.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 6 - Session 1
Chapter 9, Verses 1 - 20

Verse 1 - Krishna said, "Because your heart is pure I will explain clearly and in detail the secret and immediate knowledge which will release you from inauspiciousness. This easily accomplished knowledge, the king of all knowledge and secrets, is not opposed to dharma. It is the greatest purifier. Those who lack faith in self knowledge, do not realize Me and remain caught in the whirlpool of *samsara*.

Verse 4 - I cannot be experienced yet I pervade the whole universe. Everything has its being in Me but I am free of everything. No beings exist in Me. Such is my nature that although I create and sustain all things and beings, I stand apart from them. As the wind travels everywhere in space, all beings live and move in me.

"I cannot be experienced as an object but I pervade the whole universe."

We said that if you are experiencing something, you have to be experiencing the self because it pervades the whole universe. And the universe is the world of experience. So, when you're experiencing anything here, you're actually experiencing yourself. All you have to do is know that what you're experiencing here is the self. Then I don't have to change my experiences at all. Problem solved. Since you're already experiencing the self and you can't do better than experiencing the self, the question is, "*Why am I not satisfied with the experience I am having right now?*"

I shouldn't try to change the experience that I'm having. I should try to understand why I don't like what I'm experiencing right now because what I am experiencing right now is always just me. This is a big verse. The essence of Vedanta is right here. We are not talking karma, action and all that stuff. We are simply analyzing experience.

"Everything has its being in Me but I am free of everything."

You're never experiencing anything outside of your consciousness, are you? Everything that you experience you experience in your awareness. So that means all the objects—your body, other bodies, thoughts, feelings, memories, experiences—are rooted in you. Now you don't want to be worried about the type of experience you are having. Whatever the type of experience you're having, that's up to *Isvara*. So don't blame yourself for the bad things or take credit for the good things. *Isvara* is interpreting experience for you, meaning your conditioning is interpreting experience. And that's going to happen anyway.

So he's saying that whatever you're experiencing only takes place in Me. "Me" means awareness in your awareness in your consciousness.

"I am free of everything..."

Why does he have to say that? Because the *jiva* is not free of anything, is it? The *jiva* is attached to its experiences. It wants to change them, it wants more, better, and different experiences. But if you're

free of everything, if you're free of all your experiences, then you don't need to change them. You can't change them anyway because *Isvara* is generating the experiences.

Limitless and free are synonyms. It means whenever experience happens you don't come into existence and whenever experience goes, stops or changes you don't go out of existence. Which means what? That you're still there as awareness observing what's happening irrespective of whether it's a good or bad experience.

Who was I when I had a toothache? I was awareness observing pain in my Subtle body and my physical body. Then I took a pill and now I'm awareness observing the absence of pain. Now, when this pleasant experience of the absence of pain is gone and my toothache returns, will I be any different? No. I will just be awareness observing that the pain is back.

But I'm not back. I'm still just sitting here, aware, that's all. I'm the movie screen on which experience appears. On a movie screen there's all kinds of action taking place. The villain stabs the hero, abducts the lady, buildings are blown up and all this drama goes. But when movie is over is there any blood or damage on the screen? There's nothing, because nothing ever happened! It's the same with me. "Me" means awareness. Experience changes but nothing changes me. That's what limitless means. I am not limited by what's happening. So I'm free of everything.

"No beings exist in Me."

In this instance, Krishna is talking from the point of view of awareness. And from the point of view of awareness which is non-dual, there are no beings. There is only awareness.

The word "*in*" is tricky because beings apparently do exist in the scope of my awareness. In other words they are known to me. But "*in*" awareness itself, in Me, there are no beings. There are no forms, names, ignorance, sun, moon, or stars. There is only pure, luminous, non-dual awareness shining independently of this dream of *Maya*, this projection of *Isvara*. I shine without any effort at all. We call this effortless or action-less awareness. I am just aware. I don't have to working to generate awareness because you can't generate awareness. You increase, decrease, or get rid of awareness. It's just one constant, eternal, self knowing being. It's not *a* being, it *is* being. That's why you're free. Because there's nothing other than you to limit you.

"Such is my nature that although I create and sustain all things and beings, I stand apart from them."

All these things are created out of me, but I stand apart from them. I'm not "*in*" them. Krishna says, "*They're all in Me but I'm not in them.*" "*In Me*" in that case means within the scope of my awareness. It doesn't mean there's any beings in awareness. It's a subtle point.

"As the wind travels everywhere in space all beings live and move in me."

Space is one of the most common symbols of the self. But in every metaphor there's something that's appropriate and something inappropriate. What's appropriate is that space doesn't change. No matter what takes place in space, it's not contaminated. The sky is just space and it isn't contaminated by the clouds, is it? And the sky is not actually blue. It's just clear space. So in this way, space is a good metaphor.

What's not good about that metaphor is that space isn't conscious. Space isn't conscious but the self is conscious.

So now he's saying that, "***all beings live and move in Me***" after he just said, "***No beings exist in me.***" What he means is that objects appear in awareness but in awareness there are no objects.

If these verses aren't properly taught, they will seem contradictory. The scripture needs to be taught to you because by simply reading it your conditioning, your ignorance you're your apparent knowledge will interpret these words incorrectly. You may get some of it right, but you'll always get some of it wrong because it appears quite paradoxical. For instance the scripture says there's only one principal

here, non-dual awareness. Then it says, *“There is a world here.”* It says the self is not a creator, yet there is a creation, *“...although I create and sustain all beings.”* Does Paramātmā create or sustain any beings? No, because there’s no *Maya* for Paramātmā. There’s no *Isvara* for Paramātmā. We’re using the word Paramātmā in place of *Isvara* because often this awareness is called *Isvara* too. So then we’ve got two *Isvaras*. They happen to be one *Isvara* but it appears as two when *Isvara* assumes the role of the creator, becomes *jagatkarana* and generates this projection. So we have to be careful here when we’re trying to understand this.

So it seems he’s talking about *Isvara* here but often in the scripture the self is said to be the un-caused cause of everything because without the self, there isn’t anything. So even though it hasn’t created anything, creation is possible and the only reason it’s possible is because awareness makes it possible. But awareness doesn’t create.

Student - I am awareness and the *jiva* is put on me so I experience things. But I don’t experience your toothache and I don’t experience *Isvara* though I belong to *Isvara*. So it seems so strange.

James - The experience belongs to the upadhi. The experience does not belong to awareness. In other words, because you’re awareness you won’t experience what James is experiencing because what James is experiencing belongs to the James upadhi. And what you’re experiencing belongs to your upadhi.

Student - And what *Isvara* is experiencing?

James - Belongs to the *Isvara* upadhi. So the differences are accounted for by the various upadhis. The differences don’t apply to awareness. What you’re experiencing is awareness as your stuff and what I’m experiencing is awareness as James’ stuff. That’s a big one, that’s a common question. Because people think, *“Well if I’m awareness and awareness is one then I should know what you’re thinking and feeling. I should feel what you feel, I should think what you think and I should be omniscient.”* But *Isvara* is the one that knows what everybody is doing and feeling and thinking because it is the total upadhi. *Isvara* is the mind that controls, creates, regulates and governs everything. It’s the knowledge behind everything. It’s the power of desire, it’s creating everything. So it knows everything. But owing to our limited upadhis we only know a little bit. I only know what James knows. I don’t know what you know. The knowing belongs to the upadhi, not to awareness. This is a tough one. I mean it might be nice if you could know what everyone was thinking. Well, maybe it wouldn’t be nice. Maybe you don’t want to know what your husband or wife is thinking. Maybe you do and maybe you don’t. Better leave it all up to *Isvara* and just see the self shining there.

Verse 7 - At the end of the creation cycle all beings return to my Unmanifest and I will them to emerge from it again at the beginning of the creation cycle. With the aid of the Unmanifest, which I control, I create all beings over and over irrespective of their wishes. O! Arjuna, no karmas bind Me. I am unconnected and indifferent to them. Because I shine on the Unmanifest, sentient beings and insentient objects are created and are subject to constant change.

The unmanifest is just another word for the Causal Body or for *Isvara*, *Isvara* being awareness plus *Maya* or awareness plus the Causal Body. Notice that Krishna says, *“my unmanifest.”* This means that it’s something other than him. If you say, *“this is my body,”* it implies that you are something other than what you own. Well who is it that owns *Isvara*? Paramātmā, pure awareness. Because *Isvara* can’t create without awareness. So he’s speaking as Paramātmā who owns the Causal Body. *Isvara* is awareness plus *Maya*. Paramātmā is awareness minus *Maya*.

“...and I will them...”

Now it sounds like he’s speaking as *Isvara* rather than Paramātma. He does it why? Because he “wills.” Now that’s a funny word, isn’t it? Does that mean *Isvara* is a big *jiva* up there in the sky? Paramātma won’t be willing anything because will is a projection. This is another reason we need a teacher because we have to see where you personify this knowledge. You need to have it explained to you that the word “will” doesn’t mean that *Isvara* or Paramātma is actually doing this. It means by the grace of *Isvara*, by the grace of awareness it’s possible for this dream called the creation, called the world to happen. But *Isvara* is not a big person doing, doing, doing. I think the Native Americans called it the Great Spirit or the Great Mystery. So they obviously knew that it was formless and not a person.

Whereas in the bible you get the sense that it’s a big person up there. They do have part of it right in the Bible, that God is eternal, for example. In fact, God is called The Eternal. But you have knowledge and ignorance sitting side by side in what purports to be a scripture. It’s knowledge that God is eternal, but it’s ignorance that God is a person.

So with Moses we have a problem. The Israelites are leaving Egypt and they keep coming across all these tribes. It’s like the Middle East. So the Israelites come across this other tribe and this other tribe is threatening them. They’re moving to the self. The whole exodus is the symbol of the journey to self Realization. The land of milk and honey is the self. The Red Sea is *Maya*. We have to part the *Maya*, part the Red Sea, to get through to the land of milk and honey. Exiled from Egypt. Egypt represents materialism. And the exodus is led by Moses, by a teacher, by a spiritual person. We need a guru to make this journey out of darkness into the light. And during that journey what do you have? You have all these conflicts. You come up against all these obstacles. And how do you resolve all these obstacles? Well you have to talk to the self about it. You have to refer the obstacles to the self, to what you know about the self, to the truth.

Moses goes up on the hill and there’s a burning bush. The burning bush means the fire of awareness. It burns on its own, never disappears, just keeps burning. So it’s the self. And he talks to the bush and he says, “*God, got a problem here. It’s promised that we will get enlightened, but we are never going to get there because these people are standing in our way. What should we do?*” What does God say? “*Kill them.*” But wait, God created them too! God’s not going to tell you to kill them, is he? They think it’s like a big person so that’s how they respond to conflict. America is the same way. America thinks that violence is a legitimate way to solve conflict. And obviously they projected that onto God. So they do have a little bit right. God is eternal but it’s like a person too and this God gets angry and this God gets jealous and so forth and so on.

I mean there are other explanations for the anger of God and jealousy and so forth. But when you’re using words it’s so easy to misunderstand those words. When you say God’s a jealous God there’s another explanation—sorry I’m getting off topic here—and that is that God is so beautiful that you can’t look at anybody else. That’s jealousy. Jealousy keeps you looking only at the person. If you’re in love with somebody and you are jealous then you can only look at them, can’t you? So jealous God means so beautiful that you only look at them. It doesn’t mean that God is jealous and envious of things that are going on in the world. But when you hear those words what do you think? If you’re ignorant you think God’s just like a big person in the sky, like anybody else he gets jealous and if you do bad, he’s going to punish you.

Student - Later on in Exodus when the Egyptian army perishes in the Red Sea, the Jews start dancing and celebrating and God says, “*No! You can’t celebrate when a part of me is killed.*”

James - Plus they couldn't celebrate because it's not their glory. It was the glory of God anyway. They're taking credit for it.

Student - They're just happy that they weren't being pursued any more. But they were happy that the army drowned and God says, "*No. These are my children also.*"

James – That's good. There, you have the knowledge also operating. See, that is a scripture that has not been cleaned, not been purified. Our scriptures have been cleaned up. They been around for a long time. And all of those projections have been removed particularly in the basic texts that we teach in our tradition. In the Pūraṇas you'll find apparent contradictions and even in here you'll find apparent contradictions. That is why you need teachers, to explain these contradictions. Once it's explained then then you're fine, you know how to take it, how to read the scripture and you know what it means.

"...and I will them to emerge from it again..."

The word here is "will." We have to understand that *Isvara* is not a big person. It's inevitable that if you have an object it will remain inert and insentient. When it is in the presence of awareness it will become dynamic and it will apparently change. That's the meaning.

"...and I will them to emerge from it again at the beginning of the creation cycle. With the aid of the Unmanifest, which I control, I create all beings over and over irrespective of their wishes."

Oh no! Bad news, right? God's not a big politician or a big mom up in the sky trying to make you happy. Your likes and your dislikes are not factored into *Isvara* because it is operating according to a different principle: the needs of the total. The personal happiness bit is up to you. Insofar as what you want is in harmony with the needs of the total, and you do actions in an appropriate and timely way, then that desire will be satisfied.

It's a very confusing topic, that awareness doesn't create yet creation happens. If reality is non-dual how are you going to get a creation, which is a duality? Seems to be a big contradiction. How you get it is that awareness doesn't actually become duality, non-dual awareness only appears as a duality.

Consider milk turning into cheese. When you have milk and you make cheese, you can't get the milk back. You can't reverse the transformation. It's called pariṇāma. Pariṇāma means a transformation. One thing becomes something else or, in other words, the milk becomes the cheese and if you want to get the milk back you're out of luck. You cannot reverse the creation, the transformation. So, if that is the way that creation happens then once awareness becomes this limited and finite world, we can never get it back, can we? Because it ceased to be one thing and became another just like the milk ceased to be milk and became cheese. But that is not how this creation happens. That is why we call it a projection. It's called vivarta pariṇāma. Vivarta pariṇāma means *Isvara* makes it look like there's a creation here. In other words, it's a seeming or apparent creation.

If you have a clay pot, where is the pot located? In the clay. Is there any actual difference between the clay and the pot? No. But there is an apparent difference, isn't there? Because when the clay is in the form of a pot, the clay can pour water. But in fact, the clay never becomes the pot, does it? No, because if it became the pot then we couldn't melt it down to get the clay back. But you can take the clay and soak it for a while and even though the pot disappears, the clay remains. So the creation has happened without any change to the material of creation. Similarly, without any actual change to awareness the whole creation has happened.

How do you melt down the creation and get back to awareness? By simply investigating the created objects. This is what we're doing here. This is an investigation of the objects. Objects means thoughts, feelings, physical objects, processes, karma, memories etc. We just analyze all of the objects

that are important to us here in this creation. All of them dissolve or resolve back into consciousness, into awareness. They all depend upon awareness. They are all made out of awareness.

I've been teaching this for 45 years and I still get excited by it. It's just so ultimately beautiful and cool the way this works. Anyway, what's the point of this verse? Give up on your wishes and surrender to what *Isvara* delivers to you. *Isvara* is going to deliver what *Isvara* is going to deliver whether you want it or not. To the ego, that's not funny, is it? But it's true, isn't it? There have been a lot of things that happened to you that you didn't want to happen. You didn't like them, but they just happened. It has nothing to do with you at all. In fact, when you wake up in the morning you don't know what's going to happen. I woke up a couple of days ago and I had that toothache. I didn't know it was going to happen. I didn't want it to happen. I wanted to have a nice, clear, pain free mind but what did *Isvara* give me? A pain in my body that made my mind disturbed.

Isvara has to operate according to *Isvara's* laws. And evidently when I went to that dentist, somehow some bacteria got in there. It's just the laws. It's not personal. I can't get pissed off at *Isvara* and say, "You bastard, I'm looking after you, teaching this great knowledge and then you give me a headache. How dare you give me a headache? Don't you know who I am?" *Isvara* doesn't care if you're enlightened or not. You have teeth, you eat something and maybe they'll get rotten, who knows. Maybe they will, maybe they won't. You could brush every day and still get a toothache. If *Isvara* wants you to have a toothache, you'll have a toothache.

So what's the implication of knowing this? That I can just relax and give up trying to make the world work for me. Give up! Let go! Arjuna wanted to make the world work for himself by abandoning his duty and running off to Rishikesh to sit in a cave, wear orange clothes and be a sannyasi. But at the end of the text Krishna says, "Go ahead and make up your mind but you will do what I want." Arjuna doesn't want to fight the war, but eventually, he does it anyway. Why? Because *Isvara's* will trumps your small will every time. And therefore it pays to appreciate *Isvara* for what it is and act in harmony with its will.

And it's not that hard because *Isvara* is in your heart. All the laws, all the rules for action are all built into your heart. You just have to get your mind quiet enough and then you can tell what *Isvara* wants. When you hear that little voice inside that you should do a certain thing, get up and do it. Don't blow it off. It may not be a comfortable thing, it may not be something you want to do, but just get up and do it because that's *Isvara* talking to you. All these rules and laws, meaning dharma, are all built in to your heart. When you get *sattvic* enough and clear enough you understand that you really don't have a choice anyway. Then you relax and do what's right, what *Isvara* wants. We call that Dharma Yoga.

You know the story of Śrī Rama? It's a beautiful story. He's a self realized person who is always even tempered and follows dharma impeccably, even though his whole life is a long series of difficult situations. He always rises to the occasion and does what he is supposed to do whether he likes it or not because he understands *Isvara* and how it works.

"O! Arjuna, no Karmas bind Me. I am unconnected and indifferent to them. Because I shine on the Unmanifest, sentient beings and insentient objects are created and are subject to constant change."

Maya creates the insentient material world and the *jivas*, the sentient beings. A *jiva* is any living being whether it's a human, a plant, or an animal.

Verse 11 - When I am in a body, people do not realize that I am the limitless Lord of everything.

Why not? Because they mistake the body to be the self, thereby superimposing limitation onto the limitless self.

Verse 12 - Aggressive, godless, self-centered people, their faces turned from the sun hope in vain that the fruits of their actions will fulfil them; lacking discrimination they pursue innumerable kinds of knowledge. But noble souls with spiritual tendencies fix their minds in me and wholeheartedly seek Me because they know that I am the imperishable source of everything. Because they appreciate Me as I am they wholeheartedly worship Me, surrendering and consistently making an effort to unite with Me. Not only do they worship and seek me as the One but they worship my manifold forms, knowing that these forms are not separate from me.

“Aggressive, godless, self-centered people, their faces turned from the sun hope in vain that the fruits of their actions will fulfil them.”

Now don't think that he's talking about other people. There is an aggressive, godless person inside all of us. That's that resistant voice, that selfish voice, that angry voice, that voice of diminishment, that voice of pain and suffering. Everybody has it. But he's being nice here, he's just talking in general about people.

“But noble souls with spiritual tendencies fix their mind on Me and whole heartedly seek Me because they know that I am the imperishable source of everything. Because they appreciate Me as I am they whole heartedly worship Me.”

You can't help but worship yourself when you see how incredibly beautiful you are. It's like extreme narcissism except it's not based upon your reflection in a mirror. This is narcissism based upon your true self. You know when that narcissist sees an image in the pool he is really not in love with himself, is he? He is in love with his image. And the *jiva* is like an image, so when you are in love with your *jiva*, you're only in love with your shadow, with your reflection, with your image. But when you see how beautiful you really are you fall in love with yourself. You already love yourself but without knowing fully how beautiful you are, how whole you are, how luminous you are, how full of love you are. Your appreciation of yourself needs a little work. And once there is full knowledge and appreciation of yourself then you're hopelessly in love with yourself. And that means you love everybody because everybody is you. This self-love includes everything that is.

“Because they appreciate Me as I am...”

As what? As pure love, pure awareness pure consciousness. All of these are the same.

“...they whole heartedly worship Me, surrendering and consistently making an effort to unite with Me.”

Surrendering means letting go of your own willful stuff and trying to see yourself in everything and everybody. Like the student who saw himself in the fly. He recognized that the same life that was animating him was animating the fly. You simply appreciate that.

“Not only do they worship me and seek me as the One but they worship my manifold forms...”

If it's a non-dual reality you don't need anything special to worship. Worship what's in front of you. It doesn't necessarily have to be like, *“Oh no! I have to have an iṣṭa devatā, my own personal God, like a Krishna, a Rama or whatever.”* Don't get me wrong, I'm a big Krishna bhakta. I love Krishna. I have an amazing sculpture of Krishna on my altar and I worship it every day. But you don't necessarily have to do it that way because you can worship anything that's in front of you by appreciating, respecting and serving it in whatever way is appropriate. Why? Because it's all you, the self.

“...knowing that the forms are non-separate from me.”

They appear to be separate but you know they are not separate. The appearance of separation is just like a mirage in the desert.

Verse 16 - I am the sacrificial ritual and the sacred fire. I am the offerings, the sacred chant and the ones who chant. I am the mother and father of the Universe. I am the uncaused cause. I sustain and nourish everything. I am what is to be known and the great purifier. I am Om and I am the Vedas. I am the nourisher and the sustainer of everything. I am the results of all action and the giver of the results. I am the witness and that for which everything strives. I am the refuge and the friend of all. From Me the whole creation evolves and into Me it is resolved. Everything has its being in Me. I am the imperishable seed. I am the heat in the Sun. I withhold and release the rains. I am death and immortality. I am the cause and the effect, O Arjuna.

Verse 20 - Those who propitiate me by religious rituals, who offer the soma and are purified of their sins go to heavenly realms where they enjoy the results of their meritorious deeds. They enjoy until their good karmas are exhausted and then they return back to *samsara*, the world of coming and going. But those who inquire into me and understand that they are non-separate from Me realize their identity with Me. I protect what they acquire and value.

If you don't know who you are you will do things to get to heaven, meaning experience happiness. And your experiences of happiness will be object dependent and intermittent. When you get what you want, you'll enjoy for a while, but then, when the results of that action burn up you'll have to go back again to some object to make you satisfied. This is the concept of heaven and hell in the Vedas. The Vedic view is that heaven and hell is not eternal. Heaven is just positive experiences you get from following dharma. In other words, if you live in harmony with *Isvara* and live a good and righteous life you will feel good. But the problem is that you'll have to keep doing those good actions to continue feeling good. You see this with the do-gooders and the saints. The saints have to keep doing saintly actions or they don't feel good. We don't want that. Why? Because then we are just stuck on the karmic wheel. Oh yeah, it's a lovely karmic wheel, but we're still bound by action and the results. When I do a good action, a virtuous action, I feel good and then I become attached to that feeling so I have to keep doing good actions to get the feeling back.

"But those who inquire into me..."

Which is what we are doing here...

"...and understand that they are non-separate from Me realize their identity with Me. I protect what they acquire and value."

That last part means you don't have to worry about food, clothing, shelter, security and pleasure and all that sort of thing if you understand that you're non-separate from the self, that you're whole and complete. Why not? Because *Isvara's* going to look after you. *Isvara's* looking after you any way, but what's the problem? You don't know it. So you believe that you have to keep working to be secure, to get your relationships and all that sort of thing. But once you understand what *Isvara* is, then you relax and you see that *Isvara* is taking care of you all the time. *Isvara* is taking care of your getting and your keeping. What you want will come from *Isvara* and what you need to keep, what you need to survive, that will be presented to you by *Isvara* and will be maintained by *Isvara*. What you don't need, *Isvara* will take away.

Sundari calls this, "Gods Trust Fund." You trust in God and God looks after you. It's like a principle, a rule. You can count on it. If you don't trust the Lord, if you don't trust yourself and love yourself completely, then you will find yourself in *samsara* trying to look after yourself. You know how much trouble it is to look after yourself? Oh my God! Such a pain. But when you trust in *Isvara*, you relax, you see that *Isvara's* got everything under control, you're completely looked after and you're like a child. Swami Abhedananda, he was the greatest being I ever met. He was like a child. He was so

beautiful, he was the most sophisticated person, he had the greatest knowledge and the greatest love in everything but he was just simple like a child. And he trusted that everything was fine all the time. One time he just walked out of his ashram. I followed him and we ended up on a train going to this place called Kanyakumari without any money. And there is no way we can get back to the ashram by night. So we showed up at Kanyakumari station with no money and no place to stay and the station master comes up to Swami, touches his feet and says "Mahārāja, come, we have rooms for you here. I'll get the boy to bring your dinner." And they took us to a room inside the station. We ate and then we went to the temple for a puja. He wanted to go to the temple that evening for some special reason. I don't know why.

Bhagavan must have told him, "Go there." Full trust!

Other times, we would be on our way somewhere and and we would run out of money. The whole group and nobody had any money but suddenly, somehow, the money would come. And nobody was sitting around saying, "Oh my God! What are we going to do?" biting their nails and worrying about things. Everybody was just cool, we took it easy and sure enough, the money came. Same sort of thing would happen when we needed a place to stay. We were going to another place called Papanasham and Swami had said there was an ashram there but it was closed for the winter. One of the devotees got out a cellphone, called somebody in town and by the time we arrived at the temple there was a guy there with a key saying they would clean it out and we could stay there for as long as we liked.

So Krishna says, "I'll take care of you. You just keep your heart and your mind on Me."

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita

Spain - January 2014

Day 6 - Session 2

Chapter 9, Verses 20 - 29

Chapter 10, Verses 1 – 40

Going back a bit to the beginning of Verse 20, Krishna is talking about worship and ritualism. Religious people worship what? They worship worldly ends. They use God to get worldly things like kama, artha, and dama. So he says, instead of worshipping me, they worship my stuff, so they get my stuff, which means that they have to keep worshipping stuff in order to continue being happy. They're just using God to try and get the edge in getting what they want. It's very common.

Student – "Propitiate" means to worship?

James - Yes. It means to offer, to worship, to give something, to invoke. You get good or bad karma depending on the nature of your worship. But he says, "Those who worship Me." How do we worship? By inquiring into God, into *Isvara*, into who we are. This is like church, the church of Vedanta. And what do they get who worship through inquiry? They get Me. They understand they're not separate from Me. They realize their identity with Me. In other words, you realize who you are, that you're non-separate from *Isvara* and that you're taken care of.

Religious people don't think that God is taking care of them so they have to ask God to take care of them. "Please give me a job. Please give me money. My daughter needs braces for her teeth. Please

give me a new girlfriend. Please give me, please give me...If you do something for me, Lord, I'll also give a donation to the church." You know, those are the *rajasic* people. They're making some kind of a bargain with *Bhagavan*. They want to make a little business with the Lord. The *tamasic* people, they just say, "Yeah, give me, give me, give me. I just want. I love you, Lord. I love you." But we're not interested in *Bhagavan's* stuff. We're interested in *Bhagavan*, in *Isvara*. We want to know who we are. And this is how you get to it. You inquire and you think along these lines. You put your intellect in charge and you cognitively change the way you approach life.

The whole idea is that your intellect should be the guru, not your feelings. So your responses to life should be based upon what's right, not on what you feel. I mean, it's fine to feel what you feel, we're not against that. You're going to feel what you feel anyway because *Isvara* is making you feel what you feel. If you're born in that kind of environment, or you have the kind of nature where you're all sappy and emotional, it's not your fault. But that needs to be brought under the review of your intellect. This is a rational thing that we're talking about here. We're trying to introduce a cognitive shift into this cycle of desire and action, this *samsaric chakra*. Unless you change your thinking about yourself, how are you going to get out of it? If you don't, your thinking perpetuates the cycle. When all that matters to you is your fears and your desires, then you're an emotional person. Krishna, speaking as *Isvara*, pointed out earlier, "I make people do what they're going to do irrespective of what they want. I deliver results irrespective of what you want." So if you're always wanting something or not wanting something, you're going to be emotional because *Isvara* is going to constantly frustrate you. You have to depersonalize your suffering. We have to see that suffering is not personal. Suffering is a matter of lack of understanding.

Why am I emotional about anything? Because I'm not getting what I want. How profound is that? Not at all. It's totally banal. When you're getting what you want, you're happy. Conversely, when you're not getting what you want, you're unhappy. So the rational response is to discover why you're not getting what you want, instead of indulging your feelings and emotions all the time. If you want to manage your feelings and emotions then inquire, investigate where you're breaking some rule, breaking *dharma*. I'm not saying necessarily a moral rule but some rule, some situation. Because as soon as you go against *Isvara*, then you start feeling unhappy. Only a rational, mature person looks at a certain situation and tries to see what kind of a response is appropriate in that situation. That's a rational, mature person. An emotional person doesn't think about the situation. They just react immediately to whatever is coming from the environment. And we already know, you can't control what's coming from your environment.

It always annoys me, the idea that emotions are fine and there's nothing wrong with them. Not looking at your emotions in the context of this knowledge is just pointless. If you want to manage your emotions, then this is how you do it. You do *karma yoga*, which converts your emotions into devotion. You worship *Isvara*, not just with your actions, but with every thought, word and deed. And what's going to happen to your emotions? Because the object of emotion is you, the self, and because it's so pure and perfect and beautiful, when you start worshipping *Isvara*, your emotions take the form of *Isvara*, that is, they will start to conform to *Isvara*. So you start feeling love. You start feeling peace. If you're always just paying attention to the objects outside and all of your feelings are dependent on whether you're getting what you want from the world, naturally you're going to be an emotional disaster, you're going to be neurotic.

Verse 24 - Arjuna, even those who faithfully worship other gods unknowingly worship me. I receive the offerings of all rituals because I am the only Lord. Because they do not know who they really worship, they do not come to Me. If they worship the Gods they reach the world of the Gods. If

they worship the ancestors they reach the world of the ancestors. Spirit-worshippers gain the spirit world but those who worship and seek Me, get Me.

This is a beautiful verse.

“Arjuna, even those who faithfully worship other gods unknowingly worship me.”

How cool is that? When you're worshipping a big car, a big house, your big muscles or whatever, you're actually worshipping *Bhagavan*. You just don't know it. Why? Because everything is *Bhagavan*. And the ultimate motivation for worship of anything is what? Happiness. So when you happen to get what you want from *Bhagavan*, you get a little bit of happiness which means you get a little bit of *Bhagavan*. But we don't want a little bit of *Bhagavan*. We want the whole enchilada. So we go directly for *Bhagavan*.

“I receive the offerings of all rituals because I am the only Lord.”

Nobody is worshipping anything other than themselves. And by yourself, I don't mean your ego, I mean the self. However, since the ego is non-separate from the self, even when you ignorantly worship the ego, you're actually worshipping the self.

“Because they do not know who they really worship, they do not come to Me.”

In other words, they don't gain understanding. They just get the results of their actions, not the knowledge of who they are.

“If they worship the Gods they reach the world of the Gods.”

This just means they get the stuff they want.

“If they worship the ancestors...”

Whatever you meditate on, that's what you get. If you worship the ancestors, then you get knowledge or experience of your ancestors.

“Spirit-worshippers gain the spirit world but those who worship and seek Me, get Me.”

“Spirit world” means that you experience the siddha lokas. That's all you get. I once had an experience of siddha loka. I saw some siddhas doing a bunch of strange practices with light and fire in some weird dimension. *“Wow, that was great, James. Gee, that looks good in your spiritual autobiography. You went to siddha loka.”* But so what? I came back from siddha loka and then what? All I had was knowledge of these stupid siddhas. What good does that do me? It doesn't pay the rent. It doesn't make me popular with the ladies. It just makes me a goofy spiritual person. The next verse is such a beautiful verse.

Verse 27 - I happily receive a pure hearted offering no matter how humble: a leaf, flower, fruit, even a drop of water. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever rituals you perform, whatever you give, or whatever religious discipline you follow, Arjuna, please do it as an offering to Me. This will release you from desirable and undesirable karmas. This karma yoga attitude will endow your mind with the spirit of renunciation and you will come to Me.

“I really, really don't have time to worship, James. I'm too busy, you know. I've got a wife and the kids and a family and a job.” Well, yes you do, because you don't have to do anything fancy or special to worship.

“I happily receive a pure hearted offering no matter how humble: a leaf, flower, fruit, even a drop of water.”

You just have to offer whatever is in front of you to *Bhagavan*. And if you don't have any of those things, just offer your thought, that's all.

“Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever rituals you perform, whatever you give, or whatever religious discipline you follow, Arjuna, please do it as an offering to Me. This will release you from desirable and undesirable karmas. This karma yoga attitude will endow your mind with the spirit of renunciation and you will come to Me.”

Here he’s reiterating the importance of doing all actions as karma yoga. Karma yoga is worship because it is the offering of all actions to *Bhagavan*.

Verse 29 - I am the same in all beings. I dislike no one nor do I play favorites, but those who devotedly seek Me realize that they exist in Me and I in them. Even sinners who know they are non-separate from Me should be respected because their understanding is clear. With this non-dual understanding the mind quickly conforms to dharma and becomes peaceful. You can know for certain that anyone sincerely devoted to Me will never be destroyed. Indeed, even women, business people, the lower castes or those born into families of improper conduct who take refuge in me ultimately realize who I am. Not to mention how easy it is for those who have fortunate births. If you find yourself in this impermanent, unhappy world, may you seek Me. May you devote yourself to realizing who I am, offer your actions to Me and surrender the fruits of your actions to Me. If you understand that I am the only desirable goal and prepare yourself in this way, you will reach only Me.

“I am the same in all beings. I dislike no one nor do I play favorites, but those who devotedly seek Me realize that they exist in Me and I in them. Even sinners who know they are non-separate from Me should be respected because their understanding is clear.”

There are people who know *Bhagavan* but who break the rules for whatever reason. We shouldn’t necessarily follow them, but we should respect them. Sometimes there is residual karma left in their karmic account and even though they know *Bhagavan*, they behave badly for a while until their minds clear up. So, these people should be respected. Everyone should be respected because everyone is “Me,” meaning the self.

“With this non-dual understanding the mind quickly conforms to dharma and becomes peaceful. You can know for certain that anyone sincerely devoted to Me will never be destroyed.”

It’s not that if you’re not devoted to *Isvara*, it will smite you, destroy you, or anything of the sort. “Destroyed” means to lose your way spiritually. And if you lose the Lord, I tell you, you lose the most valuable thing there is. You’ve lost everything because everything we have has come from *Bhagavan*. If you lose appreciation of that fact, you are, as Krishna said earlier, a thief or a miser. If you don’t recognize your debt to *Isvara*, and have a sense of gratitude, awe and wonder at being here and being alive, then your life is lost. You’re just a thief and a miser. You’re only thinking about yourself. You’re not going to be a happy person.

Now look out for this next verse ladies. Some of these texts need a little tidying up. There’s some sexist stuff in here.

“You can know for certain that anyone sincerely devoted to Me will never be destroyed. Indeed, even women, business people, the lower castes or those born into families of improper conduct who take refuge in me ultimately realize who I am.”

So there’s hope, ladies. (laughter)

The Glories of the self

Verse 1 - Krishna said, "Since you are pleased with my words I will reveal my limitless glories. Because I am the uncaused cause neither the gods nor the sages understand how I manifest my glory in this world. The undeluded mortal who knows Me as unborn, beyond cause and effect, and as the limitless Lord of the world, is released from merit and demerit."

'Krishna said, "Since you are pleased with my words I will reveal my limitless glories. Because I am the uncaused cause, neither the gods nor the sages understand how I manifest my glory in this world."

How *Maya* creates this amazing world out of pure awareness nobody knows. It is the most marvelous and absolutely wonderful mystery. Everybody is trying to figure it out. *"Oh, we'll figure it out, we'll create life."* That's a good one. People actually believe that we're going to create life but here it says it's a total mystery.

Now, this next part talks about values, which are referred to as, *jnanam*, knowledge. This isn't self knowledge, but the knowledge you need to prepare your mind for self knowledge. So these are the values that I need to investigate, develop and cultivate if I'm going to understand who I am. In the Neo Advaita world, they talk about values, not a word. For more information on this topic, I recommend a great little text by Swami Dayananda called "The Value of Values." I've also devoted a chapter of "The Essence of Enlightenment" to this topic.

Verse 4,5 - The capacity to understand, knowledge, freedom from delusion, the ability to accommodate, composure, truthfulness, restraint in behavior, the ability to think clearly, pleasure, creation, destruction, fear and fearlessness, harmlessness, equanimity, satisfaction, religious discipline, charity, fame and infamy come from Me alone.

Now, each one of these values implies the opposite value, doesn't it? Some people embody them and some people don't. You know in the world, everybody espouses values like honesty and so forth, but who lives like that? Well, some live up to these values and some don't. But we don't really care about the world so much as ourselves, how faithful we are in living up to these values. So they need to be considered.

So the capacity to understand is a value. It's what I was just talking about when I was ranting about emotional people. Many people don't value knowledge and understanding. They just think it's dry and intellectual so they can't see the utility of knowledge and understanding. What they value is feeling. They always need to be feeling something intense, some intense emotion. And those kind of people are not qualified for self knowledge. Only somebody who has values, who has this capacity to know and understand, is capable of self knowledge because enlightenment or freedom is simply the basis of knowledge. Why? Because you are already free. There is only one principle here and you're it. And if there's only one, then you're free. There isn't two, four, ten, or twelve. There's only one principle here and that's it. So if that is me, i.e. awareness then the only way that I'm going to access that is through knowledge. The only access to yourself is through knowledge because you are yourself and because you're already free. So you have to have the capacity for knowledge and an appreciation for knowledge.

I think everybody here probably fits into that category. I know I do. I've really only been interested in understanding since I was a little, tiny kid. I know Sundari said that. Her whole life has been about

seeking knowledge, about understanding, about wanting to know what's going on here. That's the big issue for us, so we need to value knowledge.

"...freedom from delusion..."

You have to know what delusion is, what ignorance is and you have to value freedom. If you don't value freedom, how are you going to get free? So you should have a strong value for knowledge and for freedom. It's the same thing, basically, because freedom equates to knowledge. But just the general capacity to understand should be there, in a person. I should know that I'm suffering because of my own ignorance. I shouldn't defend my ignorance, justify it or reinforce it. I should understand what delusion is. So having this capacity for understanding is related to freedom from delusion.

Here's a huge one, one of my favorites.

"...the ability to accommodate..."

What's the opposite value? Just focusing on what I want. That was Duryodhana's problem. He was self-centered and self-centered people don't want to accommodate. He couldn't even assent to the small desires of his cousins, of Arjuna and his family, despite being in a position of total power.

"Accommodation" means taking *Isvara* into account and accommodating *Isvara*. When somebody comes to you and they want something, you should be willing to accommodate them. Granted, this requires some discrimination. If they want something that's stupid, something you can't give them, something that's bad for them or bad for others, then you should say "No." But generally you should have a willingness to accommodate.

For instance, somebody boring comes up to you and they want to talk. They're a little lonely. You should give them a little bit of your time. We're not talking about giving money or anything big, just giving a little bit of your time. That's the ability to accommodate. That's a very important quality to have. It shows that you're not so self-centered, not so egocentric and that you can appreciate other people.

The value for accommodation also means that you accommodate the circumstances you find yourself in. This is to accommodate *Isvara*. Unfortunately, *Isvara's* been rather pesky this week. He's taken away our internet when we wanted it and given it when he wanted it, so what are we going to do? We can't get all worked up about it. We just have to accommodate that situation. So many times the world asks something of us and it wouldn't be a problem to give it, but we don't. We just blow it off, ignore the situation. So accommodation is a really important value.

Going a little further down the list we see a value for composure, for being steady, constant and composed in every situation. That's a *sattvic* value. These are all basically *sattvic* values.

"...truthfulness..."

A value for the truth, not just toward other people but toward yourself. That's the hardest one, to be honest with yourself and not fool yourself. So, you should have a real strong value for honesty, self-honesty and honesty with others.

"...restraint in behavior..."

Again, this relates to emotions. You should be able to restrain your behavior. You're angry with somebody. Before you really blow them off and yell and scream and rant and rave, you should at least try to control yourself, restrain yourself. Even when you give a bad message to somebody, you should do it in a restrained, reasonable way. That's a higher value, a noble value. It shows that you understand that there's something other than your own desires, that that's important here, and you're accommodating it.

"...the ability to think clearly..."

This is a really big one. Appreciate clarity in thought and that will make you cultivate it.

"...pleasure..."

You don't want to become a pig for pleasure but a value for pleasure is sensible, up to a point. Why? Because if your mind is *sattvic*, you'll experience a lot of pleasure. Therefore a value for pleasure is essentially a value for *sattva*. So if your mind is pleasurable, it means you're doing something right, that you've got the kind of mind that allows you to properly inquire, serve the world and worship.

"...creation..."

This means you value thinking on your toes and creating situations that are useful for the development of your spiritual life. Instead of just sitting around hoping everything is just going to fall into your hands, you should have this creative power and value thinking for yourself.

"...destruction..."

You should see the value in destroying ignorance, adharmic behavior and adharmic situations.

"...fear and fearlessness..."

Fear—meaning prudent, rational, intelligent fear or caution—is a reasonable value. And having a value for fearlessness means not giving in to your irrational fears. Rather, you stand up to them because fear is a huge problem, spiritually speaking. So on the one hand, be reasonable, cautious, and careful. But, on the other hand, don't allow your fears to push you around. Face them, do what needs to be done, even if it scares you. Have a value for that, otherwise you're never going to grow.

Sometimes it is wise to be cautious. Sometimes fear is valuable and fearlessness is not valuable. Sometimes it turns into foolhardiness. A person could think they're fearless but really they're foolhardy. And then they get whacked, usually dead. These guys like Michael Schumacher and his accident. You know, obviously, he just pushed a little too far, went a little too far over the edge. When you're a little too fearless, then you're tempting *Isvara*. He should have been a little more cautious, and maybe he wouldn't have hit that tree. So, for every one of these values, there's an upside and a downside.

"...harmlessness..."

That's ahimsa, the value for non-injury.

"...equanimity, satisfaction..."

To value equanimity is to value the ability to remain composed in the face of any situation that life presents to you. This one is important because a composed mind is required for self-inquiry. Satisfaction is self-explanatory because I think pretty much everyone understands and values it.

"...religious discipline, charity..."

This makes sense because you're going to develop generosity by valuing charity and you're going to give away miserliness and self-centeredness.

"...fame and infamy..."

Understand the value of fame and the value of infamy so you'll avoid infamy and you'll do good to cultivate fame. It's helpful to be famous. You have to be careful you don't get into trouble though, that you don't get too vain, thinking you're special. There's a beautiful Chinese proverb that says, "*When doing evil, avoid punishment. When doing good, avoid fame.*" It means don't let it go to your head. It doesn't mean you shouldn't do good. When you do good, you become famous. When you actually give, that's good, that's a good sign that you're making a contribution.

So all of these things need to be appreciated for what they are. And there are other values too. Renunciation is a great value. Krishna has already mentioned this over and over again, it's just not included in this list. I should have value for renunciation, for letting go. Because sometimes, life isn't about keeping what I've got, it's about letting go of what I've got. I need to be able to give away my ignorance, my self-centeredness and so forth. I should be able to give away the results of my actions. Earlier in the text it says that karma yoga helps you to cultivate a spirit of renunciation.

Conversely, what values are bad? Greed, lust, anger, sloth etc. There are many. This means I need to take a fearless moral inventory and see where I stand on all of these issues and develop values for truth, honesty, charity, accommodation and goodness. I need to appreciate how the positive values serve me and how the negative values don't serve me.

Student - Do these values prepare your mind to understand the self?

James - That's right. Absolutely. In the Gita they are called the divine and demonic values. *Rajas* and *tamas* are predominantly demonic—meaning negative—values and *sattva* is a predominantly divine—meaning positive—value. You should understand these values and how they either inhibit a clear mind or promote a clear mind. If you're having doubts or problems in your life, it's because some of your values are not up to the mark. So you need to constantly be making this fearless moral inventory and cultivating those values which produce a quiet mind and purging yourself of the values that produce a disturbed mind.

Verse 6 - The seven ancient seers and the four progenitors whose minds are resolved in Me are born of my mind. All the living beings issue from their minds. If you see these glories of mine here in this world there is no doubt that your vision of Me is steady. You are wise if you see Me as the creator and sustainer of everything.

This means all these values come from *Bhagavan*. They're built in, everybody has them. They're universal values.

Student – What's a progenitor?

James - "Progeny" means "children." A "progenitor" is a father who has children.

Verse 9 - Those whose minds are fixed on Me, who live by what they see, who teach one another and talk continually about Me are always satisfied because they revel in Me. I grant the vision of non-duality to those who seek me with love and deep commitment. Out of compassion, I extinguish the dark thoughts of limitation with the shining lamp of self knowledge.

"Those whose minds are fixed on Me, who live by what they see..."

That's a good one. "**Who live by what they see**" means they aren't living in the future. They're looking in the present to see what the solution to their problem is. They're not blaming the past for their problems or looking to security or the future to solve their problems. They know that the solution to every problem is available right here, right now and they look for that solution and live by what they see. They live on the fly, you could say. It's very nice.

"...who teach one another and talk continually about Me are always satisfied because they revel in Me."

There's nothing more attractive to you than yourself, is there? No, there's not. So when you honor yourself and serve yourself and teach yourself and teach others, and the topic is the self, you feel satisfied. You feel happy. Why do you come to *James's* Vedanta talks? It's satisfying, isn't it? If you worship the self, talk about the self, communicate about the self and so forth and so on, if that's really what you're fixed on, if that is really what you want, then he says, "**I grant the vision of non-duality to those who seek me with love and deep commitment.**"

There's a thing that happened to me and I never understood it until I read this verse. Three days before I finished my spiritual work a boy came and told me, "*Swamiji wants to see you.*" I thought, "*This is really bizarre.*" It was about two in the afternoon, the ashram was dead and Swamiji was

usually taking a nap around that time. So I went to his little hut and when I went in the peace and radiance was beautiful. He was sitting behind his desk and he showed me a chair in front of him. I said, "Swamiji?" He said, "How much food do you eat every day at lunch?" A question mark went across my forehead. I thought to myself, "He called me in to ask me how much food I eat at lunch?" And I said, "Whatever they give me, I mean whatever they put on my plate, that's what I eat." I was skinny. I actually was, you could see my ribs. And I was pretty fit because I sat all the time like a yogi so I didn't see there was any reason to ask me this. I guess he knew about my food vāsāna but it wasn't really about that, I was thinking. Then he just looked at me, with the greatest love and he said, "I am returning you to your original form." Three days later it happened, the vision of non-duality stuck in my mind. Evidently *Isvara* was telling me in advance, "I'm going to give you that." That was the weirdest thing, the strangest thing that ever happened because how could Swamiji have known that? But evidently *Isvara* seemed to know and wanted to inform me in advance.

Why *Isvara* just didn't do it I don't know, but when I read this verse, I realized that because I was totally, completely, absolutely, 100% awareness committed to it, because there was no other thought in my mind, it happened. And so he's right. It says when you get like that, the vision of non-duality will stick in you. I mean, I had it pretty much all along there for a couple years. But it wasn't firm, it wasn't completely steady and clear. But three days after I talked to Swamiji, there was just this little click and that was it. I knew that I could never, ever forget what I was. There was no doubt.

Why can't you forget? Because you're always present, aren't you? You can forget something that isn't present, something that comes and goes, that you can forget. But when you know it's you and you're never not present, how can you forget who you are? It's impossible. What does that mean? That the self is not an object. The self is just me, just you.

"Out of compassion I extinguish the dark thoughts of limitation with the shining lamp of self knowledge."

The thoughts such as, "I'm insufficient, I'm inadequate, I'm not up to the mark, I'm not good enough" and so forth and so on are, "dark thoughts of limitation." self knowledge "extinguishes"—meaning it destroys—those thoughts.

Verse 12 - Arjuna said, "O! Krishna, you are limitless awareness the light of lights, the great purifier. The sages and the gods say you are their source...eternal, transcendent, unborn and all pervasive...as you yourself have said. I believe all that you have told me so far. Neither the gods nor the demons know who or what you are. You know who you are with your own mind. Indeed you are the most exalted being, the creator and ruler of all beings, including the gods. Only you are capable of revealing the extent of your extraordinary glories. What is the best way to meditate on you, O greatest of yogis? Because I am still not satisfied please describe in greater detail your wonders and glories.

Verse 19 - Krishna said, "Because there is no end to them I will only enumerate the most important ones."

Verse 20 - I am the master of sleep, O! Arjuna. Meditate on Me as your own self because I am the one who dwells in the hearts of all beings, creating, sustaining and destroying everything. Among the Adityas I am Visnu; among the luminaries, the Sun, the one who has rays. Among the Maruts, I am Marici; among the nocturnal luminaries I am the Moon. Among the Vedas I am the Samaveda; among the gods I am Indra; among the sense organs I am the mind, and in the Subtle Body I am the intellect. Among the Rudras I am Sankara; I am Kubera among the yaksas and Raksasas. Among the Vasus I am Fire.

I am Meru among the snow-capped mountains. Arjuna, may you know Me to be Brhaspati, the chief among the priests. Among the commanders-in-chief I am Skanda; among bodies of water I am the ocean. Among the sages I am Bhrgu, among the words I am the syllable Om, among rituals I am japa and among the mountains, the Himalayas.

I am the sacred banyan among the trees and among the celestial sages, I am Narada. Among the gandharvas, I am Citraratha and among the siddhas I am the sage Kapila. May you know Me Uccaisravas among the horses and Airavata among the elephants who both appeared when the milky ocean was churned by the gods and the demons. Among men I am the kings. Among the weapons I am Vajra; among the cattle I am the wish-fulfilling cow.

I am Kandarpa, the God of love, who causes children. Of the poisonous snakes I am Vasuki. And I am Ananta among the many headed snakes. I am Varuna among water gods; among the ancestors I am Aryama; I am Death among those who enforce discipline. And I am Prahlada among the daityas, the asuras born of Diti.

Among things that think, I am Time and among wild animals I am the lion. I am the eagle among the birds. Among the purifiers, I am air. I am Rama among the warriors. And among the fish I am shark; among the rivers I am Ganga. I am indeed the beginning, the middle, and the end of the creation, Arjuna.

Among the disciplines of knowledge, I am the knowledge of the self. Of those who reason, I am the reasoning that leads to truth. Among the letters I am 'a' and I am the dvandva among the compounds; I am indeed eternal time. I am the all pervasive giver of the results of all actions. I am Death that takes away everything and I am the cause of prosperity for those yet to be.

Among the feminine words I am fame, wealth, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude, and equanimity. So too, I am the brhatsama among the samas, gayatri among the metres; among the months, Margairsa, and among the seasons, the spring. I am the game of dice among the things that deceive; of the brilliant I am the brilliance. I am the victory of the victorious. I am the clarity in clear thinkers. Of those with contemplative dispositions I am *sattva*.

Among the Yadavas, I am Krishna and among the Pandavas, Arjuna. Among the seers I am Vyasa and the preceptor Usana among the sages. I am the discipline in the enforcers. I am the dharmic order that makes success possible. I am silence among the secrets. Of those who have knowledge, I am that knowledge. And I am the cause of all things. Nothing sentient or insentient can exist without me.

I'm not going to elaborate on the whole list because most of the things Krishna talks about are only relevant to people raised in, and familiar with, Vedic culture and lore. In general, the idea is that wherever there's anything exceptional or unique or special, it's a good opportunity to see the Lord. Furthermore, when you see something exceptional in the creation, including any aspect of yourself, you can't take credit for it because it belongs to *Isvara*, not you personally.

"I am death among those who enforce discipline."

What is it that enforces discipline in your life, that controls you more than anything? The thought that you will die. Maybe you haven't got to that point yet but I hit that point recently, when I had to contemplate my own death. That suddenly disciplined my life very clearly. In fact, it's disciplining me now. I avoided a second helping of that pasta because I'm thinking I want to live long. I'm really careful now of what I eat. I'm being very disciplined. Why? Because of death.

"Among things that think, I am time..."

Do plants and animals think? No, but human beings think because we're conscious of time, which represents change or death. Again, it's the same idea as before. What is it that causes all my

thoughts? The fact that I'm alive and that I'm going to die. So ultimately, time is controlling me completely.

"...and among wild animals, I'm the lion..."

The lion is the king of beasts. It's the most amazing, glorious animal.

"I am eagle among the birds."

Now, there are all kinds of third rate little birds flying around. But what about the eagle? Just seeing one in the sky, don't you feel elevated? Don't you feel something special? They fly so high, they have such clarity and dispassion and so forth and so on.

"I am Rama among warriors."

Rama is not only the best among warriors but the best among men in general. He was an exceptional example of someone who followed dharma impeccably.

"Among the disciplines of knowledge, I am the knowledge of the self."

If you get self knowledge it supersedes all other kinds of knowledge. In the Mundaka Upaniṣad, it is described as, *"the knowledge that ends your search for knowledge."*

"Of those who reason, I am the reasoning that leads to truth. I am death that takes away everything and I am the cause of prosperity for those yet to be. Among the feminine words I am fame, wealth, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude, and equanimity."

Here Krishna reiterates some of the values he previously mentioned.

Verse 40 - There is no end to my extraordinary glories, Arjuna. I have listed only a few important ones. Whatever glorious thing there is, whatever is endowed with value, distinguished or mighty reveals only a mere fraction of my glory. Strictly speaking, Arjuna, what use is such a short list because I pervade the entire creation with only one tiny ray of my awareness. So great is your self.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita

Spain - January 2014

Day 6 - Session 2 Continued

Chapter 11, Verses 1 - 52

Chapter 12, Verse 1

There's not a lot of meat in Chapter 10 or in the chapter we're about to discuss, but they're interesting and entertaining. The gist of Chapter 10 is that if you're having a problem seeing the Lord—meaning the self—look at anything exceptional, contemplate it's essence and it will remind you or take you to yourself, it will invoke yourself. Take a sunset for example. Why do people watch a sunset? Because it's a beautiful symbol of yourself, isn't it? Don't you feel happy and peaceful and good when you look at a sunset or a sunrise in the morning? The sun is a symbol of the self, a symbol of the light. It's radiant. It gives life. So there's an innate appreciation of the Lord. The nature worshippers are actually worshipping the self. And whenever you find something exceptional or brilliant or beautiful or loving, you'll see awareness shining. That's the idea.

The next chapter is very dramatic. It paints a picture of *Isvara*, the macrocosmic mind, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of everything. There's not much to comment on, except Arjuna's reaction to the whole thing. It should discourage you from chasing spiritual experiences. (laughter)

Because my autobiography is so full of spiritual experiences, a student once asked me if people thought or wondered or felt insecure about *moksha* because they didn't have spiritual experiences.

And the answer is some people do. But generally I have found that people get this knowledge a lot faster and easier if they haven't had a bunch of spiritual experiences.

Student - Why?

James - There's nothing more addictive than spiritual experiences. They're worse than heroin. It's almost impossible to wean yourself off of the *shakti*, the energy that you get when you have spiritual experiences. More than likely you'll just end up chasing more spiritual experience. You'll probably start thinking that enlightenment is some kind of experience, one that you will somehow make permanent, and this belief will cause you to suffer tremendously. Because all experiences end, spiritual or otherwise. And especially when spiritual experiences end you feel like a fish out of water. The Bhakti Sūtra says that it's like falling in love. When you fall in love with somebody you get very attached to that person and to that feeling of love. Then that person leaves you. What do you want? What do you do? You want to get them back or want somebody else to come so you can fall in love with them. That's the problem.

If you look at your experience right now, if you actually just sit quietly and feel what you're experiencing, you'll see that you're experiencing fullness, bliss, peace. But when your mind is distracted by your fears and desires you don't appreciate that you're having that experience all the time. It's totally satisfying, although not exciting. Spiritual experiences are exciting and dramatic. But because they're subject to change they're not to be cultivated.

In my case, after all those amazing spiritual experiences I did gain one thing: I was convinced beyond a doubt that there was a self. But I didn't know that I was the self. After three years of spiritual experiences and frantic seeking, I hadn't got anything except frustration. I swore to myself, "*I'm not going to do this spiritual thing anymore.*" Because I would go up, have this lovely experience, and come crashing down again. I'd have all of these mergers and love with all the objects where I couldn't see myself as separate from anything. And then the sense of duality would come back again. And it was so painful. I finally said, "*I just can't do this anymore. I'm just going to be a regular person, finish my education, get a job and join society and try to be a regular person.*"

But the very day I came to that conclusion, I met my guru. And then I realized I'd been searching in the wrong place. The solution was outside of *Maya*, outside of experience. It wasn't in *Maya*, it was in me. The solution was me, awareness. I was hidden from myself. I wasn't taking myself into account. It was me all along. I didn't know it. I was thinking there was some experience I had to have. So that's the problem with spiritual experiences.

Now, if some experience comes, it's by the grace of *Isvara* and there's some reason for it. You will get what you need to gain from it. And if doesn't come, then it means that *Isvara* doesn't want you to have those experiences because they won't be good for you. I mean, they were good for me in the sense that the first major epiphany I had showed me that there was some more going on in this world. At the time I didn't think there was anything other than me and my desires and the objects in the world that I was chasing, like money and sex. That was my world, that's all I knew. But then one day I had an experience that made me realize, "*My god, there's a whole other dimension to reality that I've never seen. I had no idea that it was there.*" It was completely hidden because I was just stuck in my body and my senses and my desires. That's all. So it was really valuable to know there was more and I just became totally curious at that time.

But of course I thought—and naturally everyone thinks this—"*I want more of that experience. Let's get that back.*" Did you ever try to get back an experience that you had? You're not going to get it back. Experience is like water under a bridge. Once it's gone it's gone. You may get similar experiences, but you'll never get that exact experience back. And this river of life is constantly

changing so there's no way you'll make any experience here permanent. Even if your mind is very *sattvic*, *tamas* will come and hide that experience from you, or *rajas* will come, disturb you and take you away from that experience.

As we take up Chapter 11, remember that it's a dramatic device that the poet, Vyasa, the author of the text, uses to discuss *Isvara*. That's all. Don't think this actually happened. There are great pictures in India—based on this chapter—of Krishna as the cosmic person, his mouth full of screaming people being ground up by his teeth. It's a very common image of the universal person, showing that *Isvara* both the good stuff and the bad stuff. That's why fame and infamy, fear and fearlessness are mentioned in the list of his glories. All the opposites are included in *Isvara*.

Chapter 11

Vision of the Cosmic Form

Verse 1 - Arjuna said, "Your compassionate words concerning the nature of the supreme self have dispelled my delusion, My Lord. You have described in detail the creation and dissolution of things and your eternal majesty. I am certain you have described yourself correctly but now I would like to see your divine form as the Lord of all things and beings. If it is possible to reveal your imperishable self please do so now."

Words aren't good enough for Arjuna, are they? Basically he's saying, "*Put your money where your mouth is, boss. You said you're great. You said you're everything. I don't have any doubt about that... but let's see some action, buddy.*" That's this idea here.

"But now I would like to see your divine form as the Lord of all things and beings. If it is possible to reveal your imperishable self please do so now."

At least he's being polite about it. "*Please do so, if it's possible.*" That's kind of like a challenge to Krishna.

Verse 8 - Krishna said, "Since it's impossible for you to see with ordinary eyes I will now give you an extraordinary eye, one that will allow you to see all my glory!"

He's talking about the the *jnana cakṣu*, the "eye of knowledge," the third eye. With your regular eyes, you can see the world, but with this special eye you can see the world of *Isvara*, the hidden world, the unmanifest. It's hidden so you need a special eye to see it. The special eye is actually the scripture. The scripture is the third eye. It's what makes you understand and know what's beyond the physical. But here it's presented as a kind of special power that is given by *Isvara*. To some degree it's true because all of your epiphanies are minor little visions of the self, granted by *Isvara*.

Verse 9 - The One whose grace destroys all sorrow showed his transcendent form as the sovereign Lord of everything and said, "Behold hundreds and thousands of my various divine forms in many shapes and colors! See all the elemental powers: earth, wind, fire and sky. Observe the sun, moon and stars and all the subtle forces playing in the universe, myriad wonders never revealed before! See everything moving and unmoving united in my limitless body...and anything else you wish to see."

Verse 10 - Arjuna saw Krishna's infinite body smeared with sandal paste, adorned with celestial malas and shining ornaments. He observed countless faces looking in every direction, each with countless mouths and eyes. He saw millions of hands held aloft gripping wondrous objects and extraordinary weapons. Should a thousand suns burst forth simultaneously in the sky it would be but a faint reflection of the radiance of the self.

Verse 13 - Arjuna saw an infinite diversity of objects united as one in the body of the Lord. Overcome with awe, his head bowed, hair standing on end and hands clasped in salutation he spoke the following words: "In your body, O! Lord, I see the powers of nature, the myriad creatures of the world, the Creator on his lotus throne, the celestial sages and shining angels. You have infinite forms with infinite arms, legs and mouths and eyes looking in every direction. There is no beginning, middle or end to your cosmic form. I see you with a bejeweled golden crown holding a mace and a discus in a blaze of awareness so brilliant I can hardly look at you. You cannot be known as one knows objects."

Verse 18 - "I now completely appreciate you as the imperishable, limitless self, the one to be known. You are the support of the whole universe and yet unaffected by it. You lay down and protect the eternal moral code and the physical laws by which creation operates. You are eternal complete being. You have no beginning, middle or end. Your endless arms embrace everything. The sun and the moon are your eyes and your face, radiant with the fire of awareness illumines the whole cosmos. You pervade the space between heaven and earth and every direction. The three worlds tremble at the sight of this wondrous frightening form of yours."

Verse 21 - "Indeed, the heavenly hosts enter into you. Some are frightened and pray with joined palms. Great sages and yogis praise you profusely. The five elements, the sun, moon and stars, the angels, guardians of the universe, divine healers, the fathers, the self realized and even atheists stare at you with amazement. Seeing your incredible form with many faces, eyes, hands and feet causes people great fear, O mighty armed one...particularly me!"

Verse 24 - "You cannot imagine how terrifying it is to see someone so huge that they surpass the heavens, someone with millions of devouring mouths and eyes burning with the fire of consciousness. It is deeply disturbing and I cannot collect myself. These awesome mouths with huge protruding fangs destroying everything in sight completely disorient me. Please, Lord, be merciful!"

He's just asked for this experience and now he wants it to go away.

Verse 26 - "Your voracious mouths eagerly devour all the sons of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona and Karna and all the other kings. Some, their heads crushed by your mighty molars, stick between your teeth. As flood-swollen rivers flow into the ocean or confused moths incinerate themselves in a fire, these great heroes...and indeed all living beings...mindlessly fling themselves into your devouring mouths. You swallow them all and lick your chops over and over again as the universe is scorched by your cruel, brilliant flames. Salutations to you, O, Exalted among the gods! Please tell me who wears this terrible form. Be gracious and remove this vision. I do not understand why you gave me this experience."

Verse 32 - Krishna replied, "I am Time. I lay waste to the worlds. Even without you to kill them, the warriors standing in the opposing army are doomed. Therefore, stand and conquer! Destroy your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. Be the instrument of my destruction. Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, and Karna and all their fighters are as good as dead. Fear not and fight!"

Verse 36 - Arjuna, his palms folded and his limbs trembling, saluted Krishna and spoke in a voice choked with emotion. "It is quite natural, Krishna, that the world rejoices and sings your praises. Demons fly in fear and the saints extol your glories. O Lord, they should surrender to you because you are even greater than the Creator. You are the God of gods, the one in whom the worlds exist, beyond cause and effect. Before creation you were here and now you fill it with being. Everything resolves in you. You are the knower and what is to be known and the ultimate abode. Your forms are endless."

Verse 39 – "You are the Lord of the Winds, Lord of Death, Lord of fire, Lord of water, the presiding deity of the moon. You are the Creator and the uncreated Creator of the Creator. Honor and glory to you a thousand times! Salutations a thousand times! I bow in front of you. I bow in back and on all sides. You have infinite all-pervading power. You are everything."

Verse 41 – "Please forgive any rash statements or slights or inappropriate jests I may have made when I did not know who you were. You are difficult to know. Your glories are unrivaled. You are the father of everything movable and immovable. You are the first teacher. In the three worlds no one equals you, nor is anyone superior. Therefore bless me and forgive me as a father forgives a son, a friend a friend, and a lover a lover."

"Please forgive any rash statements or slights or inappropriate jests I may have made when I did not know who you were."

This part is humorous. Arjuna is a little worried now. He thought that Krishna was just a guy, his friend who was driving his chariot. And suddenly, he gets this vision and he sees the whole thing. He understands that Krishna is the creator, preserver and destroyer of everything and boy, he doesn't want any blow-back from the times—thinking that Krishna was just a person and a friend—that he used to joke with Krishna and say little things and so forth and so on.

Verse 45 – "O Lord, I am happy to have seen what no one has seen before but I am also overwhelmed with fear. Please assume that pleasing form of yours once again and appear before me wearing your crown with the scepter and discus in your hands, O you of countless forms!"

Verse 47 - Krishna said, "Because you are my friend I have revealed my original radiant form for the first time. Not by study of the Vedas or religious rituals, nor by charity or severe austerities can anyone other than you see me in this form, O bravest of the Kurus. Do not be frightened and confused by this awesome form of mine. Now see me in my normal form."

Verse 50 - Then Krishna reappeared in his human form and Arjuna became cheerful once again.

Verse 52 - Krishna continued, "You have seen what is very difficult to see. Even the gods desire this vision. As I just mentioned I cannot be seen in this form through the study of the Vedas, ascetic practices, charity or worship. You alone have seen me in this way. But with the devotion in which there is no other, it is possible to see and know and enter into Me. Those who dedicate their actions to Me because I am their only goal, those who are free from attachment and enmity come to realize who I am."

"Krishna continued, "You have seen what is very difficult to see. Even the gods desire this vision. As I just mentioned I cannot be seen in this form through the study of the Vedas, ascetic practices, charity or worship."

In this context, "worship" does not refer to Vedanta. By, "study of the Vedas," he means the karma kanda of the Vedas.

“You alone have seen me in this way. But with the devotion in which there is no other, it is possible to see and know and enter into Me. Those who dedicate their actions to Me because I am their only goal, those who are free from attachment and enmity come to realize who I am.”

Why was Arjuna fearful? Why wasn't he happy with this experience? Because he didn't see that he was part of the experience. It was something outside of himself, separate from himself. When you contemplate on the tremendous vastness and the creative and destructive power of the universe—just think of an earthquake or a meteor—it's going to be scary if you think you're a person.

Like I said before, this chapter is just a dramatic description of *Isvara*, that's all.

Chapter 12

Devotion

Some people have a problem with Vedanta because they think it's just intellectual. They say, *“Ram, what you don't understand is that spirituality is about feeling and love. There's no love in Vedanta, it's just words.”* You know what? They're wrong because there's no love higher than Vedanta. It's a path of love. Krishna is going to discuss the topic of bhakti or love next.

So what's the relationship between awareness and love? It seems like awareness is one thing and love is something else but that's because emotional people think love is a feeling. When they're getting what they want, they feel love. When they're not getting what they want, they don't feel love. In other words, it's just their desires being satisfied that makes them feel happy and they call that love. But love is not a feeling. Love is the nature of consciousness, of awareness. awareness is parama prema svarupaha. “Parama” means limitless. “Prema” means non-dual, unconditional, non-emotional love. “Svarupaha” means “the nature of.” The self is of the nature of non-dual, unconditional, unemotional or non-emotional love. So, where's the connection? How do we get from love to awareness? It's simple. Love is just your attention directed to an object. “I heart my cat” means that I pet, feed and hug my cat. In other words, I pay attention to my cat. “I heart my wife, my husband, my job, whatever,” means I invest my energy, my attention, in them. Now, what is your attention but awareness?

awareness is limitless but when it's focused through the Subtle Body, it goes to an object and that object is an object you love. This attention is usually willing. But what if I put a gun to your head and tell you to love this or love that? Pay attention to this or pay attention to that. You will do that. There's love involved in that. Why? You love something that you normally wouldn't love which shows that everything that you pay attention to is just yourself and that it's yourself that's loving yourself.

Why do I pay attention to the Gita, the scripture? Because I love the scripture. If I didn't love it, I wouldn't do this, would I? So what is my attention but my consciousness? Everything here is only consciousness but consciousness directed to an object is what we call love. If there's no attachment then the love is pure. If there's attachment then the love is contaminated by desire. When your mind is pure, that is, free of your *vasanas*, then *Isvara* directs your attention to the objects that *Isvara* wants to love. And you bless everyone and everything with what? Your attention. If you have a relationship and your husband or your wife says, *“You don't love me anymore,”* they really mean, *“You're not paying attention to me anymore.”* And that's exactly what happens, isn't it? When a relationship breaks down, one or both people stop paying attention to each other. They stop, that's all. So love is awareness love is consciousness. It's not some sappy feeling, mind you.

So we're going to talk about this topic of devotion. Now we've been looking at this topic from the point of view of awareness. But what if you think you're a *jiva*? Well, you want your attention to be directed to awareness. Or you want to understand that the things you love in the apparent world are *Isvara* because everything is *Isvara*. Then you just keep loving the objects knowing that they're *Isvara*. So love is basically just understanding and that is why the path of knowledge and the path of love are one. Love is understanding. It's what stands under you. Your basis or your support is love.

Verse 1 - Arjuna said, "Which devotee has the best understanding of yoga: the one who meditates on You as a personal god in your divine form or the one who sees you impersonally, not subject to decline and unavailable for objectification?"

We fall into the latter category. That's why people say, "*Oh, you don't have any love.*" But love is impersonal, universal, it's the same everywhere. It's just awareness and awareness isn't personal. But if you don't have this kind of dispassionate, scientific kind of mind that can understand the true nature of love, then what do you need to do with your love? How do you worship? With inquiry. You choose a deity or you choose an object to love, something that invokes or inspires love in you. That's called worship of form. Going back to my example about watching a sunset, a lot of people start on the spiritual journey with nature worship because it's easy to see, it's easy to feel love in nature, isn't it? And it's easy to see the self shining in nature because of the beauty. That beauty invokes the spirit of awareness in you and you feel love. Then you become attracted to the object of beauty and the more attracted you are to something, the more you pursue it, the more you want to dwell on it and understand it. Then, when you deeply meditate on that object, it leads you back to yourself.

Student - I guess essentially, there are no words for love. It's just awareness consciousness.

James - Yes. People say there's no love in the world and that it's all going to hell. I don't get that. Love is our nature. We're expressing love every moment because we're always paying attention to something. So I see love everywhere in the world, in the simple acts of attention or love going on all the time.

Why does a person care about the environment? Because he loves the environment. Why do you care about the poor people in the Sudan that are suffering? Because you love people. Why do you care about the corruption of the government? Because you love dharma. Why do you study scientific principles? Because you love knowledge. Why do you have children? Because you love children. Everything is an act of love. All the time. Formless awareness is flowing through all these individual entities in the form of attention directed towards objects. You can even see it in animals. There's all kinds of cool videos on the internet. There's one of a dog who took a cat for a friend, and the cat is lying there sleeping on the dog's belly. It's just love. You can feel it all around you. It's happening all the time. It's not missing at all. Just open your eyes and you'll see it everywhere.

The word "Krishna" means, "that which is the most attractive." What is the most attractive thing to you? Love. When you love somebody, you don't love the somebody. You love the love that you feel when you're with that somebody. If the love stays and the somebody goes, it's not a big deal. If love goes, and the somebody stays then you've got a problem. (laughter) But what you love is love.

The words of the text are words of love. Krishna, yourself, is talking to you about yourself. It's telling you, "*Hey, this is what you are. You're free. You're beautiful. You're love. You're whole. You're complete. You're wonderful.*" That's all. The scripture is nothing but love. So technically, we can say there's bhakti yoga, but actually there's just the topic of bhakti in general because love is universal.

Love is behind every single thing that anybody does. That's the point. Because you don't do it unless you love. Even things you don't do, you avoid out of love for yourself.

So all acts of love are by the self for the self. You don't love your husband for the sake of the husband. You love the husband for the sake of yourself. You don't love your wife for the sake of your wife. You love the wife for the sake of yourself. Scripture says this, it's very clear. And this isn't something bad, something selfish. It's selfish, meaning related to the self, for the self, by the self, for the sake of the self.

Even destruction is love. Why? It makes room for new things to come. Creation is love. Maintenance is love. All the powers here, all the things that are happening here are nothing but love. But it's not, "Oh, I love you," the sappy, sentimental stuff which just boils down to need, although, in essence, love is underneath even that. If you go to Mooji's satsangs they're making such a huge story about something that's the coin of the realm, something that's so natural. For these kind of people, it's all about getting a special feeling, and once they have it they feel special. Then they start thinking they're better than everybody else because they've got that special feeling. But that's just the ego co-opting the pure love that is everywhere and everything. It's not anything special. It's just your nature. It's what's greasing the wheels and making everything move here. You don't want to make a special story about it. Just understand what it is. You see these people hanging onto the guru like the love is totally in the object. But that's not love. That's fear and need.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita

Spain - January 2014

Day 6 - Session 3

Chapter 12, Verse 2 - 20

Student - What's the difference between Krishna telling Arjuna to go out and fight and the passages in the Bible where they are told to kill?

James - Well, concerning the Bible, you'd have to consider the context in which those statements were made. Like I said before, it has to do with people projecting their ideas onto God.

But in the Gita, Krishna isn't really telling him to kill, is he? He does say, "Go and fight" but the real meaning of that statement is, "Go do your duty." That's really what the issue is here. I said earlier that death and war are just symbols of change. They are dramatic devices used to illustrate the situation we find ourselves in as people. Just like Vyasa uses a dramatic, visual, poetic image of *Isvara* the 12th chapter, the situation with Arjuna and the battlefield is also just a dramatic device. It's not really about killing. It's about how to relate to change and death, death being the most dramatic symbol of change that we know.

Actually, death is not a big deal in and of itself. One minute you're here, the next minute you're not. But all the same, death is the symbol of the ultimate change, or in other words, the ultimate loss. When you're in *samsara*, life is about gains and losses, isn't it? It's about getting and keeping. That verse that we had earlier was, "yogakṣemaṃ vahāmyaham." It means, "I protect your getting and your keeping." Why is keeping such a big deal? Because all the things that we value and keep here, are things that are necessary for our happiness. So, we're always worried about losing what's valuable to us like our money, our loved ones. But anything we get here we're going to lose. That's the problem with *samsara*.

About the Bible, you have to go through it carefully and check the language. Our tradition didn't just come out of the experience of a prophet or anything of that sort. It evolved for thousands of years and during that time, great minds looked over the teachings again and again and cleaned them up.

The scripture has been purified, except for a few things like the stuff about women and business people. But by the time the tradition comes to Sankara, for example, it's just pure Vedanta. It's just pure knowledge. There are no opinions or judgments. Sankara may interpret verses, but he always does so in light of the fundamental ideas in the Upanishads. So his writings are based upon sruti, the source texts. But in the Bible and other religious traditions, I think they're basically based upon the experience of a prophet or mystic or something like that. Their words were written down at a particular time and because people believed in those words, they weren't vetted over and over again. Plus there is no real science of knowledge. Vedanta's called brahma vidya, which means, "*the science or knowledge of consciousness.*" So this is an actual science and you can see the way it's all laid out, the way all the concepts like paramātmā, *Isvara*, *jīva*, *jagat*, karma, bhakti are all carefully related to one another.

Consider the gāyatrī mantra, an invocation which is kind of the essence of the Vedas. It means, "*enlighten my intellect.*" That's seems very strange, doesn't it? Because our idea of people in the past, thousands of years ago, is that they weren't smart and they just followed superstitious beliefs. But this a tradition of rational thinking, on that is incredibly scientific and intellectual.

So right now we're doing a scientific, dispassionate inquiry into the topic of bhakti. Arjuna wants to know whether it's better to worship the self in a personal form or to worship the impersonal, formless self through the inquiry and knowledge of Vedanta. But Krishna never answers Arjuna exactly the way Arjuna wants to be answered. What does he say?

Verse 2 - "Those who always keep their minds and hearts fixed on Me with unflinching concentration and faith are best."

Whether you're worshipping the form or the formless, if your heart and mind is fixed on the self, it's the best. For who? For you, depending on your temperament, just like karma yoga. For a saṁsāri, a karmi, karma yoga is the best, and *jñāna* yoga is not so good. For a sannyasi, *jñāna* yoga is the best, and karma yoga is not so good. What is best for you depends upon who you are, your nature and where you are in your spiritual life.

Verse 3 – "Assuming they have mastery over the senses, view everything with equal vision, and take delight in the welfare of all beings, those who contemplate upon That which is not subject to decline, indescribable, unavailable for objectification, all pervasive, not an object of thought, which abides unmoving in *Maya* and is eternal also realize Me. But they encounter greater hardships because of identification with the body."

So, the way we Vedanta people do it is fine, assuming we have mastery over our senses and this vision of non-duality. But we may have a hard time because of identification with the body. So we have to contemplate on the fact that what is known is different from the one who knows it. You can't be the body if you can say, "*I know the body.*" But seeing this is so difficult simply because we've been completely conditioned to think of ourselves as the body. That's the problem with this Vedanta teaching.

Verse 6 – "However, the way is easier for those who want only Me, consistently offer all their actions to Me and keep their minds fixed only on Me. I liberate them quickly from the ocean of life and death. If your heart clings to me and your intellect continually inquires into Me, there is no doubt that you will come to abide in Me alone."

Here he's talking about karma yogis.

Verse 9 – “If, however, you are unable to keep the mind continually absorbed in Me, then seek to reach Me through the yoga of constant practice. In the event that you do not have the capacity to practice yoga, devote yourself to my service by offering all your actions to Me. You will succeed. Even if you are unable to do this, take refuge in Me and train your mind to give up the results of all of your actions to Me.”

“If, however, you are unable to keep the mind continually absorbed in Me, then seek to reach Me through the yoga of constant practice.”

In other words, you have to continually keep taking your attention away from the vāsānas, the cravings, the objects, and putting it back on the self over and over again.

“In the event that you do not have the capacity to practice yoga, devote yourself to my service by offering all your actions to Me.”

And that will slowly purify or neutralize your vāsānas.

Verse 12 – “Knowledge is better indeed than action and meditation is superior to knowledge but renunciation of the results of action is better than meditation because peace comes immediately when results are renounced.”

“Knowledge is better indeed than action and meditation is superior to knowledge...”

Action without knowledge isn't going to work for you so knowledge is better. But meditation is superior to knowledge. Here, “knowledge” means intellectual knowledge. So meditation is superior because you're using your knowledge to bring your mind back to Krishna, the self, over and over again.

“But renunciation of the results of action is better than meditation because peace comes immediately when results are renounced.”

But is there really a difference? No, all are good. And what is the result of keeping your mind on Krishna?

Verse 13 – “The one who has no hatred for others, who is kind, compassionate and accommodating, free of pride, possessiveness, and the “I” notion, the same in conducive and unconducive circumstances, who is satisfied with what he or she is and has, whose mind is controlled, and whose intellect constantly inquires into Me, is my beloved.”

“The one who has no hatred for others, who is kind, compassionate and accommodating, free of pride, possessiveness, and the “I” notion, the same in conducive and unconducive circumstances...”

These are more values.

“...who is satisfied with what he or she is and has, whose mind is controlled, and whose intellect constantly inquired into Me, is my beloved.”

This means you'll like yourself a lot when you live like this, when this is true for you. Your self will like you and even if you think you're something other than the self, you will like yourself.

These verses are a check list. Do you have hatred in you? Are you kind? Are you compassionate? If the answer is “Yes,” then you're doing fine. Are you accommodating? Can you accommodate yourself to the world? Or do you always put up a barrier and say, “No, I don't want anything to do with the

world. It's bad. I'm just going to stick with myself alone." Being free of pride means you know that *Isvara* owns everything. If you're proud of your looks or your brain or anything else, you haven't understood that everything belongs to *Isvara*. And if everything belongs to *Isvara*, then there's no reason for possessiveness either. Besides, why would you try to hang on to an object if you truly knew you didn't need it to be happy?

James - What was it that someone said at the dinner table?

Student - On a dating site, there's a question that says, "What are the six things you can't live without?" And popular ones are family, love, my dog, chocolate, strong coffee...

James - All of that belongs to *Bhagavan*. None of that's yours. You can live without it. You're living without it anyway because even when you think you own it, it really belongs to *Bhagavan* so you might as well just let it go.

"...the "I" notion..."

When you're free of that you don't go up when things are good or down when things are bad. You're the same either way.

"...who is satisfied with what he or she is and has..."

You're not trying to change yourself. You're satisfied with yourself, the self, as it is.

"...whose mind is controlled..."

This is the ability to keep the mind away from *vāsānas* that are going to cause problems for yourself or others.

"...and whose intellect constantly inquires into Me."

It means whether you're enlightened or not, you're always thinking about the self.

Verse 15 – "The one because of whom people do not get disturbed and who does not get disturbed by people and who is unaffected by elation, intolerance, fear and anxiety, is beloved of Me. You will like yourself when you're free of anxiety, when you're free of fear and intolerance, when you're unaffected by elation."

Verse 16 – "The one from whom the world does not shrink, nor who shrinks from the world, who is independent and stable, uninclined to initiate self-centered actions who is not carried away by joy, anger and fear, who is unmoved by good and bad karma and indifferent to the satisfaction of his or her worldly desires is beloved of Me."

"The one from whom the world does not shrink, nor who shrinks from the world, who is independent and stable, uninclined to initiate self-centered actions..."

If *Isvara* presents an opportunity to you and it's appropriate to respond to it, maybe you initiate that new action. But you're not inclined to initiate new actions because you know you have nothing to gain from them.

"...who is not carried away by joy, anger and fear, who is unmoved by good and bad karma and indifferent to the satisfaction of his or her worldly desires..."

If you get what you want, it's okay. If you don't get what you want, it's okay. It's all the same. This is dispassion.

Verse 18 – "The one who treats enemies and friends alike, sees success and failure in the same light, remains unchanged when honored or disgraced, views pleasure and pain, heat and cold equally, and stands free of objects is beloved of Me."

Verse 19 – “Those who are disciplined in speech, satisfied with whatever comes, have no place to call their own, whose self knowledge is firm and are devoted to Me are beloved of Me.”

Verse 20 – “Those faithful ones whose lives are in harmony with dharma and whose lives are centered on Me are exceedingly beloved of Me.”

Student - What does “beloved” mean in these sentences?

James - It means your self. In other words, this is how awareness operates as a person with full knowledge. After a person understands, “*I’m awareness*” and that they’re full and complete, when they function in this life, these are the qualities that you’ll see operating. They are *sadhanas*, meaning qualities and values you can work on, and they are also a description of what it is to be enlightened, in terms of a person.

Student - Doesn’t that reinforce the belief that only saint-like people are realized?

James - It does reinforce that belief because basically realized people tend to be saintly. But a saint isn’t necessarily a realized person. In other words, this behavior doesn’t necessarily indicate that you are enlightened because through your own experience, you could learn to be this way. It isn’t necessarily a consequence of the knowledge that you’re whole and complete, action-less awareness. Sainly behavior can be learned or it can be the result of self knowledge. So just because a person exhibits saintly behavior doesn’t mean they know who they are.

Student – So, a self realized person could be a curmudgeon?

James - Yes. Having that kind of disposition doesn’t necessarily mean you don’t know who you are. It’s very difficult to tell by behavior. You can be very clear about who you are and yet, not match up to every point in this description. Particularly if your knowledge has just firmed up recently, there may still be some self-centered tendencies that display themselves for a period of time. But gradually, all of those negative tendencies will fade away and all these positive energies or tendencies will come out because they are a sign of pure *sattva*.

Actually, all these qualities belong to *sattva* guna. Knowledge is *sattva* guna. And if the knowledge of who you are is firm, your mind will become more *sattvic* as time goes on. So, it’s not like once you get enlightened, all this positive stuff shows up instantly. It can take years for it to evolve and years for your negative, unconscious stuff to come out. But while this happens, you’re always clear that it’s not you. You don’t say, “*Oh, I’m not enlightened because I had this bad feeling.*” Nor do you take credit and say, “*Well, I’m enlightened because I did this good deed.*” You don’t think like that because you don’t associate your enlightenment with your actions. You associate your enlightenment with yourself. In other words you say, “*I’m enlightened because I know I’m the light.*” The knowledge that you are the light, the self, is enlightenment.

So we have to give these people some slack. There are good people out there who are enlightened but still have a little bad behavior. I had a few bad behaviors after I realized who I was. I didn’t become a saint overnight. It’s irrational to think that you would. There’s nothing in nature that indicates that suddenly this conservative entity, this person, is suddenly going to be transformed by a bit of knowledge. Over time, as you revel in and live in the knowledge of your wholeness, completeness and fullness, those petty little things—fears, desires, self-centeredness—gradually, slowly disappear and you become more and more positive.

I mean, that was the thing that struck me when I met Swamji, how incredibly positive he was. Nothing got him down or got in his way. He had a lot of things to deal with that could have dragged him down like health issues and the responsibility of running a huge organization—people were dumping stuff on him all day long. But he was always unfailingly cheerful and positive going forward.

self knowledge makes you feel so confident. You know that you don't change, that nothing really affects you. You know that when something happens, it doesn't happen to you. So you're always behind, watching, observing. And that knowledge is such confidence. There is such bliss in that knowledge. That's the bliss of knowledge, the bliss of awareness.

It's not an, *"Oh, I feel so good"* kind of bliss. It's a *"Bring it on! You think you can bring me down? Forget it!"* kind of bliss. I remember one time when I was just getting established in the self, I went up to see Swamiji. He was staying in a really fancy apartment in a high-rise hotel in Hawaii, with a doorman and everything. The rich lady who organized the seminar put him there on purpose because she wanted to keep Swamiji all to herself. She was only going to let certain people in, and that was a short list because she wanted to keep Swamiji under control. I found out where he was and so I just went and I showed up and knocked on the door. When she opened the door I said, *"I'd like to see Swamiji."* And she said, *"No, you can't see Swamiji."* Then from inside Swamiji asked, *"Who is it?"* and not in a nice way, she said, *"It's Ram."* She didn't like me because I was the competition. So he says, *"Let him in!"* And so I came in and sat down and we started talking and having a nice time.

Then I put my feet up on the coffee table. I didn't have my shoes on because you take your shoes off when you go see the Swami. And she just came rushing at me, pushed my feet off and said, *"Get your feet off there! Don't you have any culture? What's wrong with you?"* She starts viciously attacking me and I'm like, *"Hey, take it easy, baby. We're just having a nice little chat here."* But she went on and on. So I just smiled politely and I took my feet off. She got real grumpy and finally, she left. Swamiji started laughing and he said, *"Never come down, Ram. Never come down."* What he meant was always stay as you are. Don't descend into any worldly nonsense because it's totally pointless, useless. That's the knowledge. You just stay in the self as the self. The world is presenting all kinds of problems for you, but don't come down. Remain yourself. Just stay with that knowledge and deal with it from that point of view.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 7 - Session 1
Chapter 13, Verse 1 - 6

See, their argument doesn't hold up. It's partly true but it doesn't hold up. Why? Because we get to know that we're awareness and we get to experience it. So we get to taste Krishna and be Krishna at the same time. They're only interested in experiencing or tasting Krishna. They're not interested in knowing Krishna because they think Krishna's unknowable; because it says in the Gita it's beyond objectification. *"Acintya rupa"* means its form is unthinkable, inconceivable. You can't think of it. So they think you can't know it. But we argue that you can know it. You just can't know it the way you think you can know it. You can know it by removing your ignorance about it and then you see that you knew it all along because 'It' turned out to be You. And you know You. Does anybody not know themselves? Of course you know yourself. You're with yourself every minute of the day.

Student - I'd like to find out what Swami Dayananda says about Verse 12 where he says, *"Knowledge is better than action and meditation is superior to knowledge."*

James - Well, he means intellectual knowledge, but meditation they're defining meditation as...

Student - They're not talking about self knowledge.

James - No, no. Well, indirect knowledge. Better than indirectly saying there is a self. It's better to meditate on the self. They describe meditation as pulling your mind back to the self all the time when you're distracted. A person with a lot of *vasanas*, it's very hard for them to keep their mind on the self, isn't it? Because the *vasanas* are pulling them away. They think, "Oh, I've got to pick up my kids at school. Oh, I've got an appointment with the dentist. Oh, I've got to cook dinner for my family. Oh, my husband. I pick up my husband at the airport." So you have all these actions and desires and so your mind is just always involved in doing some material thing in the world, in other words, in some actions. Meditation reduces the amount of extroversion of the mind and it's easier to keep the mind on the self. And your mind is *sattvic*, so you can immediately catch it when your attention goes away from the self and you pull it back. Just like in the meditation, I say, "Pull it back to the silence." That's what he means, I think, by meditation is superior to knowledge. He doesn't mean self knowledge. Often they use the word *ātma* to describe the ego. *Ātma* just means self and it can mean any self you want it to mean. So, you have to understand the context in which these words are used.

Student - When it says, "**renunciation is superior to meditation,**" ...karma yoga?

James - Yeah, karma yoga. Letting go of the fruits of your action. Now, I think that he's addressing Arjuna particularly there. Because if you meditate, and this is what we talked about earlier, meditation isn't going to work if you don't surrender the fruits of your action to *Bhagavan*, in other words, if you don't do karma yoga. So, karma yoga's actually superior to meditation in that sense. Meditation depends upon what? Karma yoga. Because if you don't do karma yoga, you're going to spend all of your time just fighting through your *vasanas*, fighting with your mind all the time. Whereas, if you have a karma yoga practice every day of your life you're going to be reducing your *vasana* load. So, the extroversion of the mind is going to be reduced daily as you practice, as you renounce the fruits of your action.

Student - I wonder why there isn't a qualification like self-mockery.

James - self-mockery. That fits under dispassion because dispassionate people see how funny they are. In other words, a dispassionate person doesn't take things in the world seriously. And he doesn't take himself, his- or her-self, seriously either. You know how people think that they're so important. Everybody thinks, "I'm so important." And a dispassionate person sees how ridiculous he or she is as a person. How funny it is. I know how funny I am as a person. Not that I think I'm a big cheese or anything like that. I know how ridiculous I look and how ridiculous some of my actions are, and my thinking and so forth, and my behavior, it's peculiar too, to say the least. And people never tire of reminding me that I'm a weird guy. And I know I'm a weird guy. I understand that. So, it's fine. If you're dispassionate, you're not trying to fix yourself. We're not into fixing ourselves, making ourselves better. We're into appreciating how silly we are. Because everybody's weird. Everybody's strange. Everybody's got these weird quirks and peculiarities, don't they? So it's included in dispassion. A sense of irony is also a very big aid to self inquiry. Okay.

The Knower and the Known

Nothing new here, just a different formulation of the same teaching. Remember, our teaching's very simple. You don't really need to know that much. You need to be qualified to apply this knowledge. We call that application *jnana* abhyasa. That is, the practice of knowledge. Now it seems strange to say, "*practice knowledge*," doesn't it? Because knowledge is knowledge. What's to practice? It's a nice sunny day. What's to practice? "*It's a nice sunny day*" is knowledge. What's to practice about that? Well, there is no practice, understand. With knowledge there is no practice. Knowledge is the practice. So, when you get it really clear that you're awareness then there's no practice. But until that knowledge that "*I'm awareness*" is firm, steady - and it will be steady if you understand what it means, then you need to practice.

What does 'practice' mean? You have to catch yourself when you're thinking that you're this *jiva*, that's all. And you don't have to really do anything other than catch yourself and know that I'm thinking like a small person. That tendency to think like a small, limited person, or the tendency to criticize myself and to feel inadequate and so forth and so on, that's hard-wired. That started out right when you were born. Your parents started telling you how limited you are. And then school is telling you; your teacher started telling you. When you watch television, the television started telling you. And pretty soon all of the voices just keep telling you "*You're small, you're inadequate, you're incomplete, you're a sinner, you're no good, you're not up to the mark.*"

And the society says, the solution to this is what? Get some object. They don't tell you you're small and inadequate and incomplete. That's too insulting. They just tell you that you'll be happy and whole and complete if you get this object. And the subtext or the implied meaning is, you're a loser. You're a loser unless you have what? A big house, good job, lovely kids, lots of friends, la-di-dah-di-dah-di-dah, whatever it is. Beautiful body, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. They don't tell you that you are a loser; they just say if you get these things you'll be a very big success. In other words, they're just telling you that you're not successful as you are.

And, you know, parents tell you that because they don't have the time to love you. If they felt they had the time to love you, then they would never allow you to get that idea that you weren't good enough. It would never happen because love means what? When you give love, pure love to a person, that person's self-esteem is really high. Children that get a lot of good, serious love, they're confident their whole life long because they know they're okay. Whereas in our societies, particularly in America and places like that, everybody has a self-esteem problem. So, it means what? I don't think highly of myself. I diminish myself, and my thinking. I think I'm not okay, I'm too whatever - too ignorant, too fat, too ugly, too poor, too this, too that, whatever it is.

So, the practice of knowledge is looking for that thought and dismissing that thought with the knowledge that I'm okay. So, I believe what the scripture says about me rather than what the world says about me. The world is constantly working against me, spiritually. But the scripture's your best friend. It says it here, Krishna says, "*I'm your best friend*," meaning this knowledge is your best friend. It's up to you if you want to use it. If you don't use this knowledge, then you're just going to fall back on the default setting and you're going to keep thinking there's something missing, there's something wrong with you. Remember, this is only about your idea about yourself. That's all.

So if you can accept what the scripture says, then the work is done. But people say, "*Oh, no. I don't know. I don't think I can accept that because I don't feel complete. I don't feel that I'm okay.*" Well, what's the problem there? You're trapped in your feelings and where did your feelings come from? So you have to look into these feelings and see where you got these feelings. And how did that idea that I'm not okay, that feeling that I'm not okay, come about?

You guys shouldn't trust your feelings. You should trust knowledge. We were talking about that yesterday. Feelings are unreliable guides to who you are. Sometimes when you feel good about yourself, that's a reliable guide. But when you feel bad about yourself, that's unreliable, isn't it? Because, it's not true. Because, your self is just one thing and it never changes and its nature is love, bliss, awareness like that. It's the nature of the self, so when you understand that your feelings about yourself are always positive. They're always good.

So, the practice of knowledge is the application of discrimination on a moment-to-moment basis, assuming that you have the conditions right. If you have the right kind of lifestyle, then you can discriminate quickly and easily and it won't take you very long to remove your tendency to think of yourself as somebody that's an incomplete person. And if you have a more extroverted life, then you need to do karma yoga until you get contemplative enough to apply knowledge, to practice knowledge.

Before you practice knowledge you have to get knowledge, and that's what we're doing here. We're using these teachings to prove to you that you're okay. I don't want you to believe me. I mean, if you can believe me, that's great. If you can just take it on board what the scripture says and what *James* says, that's great, but most people don't trust anybody but their own intellect. So we say, "*Well, surrender your intellect to this teaching and you will teach yourself.*" Then that knowledge is firm. If I tell you you're okay, then maybe that works for you but maybe it leaves you with a doubt. "*I'm okay because James said I'm okay, because the scriptures said I'm okay, but do I really know that I'm okay? Do I really know that I'm okay? Well, no?*" Okay, then, if that's true then start thinking like this: start thinking like the scripture asks you to think. Start discriminating, and then you'll see that it's true.

So, we say that you have faith in what the scripture says but you need to practice this knowledge until what? Until it's clear to you that it is true. So this is another simple formulation of the basic teaching. The basic teaching of Vedanta is *Ātma anātma viveka*. *Ātma* means awareness; simple, ordinary, everyday awareness. *Anātma* means all; whatever object is appearing in your awareness at any given moment. It will be different for everybody.

The objects will be different for everybody but all I need to know is what the subject is - Me - and what an object is. An object we define as anything other than Me. And then I just continually keep separating those two things in my mind until I no longer identify with an object, with a feeling, or a thought, or an action, or some idea. The biggest one is identifying with the doer. I think I'm a doer. That's why we go through all these problems, all this discussion about action and doing. Most of us think we're doers and that's a very difficult thought to get rid of. So we need a lot of logic and a lot of teaching around that to loosen up the idea that we're the doer and to understand *Isvara* or the *gunas* are the doer.

Once you see that actually the whole field of existence is producing the action, then your idea that you're a doer will go away. It will gradually disappear because you'll understand, "*I can't act without all these other factors.*" For me to do an action, I need to have a mind, I need to have a body, I need to have sense organs, I need to have *vasanas*, consciousness needs to be here. All of these factors need to be here or I can't act. So, as a doer, I'm completely dependent upon what? *Ishvara*, upon all the factors in the field for action. So, basically, it's very simple. It's just *ātma anātma viveka*. *Viveka* means knowing the difference between me and an object. Then you just won't confuse it anymore.

Verse 1 - Arjuna said, "What is the field and what is the knower of the field? What is the means of knowledge and what is to be known?"

Verse 2 - Krishna said, "This body is matter and is called the 'field'. The self, awareness is the knower of the field. I am the Knower of the body and of all bodies. self knowledge is knowing both the field and the Knower."

"Krishna said, "This body is matter and is called the 'field'. The self, awareness is the knower of the field." All the world outside doesn't mean anything apart from what? The fact that I'm here as a body, isn't it? If my body's not here, there's no world outside, is there? So, we don't need to worry about all that stuff out there. We just have to know what? That I'm the knower of my body.

Now does anybody think they're their body? Well, yes I do, and no I don't. I mean, when you think about it logically, you can't be the body, can you? Because the body's an object. The body is known to Me, so I can't be the body. I know the body, but the body doesn't know me. I can't be the body because the body isn't a knowing instrument, is it? Is the body a knowing instrument? No, it doesn't know anything. The body is just matter: air, fire, water, earth - food. So what can it know? It can't know anything. It's just an instrument through which awareness shines to see what? Objects outside.

Likewise, with the Subtle Body. The Subtle Body is just subtle matter. Matter is inert. The field is inert. So it can't know anything either. I know the Subtle Body. I know subjectively what I experience. You just have these two experiences: objective reality, in other words, the material world, and subjective reality which is my own thoughts and feelings and so forth. Well, both of those instruments are what? They're part of the field. The field is *Maya* on down (on *James's* chart). Neither one of them knows anything. When you have a telescope, a telescope makes it possible to see objects but the telescope itself doesn't know anything, does it? It just magnifies the field so that I can see through the telescope. So awareness is what? Always free of the body. Now, you know, you have to catch yourself thinking, watch yourself thinking because you're going to find out that at some point you're thinking you're the body.

"I am the knower of the body and of all bodies." Why is he saying "***all bodies***"? Because there's only one knower. So, whether it's one body that's known or all bodies that are known, it's the same knower. In other words, the awareness in you is exactly the same as the awareness that's in me. What accounts for the feeling of difference? What accounts for the feeling that you know something that I don't know? The nature of the upadhi, the type of body, the type of experience that you have.

This is an example I use often: electricity. Now, electricity's just one everywhere, isn't it? Just one. No matter where you go, electricity's the same. It's the same in China. It's the same in the sky when the

lightning comes. That's electricity. When I rub against something like this, it creates electricity, static electricity. Electricity is everywhere. It's a *shakti* or an energy that's everywhere and it's all the same everywhere. You don't have a different electricity in China than you have in America. It's just the same. But when that electricity goes through a light bulb, it comes out as light. And when it goes through a heater, it comes out as heat. And when it goes through a radio, it comes out as sound, doesn't it? Now, all three of those things are what? Are only electricity, but they have different manifestations because the electricity is flowing through different vehicles, different fields. Understand.

So, the consciousness in me is exactly the same as the consciousness in you, but it manifests different actions and behaviors why? Because the instrument is different. I was born at a certain place. No two people are born in exactly the same place and at exactly the same time. So, no two people are exactly the same. Even twins are born what? Born from the same womb and so forth and so on, but they're not born at exactly the same time. And they'll have what? They will have different *vasanas*. Sometimes twins have very similar *vasanas* and sometimes they're different. There will be different *vasanas* in twins. So they come in with a difference already, a subjective difference. So that means what? Everybody's going to behave differently and that's what makes us think we're all unique and separate and so forth. But in fact, what is sound but electricity transformed by the instrument. What is light but electricity transformed by the instrument. What is my life but awareness transformed by the James upadhi, the James instrument.

So the awareness he's saying here, is the same in all of them. It is not a specific awareness. In other words, awareness is not specific to each person. That's how people think, isn't it? People think, "*This is my awareness and that's your awareness. Everybody's awareness is different. And I can make my awareness grow, or my awareness is shrinking.*" They think like that.

Well, the reflected awareness it changes. The reflection doesn't change, but the reflected awareness changes. Why? Because the *gunas* color the awareness. So when tamo *guna's* shining through, then James can't figure out what he's doing. He's dull and *tamasic*. Now, that dull, *tamasic* state is awareness but it's awareness what? Filtered through that *guna*. So I look sleepy and dull and so forth.

If rajo *guna's* there, I'm very active and alert I'm talking very fast and I want to get this done, everybody's getting enlightened right now. That's awareness manifesting as this kind of dancing, active *shakti*. It is still awareness. And, if *sattva's* operating there, then what? awareness seems to be clear and still and bright. You say, "*James, you have an aura, a halo around you. Wooooo.*" Why? Because my mind is *sattvic*. We always put the halos around the saints and the *jnanis*. That's only because their minds tend to be *sattvic* and so you see this peace or radiance around these people, you feel this energy. But the awareness is still the same. It's just been what? Tweaked or transformed or apparently changed because it's going through this instrument, the field. I want to be able to discriminate awareness in different forms from pure awareness. Every object is awareness but it's filtered through the *gunas* and it appears differently.

Now, he said - this is important now. This is going to help you; this verse is a really good verse.

Verse 4 - I will now briefly discuss the nature of the field, the modifications that take place in it and where it comes from. I will also explain the Knower and its powers. It is to be known through the

mantras of the Vedic seers in many ways. And it is indeed explained by the sentences of the sutras on Brahman which clearly reveal It by implication and reason.

“I will now briefly discuss the nature of the field, the modifications that take place in it and where it comes from. I will also explain the Knower and its powers.” And how are we to know about the Knower? Science can tell us about the field, can't it? Science works here. Psychology has even figured out the Causal Body now. They're not really up to the mark totally on it. But they're pretty good now. There has been about a hundred years of research since Freud came along. Freud was the one who “discovered” it. Of course, the Vedic seers talked about it 5,000 years ago. But that's okay. Now, in the west, they're refining their understanding of the Causal Body. The book, 'Thinking Fast and Slow' by Daniel Kahneman for example. It's an extremely good book if you have the intellectual capability to study it. It points out the difference between System One, the Causal Body, and System Two. So science tells us all about this, not that their knowledge is as good as our knowledge because their knowledge is not intended to be used the way we use our knowledge. We use the knowledge of the Causal Body and the unconscious to set ourselves free of our problems and to point out the presence of awareness. So, our use of the knowledge isn't the same. But the knowledge here, this is scientific knowledge.

There's a huge amount of scientific knowledge here. I mean, I have new pipes here because of knowledge. I'm breathing naturally and am happy now, because why? Because of knowledge. My parents both died of heart disease and they didn't have the opportunity for this knowledge because this knowledge wasn't available at the time when they died. And now this knowledge is available. So everything in the field is known by science, more or less. But what about awareness? They draw a blank there.

“I will also explain the Knower and its powers.” 'It' meaning the knower. ***“It is to be known through the mantras of the Vedic seers in many ways.”*** In other words, through these teachings of Vedanta. ***“Vedic seers...”*** means the teachings of Vedanta. That's how we know. These are good people.

There are several means of knowledge; perception and inference being two. And there's another means of knowledge that's also legitimate. It's called āptavākya. Āptavākya means the testimony of a competent witness. If you have a competent witness who's present and all their faculties are available, then you can assume that what he or she says is true. And this knowledge is what? The testimony of competent witnesses. It has been verified over, and over, and over again, independently by people, by sages. 'Sage' means you and me, anybody who has this knowledge or can verify this knowledge in their own experience. So we can trust this, that's what we're saying.

Now, these modern people, they're not sages, generally, and you don't want to trust them, because why? Their knowledge hasn't been tested or vetted. We're just forced to believe it. Understand. So, what they say may be knowledge, but it may not be knowledge. So we say if somebody says they're enlightened and they're telling other people about it, we say, ***“Okay, we accept that you're maybe enlightened but we want to check what you say with the scripture. And if what you say isn't supported by scripture then it's just your personal knowledge. It's just what you say. It's not knowledge.”***

Knowledge is what is always good. Knowledge is good at any place, at any time, in any circumstance. It's what you cannot dismiss. Whereas erroneous knowledge, or false knowledge, or projected

knowledge, or remembered knowledge, that knowledge is often subject to correction and error. If somebody just comes and says they're enlightened, well, okay, then check and see. Do their teachings stack up? Do their statements about awareness about the field and the Knower of the field, do they correspond or coincide with scripture? If they do, then we accept it. And if not, we say, *"Okay, I'll stick with the scripture."*

In the spiritual world, God bless them, they're all good people and they're all seeking for the self, but there's more misinformation about enlightenment in the spiritual world, than anywhere else. Nobody else cares. There's more misinformation about what enlightenment is and how to attain enlightenment than you can imagine. That's why Krishna says right in the beginning of this, ***"Many and varied are the notions of enlightenment."*** And we need to look at those critically. So, he's saying here that about the self, this is our means of knowledge, the mantras and the Vedic seers.

"And it is indeed explained by the sentences of the sutras on Brahman,...." ***"Brahman"*** means Brahma sutras. That doesn't mean just the Brahman sutras. Sutra means a statement, a cryptic statement about consciousness, which clearly reveal it. How is it revealed? By implication and reason. I said this several times this week. We can't say directly what the self is. Well, we can. You can say it's consciousness. But what if I don't know what consciousness is? So you can't define consciousness. You can point to consciousness. Now, how do you point to consciousness? By using the implied meaning of the word. Implied meaning is like, okay, I walk in today and you say, *"Wow, Ram, you look really good today."* Now what is the implied meaning of that statement? Yesterday you looked lousy. Yesterday you didn't look good because you said, *"You look really good today."* It means yesterday you didn't look good. So, you can give knowledge by implication. By the way you use words, you can imply. If you look at your own speech there's implied meaning in almost everything you say. Very few people just speak directly. They speak in such a way that there's an implied meaning to the words.

And we have to speak that way with Brahman, because Brahman you can't see it directly so we have to use implication and reason. Now, reason is the logic of your own experience. When I do the location of objects teaching, that relies on logic. If you can accept the logic at every stage then you will say that these glasses are what? In Me. They're made out of consciousness and they are consciousness and they appear in Me. That's all we want to point out: that all objects appear in consciousness and are made out of consciousness. But you have to follow the logic.

I find clever people, suspicious people, they can tell that logic is being worked on them, so they pretend that they don't accept the first or the second stage. Because if you accept the first stage, then you're pretty much forced to accept the second stage because it's logical. It's based upon experience. And if you accept the second stage, then you have to accept the third stage. They maybe think, *"I don't wanna be led there. I don't wanna be told how to think."* But it's not that you're being told how to think. It's just you're seeing the absolute, complete logic of this teaching. But, you'd never come up with it yourself because the way you think unconsciously, underneath, is not known to you. It's unconscious. It's hidden from you.

Everybody has this hidden logic, this hidden knowledge inside them. We're not putting new knowledge into you. We're bringing out the knowledge that you already have. Understand. And showing you how this is what reality actually is and how you really know that reality's this way even

though you believe it's some other way. You believe it's different from what we're saying. Like another example in this teaching of reason is the three states.

Has everyone heard the three states teaching? No. Waker, dreamer, and deep sleeper? Now, even though you wake every day and you sleep every day, that's knowledge known to you. I know that I sleep, I know that I dream, and I know that I wake. But have you ever analyzed those three states and the experiencer of those three states, analyzed carefully so that you come to the conclusion that you cannot be the person that you think you are? Have you ever done that? No. The answer is "*No, you haven't.*" The logic is so subtle and it's so careful that once you've heard that teaching and surrender to the logic, you can no longer believe you're this person that you think you are. Can't do it. And by implication, what? I'm consciousness, because consciousness is present in all three states. It's the invariable factor in all three states but the variable factors in those three states are what? The three states themselves and the three experiencing entities, but those entities are state-dependent. And they come and go. And the states come and go also. But there's one factor that doesn't come and go. What is that? awareness. Because, you can't have a state or you can't have an experiencer without what? awareness.

When you think about the waking and dreaming, you don't come to the conclusion, "*I'm awareness*" and then walk away and say, "*I'm enlightened,*" do you? You need to be taught that. Once you've run through that logic a few times, suddenly there's a big shift, there's a click – "*Oh, right, I caught it.*" So, we have to use implication and reason to teach. This is our means of knowledge here, see?

You won't find this teaching in the modern spiritual world. It's just not there. It's indirect knowledge. They're experiential. They say, "*Well, I got it. If I can get it, you can get it.*" That's true, but how do I go about getting it? Well you just get it. So many people have told me that. One of my friends, she has a website that Shining World endorses. She's a great lady and she had an American guru. Nice man. Probably a self-realized person. But he had no teaching and so when she asked him, "*How do I get it?*" he said, "*Well, just get it. Just go back and do what you're doing. You'll get it.*" Well, no, you won't. No, you won't. You need to be shown it.

I can speak about myself. That's what happened to me. I couldn't get it. I tried for three years, almost four years and I'm not stupid and I was very committed, but I couldn't get it. And then I realized, "*I can't get it. Somebody has to give it to me. It's not available for my ego to just grab it.*" And our view is, "*Well, if I want it, I can get it.*" Well, this is why it is so difficult to get. Because why? I'm not looking in the right place for the right thing and I don't have a teaching. Here, we have a teaching that has worked for thousands of years, meaning knowledge, meaning Vedanta. It has worked for thousands of years and it's working today. Swami Dayananda's dying off, but I'm still on my feet. And there are people who have received this knowledge through me. And they will also, when I'm gone, they will also teach it the same way according to the tradition. So, we'll keep this teaching alive. But it needs to be taught.

So Krishna's explaining this. Now, here he's going to explain what the field is.

Verse 6 - The five subtle elements, ego, intellect and the Unmanifest, the mind, the ten senses and their objects constitute the structure of the field. Modifications that take place in the field are desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body and cognition.

“The five subtle elements, ego, intellect and the Unmanifest, the mind, the ten senses and their objects constitute the structure of the field.” The five subtle elements are what? Air, fire, water, earth, and space. Now, when we see the physical elements, these are the gross air, fire, water, earth, and space. But you can’t jump from awareness to the gross. You can’t just do that. It’s not possible for awareness to just manifest gross objects like that. How does it manifest gross objects? By creating subtle objects first. The subtle objects are what? They’re called tanmātras. They’re the idea of air, fire, water, earth, and space. They’re pure. They’re not contaminated or mixed, when *Maya* happens in *Isvara’s* mind, these five ideas, these five subtle elements appear. And then what do they do? They combine, split up and recombine in such a way that they become gross and tangible. But they’re in subtle form first. So he says the subtle form is there.

“Ego...” Now the ego is a part of the field. *“Oh, you’ve got to kill your ego. That’s the problem. Your problem is you have an ego. You’ve got to kill your ego.”* No, you don’t. The ego’s part of *Bhagavan*. *Bhagavan* has made an ego for a reason, the ego’s good, it’s fine. How’re you going to function without an ego? You need an ego. That whole idea of killing an ego is just ridiculous. Don’t listen to that. That’s what I mean by stupid teachings.

Look, why? Okay, I’ll tell you why. Everyone says, *“Oh, you have to kill your ego.”* Well, I’ll tell you why you won’t kill your ego and you can’t kill your ego. First of all, the ego’s there and it’s necessary. The ego, we said in the early chapters is *aham kartā*, *aham bhokta*. Now that means what? The ‘I am,’ the *aham*, is what? A doer and an enjoyer. The ego does actions and then what? It enjoys the results of its actions.

You don’t do actions for no reason, believe me. *“Oh, no, that’s not true, James. I do selfless service. I don’t have an ego. I just give everything to everybody else.”* Nonsense. Not so. I do because I want to enjoy. Even if you give away everything and you’re so selfless, you do it because why? You enjoy doing it. You enjoy feeling like you’re selfless, so you give away everything. *“Oh, yes, I give all my labor to the ashram.”* No wonder these ashrams are so damn rich and these swamis are running around in these big planes and flying around in boats and stuff like that. All of these fools are giving away all their energy, all their action to build up these big institutions. So the doer is doing to enjoy, isn’t it? That’s why we do.

Okay, let’s say that I’m going to kill my ego. Will I be there to enjoy the results of that killing? I won’t, will I? Because I’m dead! There’s no ego to enjoy the results of the action. The action is killing the ego but if the ego is killed, then how am I going to enjoy the results? Duh! Which means what? I’m not going to kill my ego. Nobody ever killed their ego. People shoot their body but they don’t kill their ego. It’s the ego that kills the body because why? It wants to enjoy the result of the absence of pain. I’m so full of pain, I just - boom! I treat myself to a little bit of peace. So, ego is a part of the field. You can’t do anything without ego. You need an ego to do anything.

Egoism, now you should do something about that. That’s called *ahañkāra*. That vanity, that ‘I’m doing,’ now that’s a problem. You can get rid of that. But you can’t get rid of the doer because the doer’s an intimate and integral part of the whole field of causation. It’s necessary. The ego, the intellect, we have to have that intellect. *“Oh, no, no. James, you’re wrong. You have to stop thinking. See, the problem is you are thinking and that’s why you’re not enlightened, so you have to get rid of*

your thoughts and stop thinking. You have to transcend your intellect, James. You have to get beyond the intellect. Then the intellect won't bother you."

Now, listen, the intellect is fine. It's there for a reason. It functions very beautifully. There's a reason for it. It's part of reality and we don't have to get rid of it. Understand. We just have to understand what it is. And the unmanifest, the Causal Body, meaning the three *gunas*, the *vasanas* and so forth, plus your karma - well this is where your karma is stored. Sañcita karma, prārabdha karma, and āgāmi karma - all those three karmas are stored here. That's what the driving force for all of this field is. It's the *vasanas*. And the unmanifest. The mind, the ten senses, and their objects. The ten senses and the objects are what? Material world. And what do they do? Constitute the structure of the field. Okay? That's the structure.

That structure is eternal. It manifests for 400 billion years and then it's unmanifest for 400 billion years, but after that 400 billion years it comes back again. The same structure emerges. That structure is eternal. That's the container, the laws, the rules. We call them the tattvas. The 'tattvas' mean the principles that are operating here. This is a lawful, principled universe. Okay? And now, this is the important bit. Okay, just a minute. We don't want to quit before the important bit.

"Modifications that take place in the field are desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body and cognition." Now, what's the implied meaning of that statement? We said we have to teach by implication. Desire and aversion, pleasure and pain, all of the objects don't belong to what? The Knower. They don't belong to you. That's the implied meaning. They belong to the field.

There are two things: the Knower and the field. This is what belongs to the field: desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, and so forth, and so on. It doesn't say what? They belong to the Knower, does it? It implies that they don't belong to the Knower because it said that they belong to the field. So if they belong to the field, they don't belong here. Why is that such an important teaching? Because what I want, what I ***"desire,"*** has nothing to do with me. It has nothing to do with me. It only exists in the field. It doesn't exist in me. There are no desires in me. What would I do with a desire? What's the point? I don't need a desire. I don't want desires. They don't belong here, in me. They aren't in me. There are no desires here. I'm nirvanaha, nirvikalpaha.

However, that's not how it feels though, is it? It feels like the desire belongs to me, to the Knower. But the desire that's sitting here belongs to the field. ***"Aversion,..."*** that's the opposite. It's what you don't like, what you don't want. So the Subtle Body has what? Has desire and aversion. But by implication, the self is not averse to anything, is it? Because these things don't cross the line (on James's chart). Customs here is very tight. You can't smuggle anything from here into here (James pointing below then above the line on chart). Krishna said yesterday, he said, *"There are no beings in me. There's none of that stuff in me. You can't get it here."* Even the Bible has that lovely statement. It says, *"It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."* Means somebody who's rich with desire and fears and all that stuff. And the part about it's easier to get a camel through the eye of a needle means it's impossible for this stuff to go up here. So when you go here, you leave all of this stuff behind, not that you go there. You are already here. So, you're already free of all of this stuff. That's what it's saying. ***"Pleasure, pain,..."*** They belong where? In the field.

I had my toothache yesterday. Thank God it's not there today. Now I have pleasure. The absence of pain is pleasure. You know how that is? I don't think I'm feeling good, but I'm feeling better because why? I don't have pain. Maybe I'm just back to normal, but back to normal feels like pleasure now because I just experienced pain. Well, that all belongs here. It doesn't belong to me. I was just the observer of the pain. There's no "**physical body...**" here and what? "**Cognition.**" "**Cognition**" means experience. To cognize something means to know or to experience something. So this is not an experiencing entity. It's not a cognizing, experiencing, thinking entity. It's just awareness pure awareness.

Okay, so, take a break and then we'll continue on.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 7 - Session 1 Continued
Chapter 13, Verses 6 - 15

We are talking about Swamiji, my guru and how he gives you the impression that you need to get rid of all your *vasanas* to get enlightened. It is a notion in Chin*Maya* teachings, which I disagree with and which is not really logical. Someone made a joke that if you got rid of all your *vasanas*, you'd be dead. (Laughter) And that's right! Because it's the *vasanas* that are driving everything. Nothing happens without a *vasana*. All reality starts here in the Causal Body. If you get rid of your *vasanas*, there is no reason for you to act, think, or feel, so you're dead.

What he actually meant was just those *vasanas* that disturb your mind and keep your mind unable to discriminate. Remember, according to Swamiji, *vasanas* are by definition bad thoughts. In other words, Swamiji only thought of *vasanas* as bad impulses or negative energies in your own mind. So, that is why he says you have to get rid of all of your *vasanas*. If you look at Pantajali, for example, he discriminates between helpful *vasanas* and unhelpful *vasanas*. He makes it clear.

Why would Swamiji encourage you to meditate, to study the scripture, to live a clean life, if all those actions were not producing *vasanas*? You want to get a *vasana* for meditation, you want to get a *vasana* for enquiry, you want to get a *vasana* for clean, dharmic living. You need all of those things! They are not standing in the way of your appreciation of yourself at all. Those are contributing factors to *moksha*, indirect means they are called. Śaṅkara says they are indirect means. You need those things.

If I get rid of all my *vasanas*, there will be no one there to know that I am awareness! So, we are saying that there is nothing wrong with you as a person. It is just that when there is too much confusion, too much self-centeredness, and too much anxiety or *rajas*, you could say then you are not happy and those things need to be reduced.

If all the *vasanas* are gone, then how do you understand Krishna's statement that "***I am the desire that is not opposed to dharma***"? How do you justify that statement? *Vasanas* are all your desires and fears. So Krishna is saying it is okay to have *vasanas* so long as those *vasanas* are not contrary to dharma, not contrary to your own nature.

Student - Can we say a *vasana* is generated whenever we have an experience of desire or an aversion?

James - Sure! Whenever you do an action associated with a desire or an aversion and there is a doer, an ego, then you get a *vasana*.

So, you are not bad. You are just a mechanical machine. None of us are bad. You just have to understand and get clear about how it works, then you quit tinkering with it. You quit trying to manipulate it and fix it. You see that it is working perfectly all the time and everything is taken care of all the time. That is what I mean when I say it is a benign universe. 'Benign' means it is a good

universe and it is looking out after you all the time, and all you need is to get out of the way and get your fears and desires reduced enough to see that everything is taking care of you all the time.

So, you don't have to run around doing all these things to take care of yourself. (*James* laughs.) This is not to say you do not have limited responsibility to respond according to what comes, according to what *Isvara* presents to you. But you can control what *Isvara* sends to you by the way you live. You know currently we are living out on top of one of these mountains in Spain. We are definitely controlling what *Isvara* can do because it is a big trouble for *Isvara* to send us any kind of disturbances. We are off the beaten track and we have no neighbors to speak of. Our desires are very low so there is very little *Isvara* can do to disturb us. It is almost a perfect environment.

But, when you try to take on full responsibility for everything that happens, in other words, you try to micro-manage your life, then what? Then you find yourself caught up in all these doings and feelings. "I must do, I have to do, I am supposed to do, I should do. And if I don't do, I'll get in trouble." That's called 'doership'. So 'doing' is not really the problem, the notion of that 'I am a doer' is the problem.

Student - So we have helpful values and for helpful values you have positive *vasanas*? But when you do things, anything, with a karma yoga attitude then you don't create a *vasana*?

James – Yes, that is correct.

Student - But you need a *vasana* for helpful values? No?

James – Well, you have a *vasana* for those values. You cultivate those values, you apply those values in your daily life and that way you cultivate those values.

Student - But cultivating is creating *vasanas*?

James - Sure.

Student - But when you do it with karma yoga attitude, you don't get a *vasana*?

James - You don't get a *vasana*, that's right. You are only getting rid of *vasanas* that are a problem.

Student - You don't have to create to cultivate helpful values?

James - Well, if you can't understand that you are awareness then you do. What is preventing me from understanding that I am awareness that I am whole and complete? My values! My Knowledge! And what underlies my knowledge? My values! What I know depends on what I value. If I value money, for example, is that going to help me know who I am? But if I value knowledge, that is going to help me, isn't it? So, I should get a *vasana* for knowledge. And in our case, it's for self knowledge. But getting *vasanas* for objects like automobiles, iPads and all that stuff is not going to help. If I am a *saṃsāri*, then that is all I care about.

So, when you are cultivating values, you should have the karma yoga attitude. In other words, if you were dishonest say and then you realized that dishonesty wasn't a good value, that it was not serving

you, what do you do next? You develop a *vasana* for honesty. So, when there was a situation where I could tell the truth, I did. So I just practiced telling the truth. I developed a *vasana* for the truth and that chased away my dishonesty *vasana*. Honesty is in complete harmony with universal values, with the self.

There are mean people who injure other people just because it makes them feel happy. Now that is not helpful because when you injure someone what do you do? You feel guilty, don't you? You feel bad, you feel mean when you say something nasty. You make a snarky little comment and immediately you feel ashamed of yourself. Now, how am I going to get rid of that tendency? I am going to have to cultivate kindness. I am going to have to learn the opposite tendency and develop a *vasana* for what? Kindness, for contributing to that situation. Making an offering is completely in harmony with the nature of *Isvara*. Why? Because *Isvara's* nature is what? To contribute. *Isvara* has contributed everything to us. He has given us a body, mind, a world, everything.

Any kind of adharmic behavior needs to be addressed. Any bad values need to be examined and changed. Or what? It is like Andrew Cohen who claimed to be enlightened but he had a *vasana* for abuse. He claims he is enlightened but it took him 27 years of abuse before he admitted the truth. Last year, he said he was not a good person, that he was an abuser, and he stepped down. I think he was forced down. He would not have stepped down on his own. I think he created so much bad karma with his *vasana* that eventually the people he depended upon rose up because they couldn't take any more abuse, and then he was forced to step down.

Verse 6 - The five subtle elements, ego, intellect and the Unmanifest, the mind, the ten senses and their objects constitute the structure of the field. Modifications that take place in the field are desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body and cognition.

Other than the following modifications all else is ignorance: fortitude, absence of conceit, absence of hypocrisy, harmlessness, accommodation, straightforwardness, reverence for the teacher, cleanliness, steadfastness, self-discipline, dispassion with reference to the sense objects, absence of pride, seeing clearly the defects of pain, birth, death, old age and disease, absence of ownership, absence of excessive affection regarding family, sex and home, evenness of mind regarding gain and loss, unswerving devotion to Me, love of solitude, indifference to social life and constant pursuit of self knowledge.

What does he mean by "**modifications**"? Subtle Body activities. Remember, he says up above that modifications that take place in the field, are desire, aversion, pain, the physical body and cognition.

Now he continues by saying, "**Other than the following modifications, all else is ignorance:...**" Ignorance with reference to what? Ignorance with reference to purifying my mind, because if I allow these bad values to fester and grow: if I don't address those bad values, then my mind is not going to be pure. I need a pure mind. I need a pure, simple, holy mind to understand this.

So what are the good values? These are called *jnana* in Sanksrit and it means knowledge, not self knowledge, but knowledge that is suitable for preparing my mind.

"Fortitude,..." That's courage.

“Absence of conceit,...” Everyone knows what conceit is? Conceit means thinking you are special, thinking you are wonderful, thinking you are so hot. *“I’m the James! (laughter) You’re the guru! I have seminars with thousands of people.”* No, there are only about 20. (More laughter.) I think I am wonderful. That is conceit. So, absence of conceit. If you have this, if you think you are special and wonderful and all that, and when you look in the mirror you fall in love with yourself, you are probably conceited. So this is something I have to look at. If I have that tendency, then I should work on getting rid of that tendency.

“Absence of hypocrisy,...” In other words, I don’t say one thing and do something else. Better not to say anything and just do what you do. But if you say something or think something, your action should match what you say, think and feel. Like Bill Clinton, *“I did not have sex with that woman.”* What a hypocrite! And then, a couple of weeks later under oath, *“I had sex with that woman.”* What a hypocrite. So long as he thinks he can fool us and convince us, he says he did not have sex.

Politicians are like that. They are the worst. My theory about the presidency of America is that the President is the best liar in the country. The biggest hypocrite is the President. He is the guy who knows how to tell lies better than anyone else and to pretend one way or another, he is something else. It’s not really true, but you get the idea.

“Harmlessness,...” You know if you don’t like yourself, you will harm yourself. There are many ways you can harm yourself. You need to look and see whether you are harming others. If you are harming others than you are harming yourself. You wouldn’t harm others unless you were in pain. By harming others, what you are actually doing is you are harming yourself. You are reinforcing unhappy, negative tendencies. So, if you are really harmless, that’s a great quality. Cultivating this *vasana* means watching yourself, watching your speech, watching your actions and seeing that you are not injuring yourself.

“Accommodation,...” This value comes throughout the Bhagavad Gita. This is a big one. I had a friend once and we were traveling to India; five of us were traveling together. Everyone was accommodating around food, but she was completely fanatical about her diet. She was absolutely unable to accommodate, so sometimes we had to go to four or five restaurants before we could eat. She had to quiz all of the waiters about how they cooked the food and exactly what they cooked. Those waiters in India were looking at her like, *“What!?” “Are you using oil? When did you change your oil last? Are these fried or are these baked?”* She would not accommodate. Here are four people and we are all dead hungry and we can’t eat because what? Because she won’t accommodate anyone. The group is saying, *“Let’s go there, let’s eat, let’s enjoy ourselves and go home.”* No, no. She won’t accommodate so she is causing all kinds of problems for everyone else. She just simply would not eat what was there.

Accommodation shows lack of ego, lack of selfishness. Okay, this is the situation *Bhagavan* wants so I’ll accommodate. I don’t want to go to that restaurant particularly but I’ll go and find a salad there. You want to eat steak. I want to go for tofu. Okay, I will accommodate. We see these enlightened people going around or just waiting because they won’t make up their mind in the sense that they will wait and let you decide. They ask, *“What would you like? What do you want to do?”* They keep

pushing it back on you. They don't necessarily want you to do what they want to do. It is all fine, anything. That's accommodation.

"Straightforwardness,..." Up to a point. It means, don't be too honest. You can be too straightforward and honest and you can injure people. Be careful. But make sure what you really say is what you mean. And that is again related to hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the opposite of straightforwardness.

"Reverence for the teacher,..." So, if you have a teacher you should show respect for them.

"Cleanliness,..." Inner cleanliness and outer cleanliness.

"Steadfastness,..." That's a big one. It is listed as one of the qualifications, determination or steadfastness. You want to stick to it, so once you understand the value of these teachings, for example, you stick to them. They're everything you need. Just keep plugging away, little by little, consistently. Don't look for anything exciting to happen, just understand the value instead, day-by-day, step-by-step, and little by little. Don't expect big changes. Just watch for small changes. Be steadfast!

"self-discipline,..." Some people have to go to all these seminars or meditations because they cannot discipline themselves. Well these things are great, but you have to have self-motivation, self-discipline. I am not paid to do this. I am not paid to write books. It is not coming from the outside at all. Because I love it, I just keep doing it: keep studying, keep reading, keep writing the books, keep improving the website, keep trying to improve my teaching all time.

"Dispassion with reference to the sense objects,..." Well, that makes sense.

"Absence of pride,..." Why? Because I understand that there is nothing for me to be proud of. Everything belongs to *Isvara*.

"Seeing clearly the defects of pain, birth, death, old age and disease,..." This is an important value. I don't know why it is hard to see that! (Laughter) No! It means life. People have this romantic notion of life and they don't want to look at the pain and the suffering. I am starting to realize that, *"Oh my god, it could be this miserable. I am 72, my heart is just about to die and I have toothache and heartache. Goddamn! I got all these problems."* Well, I can wonder around thinking I am transcendental and all that sort of thing but let's face it; you have to see very clearly that this is the end of the road. Maybe I have another ten years, or five years, or two years, even twenty years! It is not going to get better because this machine is disintegrating. *Bhagavan* has all the bits and put it together, assembled it, but now what? It is starting to disintegrate, to fall apart. I might as well be clear about that, understand that and not try to avoid that fact.

"Absence of ownership,..." We talked about that.

"Absence of excessive affection regarding family, sex and home,..." That means you should be affectionate towards your family and towards your home and you can be affectionate sexually too. That's nice. Nothing wrong with that. But what! Excessive affection is the problem. I had a girlfriend once that I did not stay with for very long because I realized her and her family did not love each other

at all but they told each other that they loved each other every five minutes. It was the way they covered up the fact that they did not like each other. They used excessive affection in telling each that they loved each other every five minutes when in fact, they did not. They were all in conflict.

It is good to be affectionate, that is love. You feel tender and affectionate toward other people but not excessively. You see these western women in India, picking up the street dogs. So sad! A lot of them just carrying around these dogs 24/7. One woman, wherever she goes she is carrying this stupid dog. Patting it, feeding it, putting it in her bag. You'd think the dog was her child. She was completely controlled by that *vasana* for love and affection.

“Evenness of mind regarding gain and loss,...” We already talked about that.

“Unswerving devotion to me,...” That is a good one. Cultivate devotion to *Bhagavan*, to yourself.

“Love of solitude,...” It does not mean you have to live in a forest all day long. You should simply love peace and quiet and solitude. You can find plenty of peace and quiet in your own house. You can create it. You can turn a very *rajasic* house into a haven of peace and tranquility if you want to. You should have that love.

“Indifference to social life,...” Take it or leave it. It is no big deal. Go out on Friday night have a drink, party a bit or stay at home and read the scripture. Either way it is no big deal. I can go out sometimes, it is no big deal sometimes. I'm indifferent.

“And constant pursuit of self knowledge.” That's a good one.

Verse 12 - The self, pure awareness beginningless, limitless, neither existent as an object, nor non-existent, is what is to be known. Everywhere are its hands and feet, everywhere it has eyes that see, minds that think and mouths that speak. It listens everywhere. It dwells in everything and pervades everything. Though free of the senses It shines through every sense organ. It is connected to nothing but supports and sustains everything. It stands apart from the three *gunas* yet it enjoys them all.

“The self, pure awareness beginningless, limitless, neither existent as an object, nor non-existent, is what is to be known.” That is what we want to know. Means what? It doesn't exist as an object. But it is not non-existent either. It is perfect. It is You. But You are not an object, are you? No! You are the subject. This is what we are talking about. This is Me. I want to know Me.

“Everywhere are its hands and feet, everywhere it has eyes that see, minds that think and mouths that speak.” That is lovely isn't it?

“It listens everywhere. It dwells in everything and pervades everything. Though free of the senses It shines through every sense organ. It is connected to nothing but supports and sustains everything. It stands apart from the three *gunas* yet it enjoys them all.” Lovely, no!? That's You. What you are seeing, I am seeing. When you are hearing, I am hearing. There is only one 'I', there is only one body and only one mind. awareness dwells in everything, it pervades everything. I am in everything and I pervade everything. There is no place where 'I' don't exist.

“I shine through every sense organ, but I am free of them. Everything that exists has its being in Me. I support and sustain everything.” Means what? Without consciousness, without Me, no objects! Yet, I don’t need objects to be what? Me. I’m free of them. I stand apart from the three *gunas* means experience, but I get to enjoy my experience. I don’t do anything, I just enjoy as a witness. As an observer, I am enjoying what ‘James’ is experiencing. ‘James’ is an experiencer through which ‘I’ experience. The *gunas* play through James. He is always changing and I am watching ‘James’ change.

Verse 15 - The self to be known is within all beings yet outside them too. It moves without moving. Too subtle to be perceived it is the nearest of the near. It is indivisible but seems to be made of parts. It creates, sustains, and devours all beings. The light of lights, it is beyond ignorance. It is what is worth knowing. It is knowledge, the means of knowledge and the object of knowledge. It is present in the hearts and minds of all beings.

“The self to be known is within all beings yet outside them too.” Means what? It is not limited by any form.

“It moves without moving.” Oh, that’s a tricky one, eh? How does it move without moving? By apparently moving. When I look at the self through the mind, which is changing, the self seems to be moving but is it actually moving? No, it’s not actually moving. Remember the train? You sit on a train waiting for it to pull out of the station and another train pulls into the station and stops. Then this train takes off, it leaves the station and although the train you are on is still sitting in the station, you think you are moving. It feels like you are moving, but you aren’t. You are not moving. You are moving without moving. You are sitting still but you are moving. How does that happen? Everyone has experienced that. Very strange isn’t it? Well, that’s how it feels to know and understand the self.

“Too subtle to be perceived it is the nearest of the near.” What is the nearest of the near mean? Me! Is there anything closer to you than you? Can you find anyone else closer to you than You? You are the nearest of the near. You are so near to yourself you cannot even see yourself.

This is the idea that Krishna said earlier is a great secret, the royal secret. What I am looking for is so close that I can’t see it. If I just turned around and looked at the looker then I would see it, but I don’t because I am looking outside all the time. I am looking for some experience, or feeling or object. “Oh, it must be there!” No, it’s me; it’s the looker, the one that sees. It’s so near.

“It is indivisible but seems to be made up of parts.” The self is indivisible. Then why does it look like it has parts? Because *Maya* is generating the appearance of parts. Look at your own experience. Where’s the line between the body and the mind? Where is it? Have you ever seen a line between your body and your mind, like a line down the middle of the road? There’s a right lane and a left lane and there’s a line going down the middle. But what about your body? Where’s the line? There is no line. Where is the line between your mind and yourself? There must be a line.

The lines on the chart don’t exist. We are just putting those lines there to help you discriminate. But there is no line between You and your mind. No line between You and the body, and no line between the body and the world. Where is the line? If there is a line I want to see it. I can’t see it because

there isn't one. Isn't that right? So what? Means there are no parts here. It just looks like there are parts because *Maya* makes it look like there are all these different parts, makes it look like you are there and I am here.

"It creates, sustains and devours all beings." Why? Just look at your thoughts. Where are your thoughts coming from? They are not coming from outside, they are coming from out of You. And then what do you do? You watch the thought. The thought has a life. Say a feeling of anger comes up. That feeling is a thought. So anger comes out of me. I'm creating anger. Then what? Then I watch anger for a while and then what do I do? I gobble it all up and it disappears. So I create it, I sustain it and I destroy it. Then the next thought comes up and then it dies. All that process, creation, sustenance and destruction, is taking place in me all the time. Nice!

It is ***"the light of lights...."*** How do you know? How do you see objects in this room? Because there is sunlight in this room. Well how do you see the light? Never mind the objects, how do you see the light? Because you are Aware. In other words, awareness illumines the light, doesn't it?

Physical light illumines physical objects. You know the sunlight illumines physical objects. Okay, close your eyes so there is no light. How do I know the absence of light? Because I am the light that illumines the absence of light. awareness is illumining the darkness. If awareness is illumining the darkness it is also illumining the light. It is very simple. There is a light shining on my mind and that is Me, awareness.

"It is beyond ignorance." Means what? You say you don't know. Well, how do you know you don't know? Because I illumine ignorance. I shine on my ignorance and therefore what? I am beyond ignorance.

"It is what is worth knowing." This is what is worth knowing. Not the objects, Me. That is what is worth knowing because knowing that, knowing who I am, is freedom.

"It is knowledge, the means of knowledge and object of knowledge." Knowledge is taking place here. The means of knowledge is the senses and the object of knowledge is the world. It is all three of these and none of these because in the absence of knowledge I still shine.

"It is present in the hearts and minds of all beings."

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 7 - Session 2
Chapter 13, Verses 18 - 27

Mukti means self. Śiva also means the self. Śiva means that which is auspicious at all places and at all times. So, what is auspicious at all places and at all times and is auspicious under every circumstance? Me. So Śiva means your self, and in our tradition that self has a form called dakṣiṇāmūrti. This is Śiva as the bringer of knowledge. Most people know the dancing form of Śiva, śiva nāṭaraja. All symbols of Śiva refer to different spiritual truths, so in this case dakṣiṇāmūrti is the bringer of the knowledge. And remember, Śiva is the first guru. Obviously, the teachings don't start here with śiva. That is why Vedanta did not come from people, it is coming from the self, from Śiva and it is revealed to people when their minds are *sattvic*.

Anybody can be a ṛṣi. When the mind is *sattvic* you can see this knowledge and you understand directly and intuitively what is meant by it. In this way you are a ṛṣi. Ṛṣi means a seer. In our tradition it is called śruti. And śruti means heard, what is heard. The significance of seen and heard is that it is not subjective. It comes from outside. Knowledge is not subjective, it is objective. It is good, irrespective of what you think, feel or know. Knowledge is something that is always good. That is to distinguish it from spiritual experiences and mystical experiences. Based on a mystical experience, I can make certain statements. Fair enough. There is nothing to stop you from talking about god or starting a religion. But Vedanta did not come from people. It came to people from Śiva. So in our opening chant we honor dakṣiṇāmūrti, we invoke Śiva as the bringer of knowledge. And who brings us the knowledge? Śaṅkara. Then the invocation continues through the lineage naming some of the other teachers in the lineage. Dakṣiṇāmūrti means the one facing south. It is the murti or the form that is the form of the greatest wealth. And what is the greatest wealth you can have? self-knowledge! There is no greater wealth than self-knowledge. You can have lots of wealth and not have self-knowledge. But if you have self-knowledge, it doesn't matter what other kind of wealth you have. That is the greatest wealth. It is freedom. It is happiness.

Verse 18 - I have now briefly explained the field, the Knower of the field and what is to be known. The one who understands this clearly and is devoted to actualizing it will realize Me. You should also know that the field and the knower have no beginning and that the modifications taking place in the field are born of the field alone. The field generates the physical body and its instruments. The Knower makes it possible to experience pleasure and pain. Because the experiencer obtains in the field, it enjoys the modifications and attributes of the field. Attachment to the attributes is the cause for births in higher and lower wombs. The one obtaining in the body is the limitless self, the seer, permitter, sustainer, and enjoyer.

“I have now briefly explained the field, the Knower of the field and what is to be known.” What is to be known is that I am the knower of the field. And what is the benefit of this, what does it imply, this knowledge?

“The one who understands this clearly and is devoted to actualizing it will realize Me.” In other words, you will become free by understanding the difference between the field and the knower of the field. That is the benefit. The scripture always tells you the benefit. And the benefit is what? Freedom.

“You should also know that the field and the knower have no beginning and that the modifications taking place in the field are born out of the field alone.” So repeating what we said earlier with some of the modifications: desire, pleasure, pain, cognition and so forth. In other words, all of what you call your subjective stuff is not your subjective stuff. It’s what? It belongs to the field. It does not belong to you. So why are you saying this is my stuff and you need to own it? If you are a karma yogi, you assume this stuff is yours and that you have to work it out. If you are *jnani* yogi, which is what this knowledge is about, then you just have to understand that this stuff doesn’t belong to you. And that is a tough one. That is really a tough one, because it’s natural to assume that because it is coming through you that it belongs to you. But it doesn’t. It belongs to *Isvara*, to the field.

I know that sounds way too easy. Yeah, it seems easy but we all know it’s really hard to accept the fact that what I am experiencing doesn’t belong to me. *Isvara* sends the same stuff to the wise people as is sent to the unwise people. It is just that the wise people say, *“This is not mine and I don’t have to own it. I didn’t create it and I am not bringing it up.”*

Say you had a *vasana*; say there is a *vasana* in you. See how I immediately started to put a little ignorance in there when I said you had a *vasana*? What is wrong with that? You don’t have a *vasana*. Understand. I have to catch myself all the time because ignorance is going to come out, so I have to correct it. If there is a *vasana* in you, just sitting there dormant and you are just floating around enjoying yourself and then something comes up and excites that *vasana*, anger arises. I became angry means what? It is my stuff: the anger is mine. But did you actually decide to get angry? Okay, get angry now! Go ahead, get angry. I want you to get angry. You can’t get angry, can you? Think about it. You just can’t get angry. There has to be some trigger. The anger is in you. It is not you. Some circumstances that are contrary to your idea of happiness happen and they trigger anger and then the anger comes up. But you didn’t go out and solicit the circumstances. Did you say how am I going to get this anger? I have to put myself in a situation that I don’t like so I can feel angry? You don’t think like that. Nobody thinks like that. Which means that anger does not belong to you at all. It is just sitting in *Isvara* looking for opportunities to come popping out. But you are not actually doing it, are you? Why do you own it and say it is mine?

I get angry about once a year. It’s very clear to me that when it happens it has nothing to do with Me at all. Do I get angry? Well, no. Anger appears and the way it looks like from the outside is that *James* is angry and he is yelling at me. But actually, no. *Isvara* created the circumstances, the anger was triggered and then the behavior occurred and I am observing the behavior. I think, *“Oh, this is funny! I have not been angry for a whole year.”*

I had a friend who lied to me. This was the last time I was angry. My friend told me a lie. And that pissed me off. *“You should know better than to lie to me. I am not a fool. How dare you!?”*

Or, getting happy. Well, right now get happy, please. I want you happy. Hey! Things happen that make you happy. So happiness and anger and all these things belong where? In the field, with *Isvara*. They do not belong to you.

So in this verse he is saying that you should know the field and the Knower of the field. First of all, it has no beginning. Well, what does that mean? The self is unborn. But the field is also unborn. In other words, it is anādi. Anādi means doesn't begin. It has no beginning. Tell me, when did you become ignorant of the 'gagabooguy'? When did you become ignorant of it? You have always been ignorant of it. It never began. You are always ignorant but that doesn't mean that ignorance doesn't end, does it? So when I tell you what the 'gagabooguy' is, you are no longer ignorant. So anything that belongs to the field, ends. Ignorance is part of the field. Desire, pleasure, pain; those are all dependent on ignorance.

And what is this now? This is my body. What is wrong with that? He says here Verse 18 that "***The field generates the physical body....***" Doesn't it? Then how do you get involved in it? Tell me how it became your body when the field generated it? You didn't make this body. The field generated this body according to the *vasanas*. And who put the *vasanas* there? *Isvara*, the field. The *vasanas* belong to *Isvara* and when it interacts it appears as a human being and then a body comes. And so "***The field generates the physical body and its instruments.***" That means the ten senses. That is why we have these squiggly lines on the chart.

"The Knower makes it possible to experience pleasure and pain." Pleasure and pain belong in the field. They come from the field but there won't be any experience of pleasure and pain without the Knower. In other words, anything you experience depends upon the knowledge of it. All your experience depends upon the knowledge of the experience.

"Because the experiencer obtains in the field...." Because James obtains in this world "***it enjoys the modifications and attributes of the field.***" James is stuck in this field. So what does the field do? It gave me a toothache! Did I give me a toothache? No way, I did not want a toothache. No, thank you! I had no choice, did I? The teeth and the food and whatever it is, they all belong to the field operating under certain laws and when you do certain things then you get an infection, then you get a toothache. Right! I didn't get a toothache. The field gave me a toothache! See how the thinking is? Just disassociating 'I' from these things. All that stuff does not belong to you. It definitely belongs in the field.

"It enjoys the modifications and attributes of the field. Attachment to the attributes is the cause for births in higher and lower wombs."

If you get attached to spiritual stuff, then you'll get born in higher ones so you get a more pleasant, *sattvic* experience. If you get attached to lower vibrations, you will get more unpleasant and difficult experiences. That is all it means. Because you see the attributes of the field and then the experiencer gets attached to the attributes. Okay, sex. Does the self have any sex organs? Don't think so! Where does sex belong? In the body. So sexual pleasure, sexual desire is an attribute of the body. The body is the field. So that's built into *Isvara*. Now, what is that? "***Attachment to the cause of attributes is the cause for births in higher and lower wombs.***"

I am attached to travel and it's a bit hard to break. I don't know what it is like to grind the travel *vasana* down to zero so I can actually sit still in one place. My fascination for the world, it has been hard to grind that down. As soon as I sit down for a couple of months I start getting bored, I start thinking, "I'd like to go there, see this, see that, do this do that." Your *vasana* keeps coming up and tickling you. Then somebody writes me from England saying, "I have a nice big apartment for you. We'll just treat you like a king. Bring your wife." Suddenly, sitting still does not look so good. I start firing off emails suggesting that I could use the house for a class and we can do that and that and in comes that *vasana*. I get attached to moving around. I get bored quickly. And a lot of people get bored of you after two days. It is not that you are boring; I am boring. I have this restlessness in me, this *rajas* in me. My whole life I have been running around. I never stop. I never sit still and even if I am sitting still, I feel like I am moving all the time. But all that stuff belongs to the field, to *rajo guna*. *Rajo guna* means I am restless. And when you are restless, you get bored. Restlessness and boredom are just *rajas*. You want something exciting to stimulate you. But all that stuff does not belong to me. I talk about it with humor, I observe it happening but it doesn't belong to me. I am the one who knows it and appreciates it for what it is.

So attachment to the attributes is the cause of births and deaths. Births and deaths means continuing with a certain kind of behavior you are attached to like sex, money, food or whatever it is. You get born into that *vasana* over and over again and you get tied down by it. It just becomes a habit.

"The one obtaining in the body is the limitless self, the seer, permitter, sustainer, and enjoyer." Why do they put the doer in there? Because, these are all what? The self. The self permits everything. Just go right ahead. Everything is fine. As the sustainer, as long as you keep looking at it, the object remains. But when you no longer look at the object, the object collapses. Doesn't it? The object is gone. And the enjoyer, it enjoys without doing. In other words, it just appreciates the play of the *gunas*. It is entertaining.

Verse 23 - Irrespective of your lifestyle you will not be born again if you understand the nature of the field and its knower. Some, with the aid of a purified mind realize the self by meditation, some by inquiry guided by the means of knowledge, some through karma yoga. But others, by applying what they have heard from qualified teachers, also realize the self. Living and non-living things are born because the Knower illumines the field.

"Irrespective of your lifestyle...." So you don't have to have the lifestyle of a *jnani*. **"Irrespective of your lifestyle you will not be born again if you understand the nature of the field and its knower."** It is *ātma anātma*, you understand? What is the knower, what sees, what is the field, all activities, all objects. Very simple.

"Some, with the aid of a purified mind realize the self by meditation, some by inquiry guided by the means of knowledge...." That's us. And meditation, if you like meditations you go right ahead. And **"some through karma yoga."** But others, by applying what they have heard from qualified teachers, also realize the self.

Some people can actually read the scripture and if they are purified enough, they might be able to gain some knowledge through that. Those who are applying what they learned from qualified teachers also realize themselves. That is the best; well, I am just saying that worked the best for me,

maybe it does not work for you. In fact, people who get teachers are the smart ones. Seriously. It saves a lot of time. I mean you will get there in the long run: it says anybody is going to get there whatever they do. Eventually they will get there because it is the will of *Isvara*. Everybody knows *Isvara*. But what? How many lifetimes do you want to live? How much suffering do you want to go through? Why not just get on the bus? Have the teacher take over and teach you and then apply that knowledge. All those people also realize themselves.

Living and non-living things are born because the Knower illumines the field. You take away the knower and what happens? No living things and no non-living things. If you take away awareness what is left? Nothing. Everything depends on You. Which means you are in control here. You are the boss.

You don't need an experience, knowledge or ignorance or anything to validate You. You validate everything simply by watching it. The fact that you know it, that you observe it, is what makes it valuable. It has no value on its own. All the objects are value-neutral. They don't mean anything. They are just forms created by *Isvara* with no meaning whatsoever. They only become meaningful when I see them. Think about this. It is lovely.

Verse 27 - The one who sees the self unchanging in the midst of the changing field, alone sees. If you see the self in all things equally you will not fall from the path which leads to self realization. If you understand that the field alone is responsible for the action and that the self is not a doer you know the truth. Liberation is seeing clearly that the manifold beings and objects in the field are a projection of the non-dual self. Though it obtains in the body, the self, limitless awareness does not act. Just as subtle all-pervasive space is unaffected by what takes place in it, the self is unaffected by the modifications taking place in it. Just as the sun illumines the entire world the self illumines the entire field. The knowledge that distinguishes the field from the Knower is liberation.

“The one who sees the self unchanging in the midst of the changing field, alone sees.” That is the one who knows. It means what? You don't have to get rid of the field. You don't have to get rid of that changing part of yourself at all, do you? You have to see awareness shining on the changes. You are something other than the field and the Knower. If you see the self unchanging in the middle of a changing field, what does that mean? It means you are something other than the changing self. Aren't you?

There is a beautiful verse coming up in chapter 15. It establishes that there is this changing self, and then something unchanging. The field is unchanging. It is immutable. The Causal Body, that is what they mean by the unchanging. This doesn't change, it's temporal, eternal and unmanifest. And one who sees, who understands these two, what's changing and what's unchanging, that one alone sees. Now, *Isvara* is what? Sees both the changing and unchanging. In addition to the changing self and the unchanging self, there is this Knower. We just use the idea of change and not changing to reveal what? The Knower, to reveal your nature.

“If you see the self in all things equally you will not fall from the path which leads to self realization.” In other words, if you have this vision of non-duality you will never get off the path. Why? Because your vision will be in harmony with the nature of reality. There is no difference between one thing and another. All the differences are created because you want to take the form to

be real. You think your body is separate from other bodies. But we know it is not. Your body is five elements: my body is five elements. That is it! That is non-duality. Even though it looks like you are over there, I know your body is made of five elements and I know my body is made of five elements so there is no difference between my body and your body. Your eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin do exactly the same things my eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin do. There is no difference. They see, hear, smell, taste and touch. That is what they do.

Emotions. When I see your anger I understand that it is not separate from my anger. That is non-duality. It looks like it belongs to you but it is the same thing in me. Have that understanding, that vision of non-duality that nothing here is separate from me. Everything is just this one eternal consciousness appearing in different forms. It's like electricity appearing in different forms. That is it. Have that vision of non-duality and you cannot get off the path.

“If you understand that the field alone is responsible for the action...” Again he is hammering on this point, just hammering on it. Why? What is the implied meaning that the field is always responsible for action? I'm not! That is so hard isn't it, for the ego to accept? It is so hard.

“If you understand that the field alone is responsible for action and that the self is not a doer you know the truth.” That is all you have to do. That's it.

“Liberation is seeing clearly that the manifold beings and objects in the field are a projection of the non-dual self.” In other words, of *Maya*. Obviously the self is not a projection of the self. The self, in its role as *Isvara* or the Creator, is projecting this. But what is all this made out of, what is this projection made of? awareness. And where does the intelligence arise from to shape the forms to come into manifestation? awareness. We know that these forms are intelligently designed. But where is it coming from? It is not coming from any place else. It is coming from awareness. Once you understand that, you see all forms are equal and are awareness.

So, who am I to you? I don't know what I am to you, or what you think I am. I have no idea. I am an idea in your mind. That is what I am. You have projected a guru called *James* teaching in your mind, so where am I actually? Am I sitting over here talking to you or am I just a thought in your mind manufactured out of your own consciousness, a walking, talking thought, idea, or experience? Because, you are experiencing me in here, aren't you? And everyone here experiences things differently, don't they? One of you will hear this sentence one way and somebody else will hear it another way. And you will say, *“Well, James said this,”* and she will say, *“No, James said that.”* Well, what did this *James* say? It does not matter what this *James* said because as soon as *James's* words went into that one or that one, they were interpreted differently according to your knowledge, your understanding and your situation in life.

So am I really out here talking to you? Not really. I am rarely what you think I am in your mind. Now, that means what? That I am made out of you. Yes!

Student - Well, it would be fair, if you are made out of me, that I had some sort of control over it. (Laughter)

James - Actually, that was the question we had here yesterday. I should know what you are thinking, I should have control over you. No. The control that issues behavior belongs to the field, it does not belong with the self at all. You see the point of this teaching is to show that you are only experiencing your self and I just stand for this desire to know. I represent the desire to know, that you have.

How do you know what I actually am? Maybe I am an axe murderer. You do not know what I do in the night. I might even molest little boys in the park. How do you know? I might hold up the bank with a gun. How do you know? You only see me sitting here blabbing Vedanta. But when I am not here blabbing Vedanta, who am I to you? I am the thought of *James* and you come and listen again.

So, where am I? And the same is for me. Where are you? You are here in me. You are the eternal Arjuna. You have questions and I am eternal Krishna and I talk the terminology. But all that is only taking place in me.

Student - So, would you agree that when you really understand, one of the possibilities is that you can become a much deeper listener? That the quality of your listening changes because you realize that to communicate, everyone is seeing what you said in a different way?

James - Oh yeah, sure. I do not know what you are taking in until you tell me. I can tell you are taking in something, but I do not know what you are taking in. I don't know how you are interpreting this. If you are smiling I assume that you are probably enjoying what you are hearing. But how do I know what you are taking in, because I am only in your mind. You are relating to these words. But where are my words manifesting? They are manifesting in your mind. The words are not staying over here. My words go into your mind, they create a certain pattern, idea or object and then you think about it and then you reject or accept it or put it on the shelf. That is it. And your mind is where? In you, isn't it? Your mind is not over here in me. Your mind is in you.

In fact, all the bodies are in the mind. There is only one mind and one body and one self observing the experience that is taking place in it. But this self is not modifying to what it observes, what it experiences. This indweller here is called the *Jiva*, and this *jiva* when it is under the spell of ignorance then it identifies. What was the word he used? Attached! He gets attached to the modifications and attributes of the field. But this one never gets attached. The experiencing entity gets attached, but this one does not. You are just the clear knowledge, the clear knower of what you are experiencing.

You don't experience me in the body. My body disappears in your self, doesn't it? I don't experience myself in my body. I experience the body as an object known to me. I observe the body as an object. I don't feel like I am encapsulated in this body. The body is contained in me, inside of me. The way I see it, is the body is just an object appearing on the screen of my awareness. I can't see the back of my body because I am looking at the body with these eyes. With awareness I can see or know or feel the back of my body because it is an object. I surround this body completely. In other words, my awareness is panoramic. It sees all around, in all directions without effort and it provides all the knowledge of all the objects.

Student - Could we go back to the first sentence? I didn't understand.

James - There is the changing self and an unchanging self. He says here that the field, which means the Causal Body, is eternal, unchanging. It says it has no beginning, which means it was not created.

Student - Is the self unchanging?

James - Yeah! The self is unchanging.

Student - So the *gunas* and the *vasanas* are changing?

James - Are apparently changing. The *gunas* are always the same. The *gunas*; *satva*, *tamas*, and *rajas*, they don't at all. And all *vasanas*, think about it. Are there any new *vasanas*; is *Isvara* coming up with new *vasanas*? No.

Student - In the first sentence it looks like we are talking about action and inaction?

James - Okay, to see an action in inaction what do you have to do? Inaction means awareness. You see that *Maya* has to be operating, so if *Maya* is operating then actionlessness appears to be moving, to be changing. Doesn't it? And then inaction in action, so when things are happening here is anything actually happening? No. *Maya* is just making it look like something is happening. Nothing is really happening as in those two examples I gave of the train and the boat.

Here we are trying to get rid of the idea of the change and of the unchanging because you don't want to get stuck on the idea that the self is only unchanging. So then you go 'round saying, "*I am unchanging, I am unchanging.*" No. You are the knower of unchanging, isn't it? If you say there is change, then there is something that knows change, isn't there? You can't say there is change without the knowledge. And so, how can you say there is no change, without the knowledge of no change?

In other words, there is some factor other than what changes and what doesn't change and that is who you are. You are just a knower. Now, what are the objects? Change is an object. And, unchanging is an object. Nothing is actually changing or unchanging. There is only awareness. It seems to be unchanging when you look at it from *Maya's* point of view. But it is neither changing nor unchanging. It is what knows.

Okay, this afternoon I went to the dentist. Now where is that now? Did anything happen? Where is that action? You could say he went to the dentist and came back two hours later, but where is that action now? Did it happen? When I was going there, was I going there? No, I was still awareness. The body was going there and the body was coming back. Did I go? Did I come? Did the self disappear? No. Did the highway appear? Then did Casa Major appear? No. And now satsang appears. In a short time satsang is going to be gone. Then dinner is going to appear. Then my wife is going to appear and open the door and ask me "*how my day went*" and then I will go to bed, and then what? Tomorrow will come and go, and where is it?

Is any action going on? If it feels like something is going on, you are identifying with the doer, the experiencer, the experiencing entity. But if you understand that nothing is actually happening, then you are looking at reality from yourself, as yourself, it is yourself. You are yourself in those moments, is what you can say. Where is all the stuff that is happening to you? If it is real then it should be here.

But what is here now that was here yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that? What is that? Me; the knower, the seer, the light that shines.

I was shining yesterday on different things and shining on something else today and tomorrow, I am going to shine on something else. I am shining, that is all I do. I shine. And objects appear in my life and disappear in my life. I don't need to be worrying about what is going to happen because *Ishvara* is in charge. *Ishvara* just presents new objects for me to illumine, then I just sit here shining on them. Nice, free of them all. Leave all that doing and changing up to *Ishvara* and just remain as I am, shining, shining, shining. Happy, happy, happy. Blissful. Nothing to gain. Nothing to lose. Just a funny play. Every day a new play.

The field alone is responsible for action, so I will let the field happen. The self is not the doer. Let the *jiva* be the doer, let ego do the doing. *Ishvara* runs the *gunas*. That leaves me free of objects. Then what? Then you know the truth.

“Liberation is seeing clearly that the manifold beings and objects in the field are a projection of the non-dual self.” What does that mean? *Maya*.

“Though it obtains in the body, or apparently obtains in the body, the self, limitless awareness does not act.” Here he gives an example.

“Just as subtle all-pervasive space is unaffected by what takes place in it, the self is unaffected by the modifications taking place in it.” Which is just what I said. Does your light shine any more brightly today than it did yesterday? Will it shine any more brightly tomorrow than it does today? No! That little light of awareness is constant and steady. It never moves. It never changes. It never blinks. It just sits here observing ‘the play’. That is all. Nice! I love this stuff.

Just like space. Now a lot of things happen in space, don't they? Everything happens in space. The whole world, explosions, the wars, people making love, traffic, pollution, rivers, birds, everything is flying around, moving around in space. And is space affected by any of this? No. It's clean. Except if you are on LSD. If you are on LSD you can see the birds leaving trails in the sky. I did that once. I could see the bird was flapping and there was a jet trail behind the bird. But after a while the jet trail disappeared. The sky was unaffected. The bird was gone and the sky was still the sky.

So this is just an example of how you are experiencing life. Isn't it? Think about it. Yeah it is! 'Course it is.

“Just as the sun illumines the entire world....” He gives you another example, ***“The self illumines the entire field. The knowledge that distinguishes the field from the Knower is liberation.”*** self realization, we say.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 8 - Session 1

Chapter 14

This is a good topic. Really, its an advanced topic, actually. Anyone can benefit from this knowledge. It is quite advanced because to appreciate this knowledge, it requires you to be pretty dispassionate, particularly when you apply the knowledge of the *gunas*. It is simple, but it ain't easy. It is not easy because we tend to personalize our suffering. That's the problem, we think we are specific individuals with specific problems, and the *guna* teaching says, '*no you are not, we have had this all along*'. The *guna* teaching says, no, none of those things that are personal to you are actually personal to you. They actually belong to the subtle body. So if you can distinguish yourself from your subtle body, then you can leave the *gunas* to function in the subtle body, and just sit behind it. Observe it, watch it and not identify yourself with all that stuff.

In psychology, they are trying to solve your problems by digging around in the subtle body looking for causes for the problems that you have. Well, the cause is always a *guna* and not what happened to you back then. What happened to you then was a *guna* also, that is true. Some *guna* produced that circumstance that caused a problem for you, but it is not personal. It is all the function and dysfunction of you as a person, owing to *sāttva*, *tamas* and *rajas*. In modern psychology they treat your subtle body as the self, because that is what everybody thinks. Everybody thinks I am my subtle body, and you can see the problems of trying to fix that, because what is in the subtle body is not under your control. So how are you actually going to fix it?

OK, my mother was mean and hit me with a spoon when I was three, for example. I don't think my mother did hit me with a spoon when I was three, although I would not blame her if she did. So now I have never forgotten that and now I hate her. I hate all women, because my mother whacked me with a spoon when I was three. Is that real that your mother did that? No, it isn't. It was your aggressive behaviour, and *Isvara* whacked you, *Isvara* was trying to correct your behaviour. There was nothing personal about it at all. Your mother loved you but she was totally frustrated because you are such a little jerk, and so she whacked you. She did not whack you because she wanted to whack you, she whacked you because you violated the rules, and *Isvara* used her to correct you. *Isvara* means the *gunas*.

But it takes a big person to not take his or herself to be personal and to just look at what is coming through you impersonally. To depersonalize your suffering is a huge step here, because once you can depersonalize, you can detach from it. In fact the depersonalization from the suffering equals *viarāga* or dispassion.

I remember a woman who came to a seminar that I did in Turkey. She was a lovely woman, and she had been disassociating ever since she was young. She had gone to a shrink and they said she was disassociated, and that she should be associated with all this stuff. She had been suffering, and when I heard her problem I said, *"That is smart because you are disassociated and you should disassociate with that stuff. That is a normal reaction to this stuff."* Suddenly it was the greatest relief to her. Her husband came up later on and said, *"Jesus, thank you so much!"* So she quit trying to think her disassociation, her *viarāga*, her dispassion was wrong. She realized that all of this stuff did not belong to her at all, but shrinks and everyone else were trying to get her to own up to her stuff. Somehow she knew it wasn't her stuff and she was looking at it from the self's point of view. But she did not know that was a valid point of view, and society and the people around her were saying that it was her stuff. They don't know about the self. They think you have to own all your stuff. Her husband was so grateful he gave me a big donation and a big hug, and there were tears in his eyes. So it is not personal this stuff that is coming through you.

So, first stage is to get yourself out of the notion that I am a person and I have specific problems and issues to deal with. The *guna* teaching does this because it just blames *Isvara* for everything. Like this morning, I woke up at 9 o'clock, *"Oh my God! I have to teach a class at ten and I am in my pajamas and I haven't had my breakfast. I haven't taken my pills. Oh my God!!"* I am freaking out, you know, but what am I going to do? *"I hope those people love me because I am probably going to be late."* All that sort of thing. I did not really panic but I was starting to take it all personally, it was not my fault I over slept. I didn't sit down consciously and say, *"I think I will sleep in and get jammed, and be in a rush"*. I did not think like that.

I woke up at three o'clock, I could not sleep. I got up and sat in my chair in the front room and eventually fell back to sleep. But who did that? Did I do that? No, that is just what happened. I just sat there and sleep came over me and I woke up hours later. Am I responsible for that? Should I feel responsible for that? Should I make a big story out of that and beat myself up? No, I did not do it. Tamo *guna* did it.

Tamo *guna* came out, covered my mind and made me good and dull. I wanted to be good and dull, and fortunately, I got what I wanted. So then I slept all night, and did I oversleep? No. I did not

oversleep. Tamo *guna* was operating, and that produced this particular experience and I woke up having to deal with what was there, and what was the next state that came up immediately? *Rajas*.

Was I rushing around? No. *Rajas* took over and my body was going around like a little chipmunk with it's head cut off grabbing all the stuff, getting my pills, putting on my socks and finding my keys, and on and on. That's *rajas*. I get over here like a demon, (*James* makes speeding car noises) zipping around those curves and all that sort of thing. It was just the energy of *rajas* that was driving. Now I am here, with all these lovely *sāttvic* people and my mind has become calm and peaceful. *Sāttva* is now operating.

So, we can have a nice discussion here on the *gunas*. The idea is obviously simple, the *gunas* are the doer, not you. We said this all along. These states of mind that are coming up are causing, and that is why it is a causal body. They are causing the subtle body to feel, think, and act the way it does. That is what causal means, isn't it?

So, it's causing all this stuff to happen, and you are not there consciously making this stuff happen, are you? You are not controlling your destiny are you? Your conditioning, your *gunas* are causing, and creating your destiny. Understand. You don't know where your life is going to go, do you? You don't know. There are all these twists and turns and life goes here, there and everywhere. It is not like you decided. I did not decide to sit here when I was young. I never thought, "*what I really want to do is to teach a Vedanta class in Spain*". Like I am a kid in Montana and my mother says, "*what do you want to do son?*" "*Oh Ma, I want to teach a Vedanta class in Spain, to a whole group of people from different countries.*" That was the farthest thing from my mind. I ended up here by no fault of my own. I just kept doing these actions, and events kept unfolding, unfolding, unfolding, and slowly, *Isvara* just lead me to this particular spot. Where I go from here, God only knows. I have a kind of plan, a kind of wish but hey, the man proposes, the *gunas* dispose. That's what we say; man proposes and God disposes. We have our wants, but whether they unfold is up to the *gunas*.

There is a lot to this topic. Almost everyone here has read my book? I cover it there, in two chapters. Sooner or later Sundari and I are going to write a book on the *gunas* and summarize all this knowledge, put it all together in one text. It's important knowledge because it is easier if you can analyze yourself in terms of the *gunas*; say *sāttva* did it or *rajas* did it or *tamas* did it, not I did it. But you have to understand that you are not denying your responsibility. In other words, your ability to respond consciously to what happens, you are not denying that. You are just acknowledging, setting yourself free of the responsibility for what appears.

You do not know what is going to appear in your awareness. We said that your experience, everybody's experience is just two things: there is me, awareness observing; and then objects or events appearing in me. You don't know what is going to happen next, do you? We didn't know that Mark was going to get this fixed. We didn't know. Now I am getting thumbs up. Earlier, I was getting thumbs down but now, I am getting thumbs up. I was hoping for a thumbs up but I was getting a thumbs down. Now he is giving me a thumbs up. Well what has that got to do with what I want? It just so happens I am in harmony with what *Isvara* wants, that somehow those little connectors touched together and people outside can hear the transmission of this knowledge.

Is it personal? No. It is not personal. That is the whole point! That is why we are talking *gunas* now. So, if that is true, it pays to know what these *gunas* are and to learn to identify them, to depersonalize all objects. In other words, the 'I-ness', the 'my-ness', the one that associates with objects, is removed from the object. I just respond appropriately to what *Ishvara*, to what the *gunas* are throwing up. I do have some responsibility, but as far as what is being thrown up, I don't have responsibility.

Well I do kind of have a responsibility. There is a kind of global way I can influence the *gunas*. System two can influence system one by its behaviour. We will talk about that. I can generally change the global parameters that are operating here, over time, by doing my *sadhana*, by connecting my actions and their results. We are going to explain that in a bit. But remember, generally, what comes up, is not up to me. If I suddenly start to teach Chapter eighteen, you are going to hear Chapter eighteen. You came here to do Chapter fourteen, but some quirky thing in my brain says, "*teach them chapter eighteen.*" You couldn't know that. You are going to have to adjust, or you're going to get pissed off, if I skip all of these chapters. You don't know it is going to happen. If I get a heart attack, you don't know. Then class is probably over. I would probably finish class and then go to a doctor. I don't know.

The first six chapters in the Gīta, are how you respond to whatever it is that *Ishvara* presents to you. Arjuna didn't set up that war. He participated in one of the causes of the war by gambling, but he didn't ask to be born into that family. He didn't ask to be a prince. He didn't know Duryodhana's uncle was going to shave the dice. There are all these factors, operating all the time, over which you have no control. The only control you have, is how you respond to whatever *Ishvara* presents to you. That is where your power lies. You are free to respond one way or another or differently. You can go with it, or you can go against it, or you can go some other way altogether.

When I was talking about global parameters, what I meant was that life is just a whole series of incidents, and they are happening to you, appearing in you. *Ishvara* presents a whole series of incidents, which, if you are going to be happy, you have to process, to resolve. If there is an incident that happens which you don't resolve, that incident does not go away. If you ignore something and think you have gotten rid of it, think twice. It will come back a little later, in a different form, because this situation is crying to be resolved. If you can resolve what happens, as it happens, then your life is going to flow. That is what we want, a life which is moving forward and flowing. It gives you a sense of purpose, a sense of meaning. You don't just want to be frustrated all of the time, because events are not working out as you wanted them to. You want to have the power to resolve experiences as they happen.

When I was with the Swami, I could not believe it. We were seeing sometimes hundreds of people a day, and having amazing interactions with hundreds of people, in all sorts of different contexts. I was wondering, how does this guy keep up? How does he do it? Every situation was resolved on the spot. How is he going about this? Normally, we get what I call spiritual constipation. Spiritual constipation occurs when things happen but you ignore them, you deny them. If something happens and you ignore it, you don't handle it, resolve it, or get it out of your mind, it just goes here to the unconscious and remains there creating a new circumstance which forces you to face it again.

I mean look at it. There are eight billion people here, and the resources we have are dwindling, so there is more and more anxiety, more and more desire, more and more anger, and more and more fear, that is generating all kinds of incidents. Just the sheer number of events we have to deal with

nowadays is astronomical. If you were born one hundred years ago, maybe one or two things might happen per week that were important, other than the daily routine of eating, sleeping and going to work. I mean things that required some sort of processing. Those things only happened occasionally, so people had time to process their stuff. There was not much to process back then, but look at us now. Look at how it is. Unbelievable demands on our attention and energy, every minute coming into you all the time.

Since I wrote the book, Jesus, I can barely keep up. I am running faster than ever. You think I am getting old and should be able to smell the roses. No, *Ishvara* tells me to write this book, makes me a little famous and then creates all these things coming in now, all the time. I am going like a wizard of Oz when he was behind the curtain pulling all the levers, just to try to keep everything going. The amount of unprocessed stuff just keeps growing. You should see my hard drive and desktop. Icons keep piling up and it is all a mess. It means I am unable to process all of these things. I can't do it. I have to wait until the end of the seminar to do it, and then a whole bunch of new things will come along, and so on. This backlog of stuff you have to do, well you just have to clear it, or you feel constipated, you feel stuck in your life. With me, I just don't care, so it is OK. I don't make pressure for myself out of it. I could make pressure for myself out of it, but I just do one thing at a time which is the *sāttvic* way to approach it.

You know the term 'multi-task' has become a big word in the last twenty-five to thirty years. Why did multi-tasking become such a big word in society at this time? Why didn't people multi-task one hundred years ago? Because there was not that many tasks to do. There was more *sāttva* and *tamas*, and less *rajas*. People didn't have to multi-task. They just did it in a leisurely fashion. Now there is just tons of stuff to do, and now people are proud of their multi-tasking ability. In fact, you are not multi-tasking, you are never multi-tasking, you are only doing one thing at a time. Which means when you are doing this, and this, and this, you are not actually getting something done. You just keep hopping from one thing to another and doing a bit of each process, of each action until it gets fulfilled. You might as well do one thing and then the next thing. It is a lot easier on your mind than being forced to juggle a whole lot of thoughts, and keep hopping from one to another, and doing the actions that are appropriate, or associating with those particular impulses or thoughts. That is disturbing to your mind. In other words, the mind has become *rajasic* owing to the nature of society.

The conservatives in this society are longing for the good old days. *"Oh everything was good then. I just had my cow, and my horse, and my lovely two kids, and we all lived peacefully, and it was nice. Let's go back to the good old days."* They are always trying to reverse everything, to get back to a time when there was less stress, but those days are over, forget it. The world is getting more and more connected, and more and more wired, all the time, so more events are being regenerated. Look at the wars in the Middle East. The whole thing is crumbling, someday there is going to be a big war in the Middle East going on all the time, which is going to cause anxiety for all the people connected to it. Everybody is connected, one way or another. The thing is going to build up, more and more, because nobody can say 'No' to anything. This whole idea that more is better, well, actually, less is more. That is what we are teaching here. That is *sāttva*, less is more. The fewer things I have to do, the more peace of mind. Duh! How hard is that to figure out. More things to do means less peace of mind.

So when I am processing information, what is the processing instrument? My subtle body, my intellect. I have to think how I am going to solve this problem. I used to resist computers. I was

frustrated, and one day I realized, “*you have the wrong idea Ram. You are here to solve problems. That is what you are doing. That’s why God gave you a computer, so you should enjoy the opportunity to solve those problems*”, and then it was funny. Then, I just looked at it from a completely different point of view, and when there was a problem, I just cheerfully went along, because I really wanted to know how to solve this problem. I found that in solving the problem, I usually got what I wanted.

So, when information comes about in the form of experience, I need to lay that to rest so that my mind is open and available to the next experience. If my mind is *tamasic*, in other words, if my predominate *guna* is *tamo guna*, what is my life going to look like? I am so good at this, I can tell when someone is *tamasic* straight away. I could tell you what their house was like. I could describe their house and their car, their relationships, everything, simply because I could see their predominant *guna* was *rajo*, *tamo* or *sāttva*.

If *sāttva* predominates, they behave in a particular way, in a particular situation and have particular kind of friends and particular kind of habits. If *rajo guna* predominates, then they have a different lifestyle. If *tamo guna* predominates, then they behave and act in a third way according to that *guna*, and it is invariable. This knowledge, if anyone is in the human resources business, hiring people in business, and they had this knowledge, they could easily spot people and place people in tasks according to their predominate *guna*. They could avoid hiring people who’s *gunas* were not in harmony with what they were actually trying to accomplish. “*Oh that is profiling. You can’t profile.*” Oh yeah you can and you should profile. Everything here is profiles. That is what the *gunas* mean, profiles.

They are general patterns of behaviour that apply to everybody. They are the fundamental building blocks of the mind, and therefore, of actions and behaviours. So, if my mind is *tamasic*, what is my life going to look like? Messy. Lots of loose ends. Tons of unfulfilled tasks and expectations. *Tamas* is laziness. You just feel overwhelmed by things, and your response to overwhelming demands of *Isvara* is to blow it off, drink some beer, eat some chips, sit on the couch in front of the TV and play video games.

I just read an interesting article about a Japanese guy,. A regular guy with a good job, a wife, kids and all of that, but he got into one of these games. It destroyed his life. He lost his kids, his wife moved out, he lost his job and ended up in a crappy flat. He never ate right, he never slept, but he became the top guy in the world at this particular game, and accumulated all these points. He is living in this filthy flat with rats running around. The place stinks and he doesn’t take a bath, but he became so good, the unintended consequences were that he became famous worldwide. He finally realized he had a problem, or as we would say, he had to get out *tamo guna*. Someone realized he was a kind of genius of some sort and offered him a good job. He quit gaming, took the job and went back to his regular life.

Maya is called *Maya shakti*. *Shakti* means energy, and this is the energy of creation. Remember *Maya* is the creator. There is no creation in awareness there is just awareness. It is everything, and it is everywhere. When *Maya* appears in awareness it creates the world, and the world is made out of these three energies. *Tamas*, which is the substance of the creation, *rajas* and *sāttva*. *Tamas* is called *avāruṇa shakti* and it means a cloud. That is the literal meaning *avāruṇa*. So this is a *shakti* that clouds or hides reality. The instrument of experience is the subtle body. awareness like the sun, is

always shining on the subtle body, but if the sky is totally cloudy then you don't see the sun, do you? When the awareness the light is hidden from you, then you are in a dark environment, psychologically and spiritually. When *tamas* is operating, it means repression and denial. You don't see things clearly, so what do you do? You make mistakes, and because you don't see things clearly, you tend to be fear orientated.

Like if you are walking down a middle class street in a suburb at night, all the street lights are on, its lovely and all that sort of thing. It is very benign. Little kids left their tricycles in the front yard and you can see everyone inside watching TV, sitting in their nice, cozy bourgeois homes. Everything is lovely, and you are taking a walk. All of a sudden, the electricity goes off and the street lights go off, and you are in the dark. What is the first thing that happens? Fear. You imagine there is a robber behind the next bush simply because you are in the dark. Nothing has actually changed at all, except the light has just gone off. But as soon as the light went off, your fear begins to operate because you can't see. You don't know, your knowledge is not there.

When *tamas* is your predominant *guna*, your mind is really dull, you can't see what is there, and you can't respond appropriately to what is there. You are very slow and lazy. In fact, you don't want to respond. You want to hide out, hide away from your responsibilities. Our only responsibility, is to respond appropriately to what *Isvara* gives us. So what happens to all the events that happened to you? They get blown off, they get ignored. If you are procrastinating, that's *tamas*. I have one project, and I keep procrastinating on it. I know it is going to come and bite me on the bottom but I keep procrastinating. I keep putting it off, telling myself I'll do it later, I'll do it tomorrow. Procrastinators keep shoving things off into the future because they don't want to deal with it. This is common, it's a habit or tendency everyone has, because everyone experiences *tamas*.

I often use the analogy of the colon. The colon is part of the body that throws out waste. It is your waste tube. If you eat, for example, a modern diet of processed food, meat, cheese and bread the food you are eating produces a lot of mucous or phlegm. Mucous is intended to encapsulate toxins in water, and air, and so forth, and then you pass them out. So it is a protective mechanism, mucous. But because you are eating all this *tamasic*, clogging food, what happens is that the transit times between when you eat, and go for a poop get longer.

Stuff moves very slowly through the colon, and a very minute layer of mucous sticks to the colon wall, and it becomes hardened. They call it 'post-putrefactive mucoid'. It means it doesn't stink anymore. It just becomes this hardened layer. They have actually taken out colons and done autopsies. A colon which is clean would weigh maybe three to four pounds, but they took out colons that weighed 20-25 pounds, because of all that. It is not something that happens immediately. It happens little by little starting when you are young. Slowly, slowly, slowly it builds up, builds up, builds up and then all kinds of problems come along. Oh it is a mess, believe me, if you have a big stomach and you are prone to *tamasic* food, you probably need to cleanse your colon. In fact, colon cleansing has become a big issue, a big deal now. All third rate health food stores have colon cleansing formulas.

If anyone is interested, I can tell you more about it because I did it. It took me four months. It was very intense and I got stuff out of there, but it was like an archaeological dig. Seriously, it was like I had to go for coffee enemas. It took me four months to clean it out. I worked at it every single day and I used to go for colonics. I didn't have much money. Maybe, once a month I could save thirty dollars

and go for a colonic. There they flush you with water, and they have a tube that water goes through, and it's back lit, and you can see what is coming out. Believe me it is shocking. At one point there were all the colours of the rainbow coming out. There was every colour of the spectrum there, I was astounded. I was talking to the technician there who fiddles with all the dials to make sure it is working properly. I asked her, "*what is that?*" She said, "*Those are chemicals. Every chemical has a colour and as that post-putrefactive mucoid gets dissolved, you release all those chemical toxins which were in the colon and clean them out.*" It was amazing. Jesus! I am getting carried away.

So if you have a *tamasic* mind your psychic colon, the causal body is going to get completely clogged up and you are going to have all kind of problems. Your life is going to go in all sorts of direction you don't want it to go, because *Isvara* will be demanding that you clear up your mess, but you will be saying that you don't have a mess. "*I don't want to. That's too much work. I can't do it.*" You will focus on some short term pleasure. You haven't even got enough energy to think long term pleasures. You just want little pleasures like eating and sex, that sort of thing. It is enough for them. So people like this, distract themselves with all kinds of mindless pleasures like alcohol and drugs and so forth and they don't deal with their stuff.

Tamo *guna* means, my mind is cloudy, I am lazy and procrastinate I put off what needs to be done. I behave inappropriately according to the situation and therefore, at some point in my life, I feel really stuck. Have you ever been in that position where your life feels really stuck? Reason is because your mind is really *tamasic* and you don't want to take the bull by the horns and clean up your mess. You have been living like that for 10, 20, 30 maybe 40 years and the resistance to cleaning up your mess is unbelievable.

Food is a great example. Thank God for medical science because I have this *tamasic* quality. Even though I was eating pretty healthy, I ate too much fat and I didn't know my body was producing bad cholesterol. In fact, I felt pretty good about the fats for 20 to 30 years. I didn't know my body was producing extra cholesterol and my whole energy system slowly, slowly, slowly - because of this *tamasic* food - stuffed the pipes that take oxygen and blood to the heart. They were getting more and more constricted. As recently as five months ago, I couldn't carry the garbage can across the street to dump it out. I was panting and sweating, afraid of a heart attack. What was causing that? *Tamas*. Fat in my arteries. So now it has been a big adjustment. I want to live very badly. Now, that whole association with tasty, juicy, sexy foods has gone.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 8 - Session 1, Continued
Chapter 14, Verses 1 - 5

So obviously, if your mind is predominantly *tamasic*, you are going to feel stuck, you are going to have lots of recurring, persistent problems in your life because you are not able to respond appropriately as *Ishvara* requires. *Ishvara* requires appropriate response. *Ishvara* wants you to deal with something. You can't avoid it.

Swami Suddhananda is a good example. He managed to cheat *Ishvara* for twenty five years, but eventually *Ishvara* set up the circumstances that brought him down. He was able to deny, oppress and lie, for twenty five years. He is a clever guy. He is a very, very clever guy, very intelligent and very manipulative. But at some point, and it is always some small, little, tiny thing that happens, he made a mistake and he hit on the wrong girl. When he hit on that girl, she was a virtuous girl and she ran away from the ashram. The manager of the ashram was concerned because she was an upper caste girl and her parents were depending upon the ashram to look after her.

The manager found her somewhere there in Tiruvannamalai and asked her what happened. She said, "*The Swami tried to molest me*". He didn't believe it. He had some technical skills and he installed a camera in the Swami's room. He didn't really believe it but he thought it sounded believable, so he installed the camera in the Swami's room, and the rest is history. He got the Swami on tape and the whole thing blew up and became a big scandal. Swami tried to contain it for a while. Finally he just admitted it, stepped down and that was the end of him. Why did he do that? Because he was under the spell of *rajo guna* and *tamo guna*.

Now, the next *guna* is called *rajo guna*. Wherever you have *rajas*, you have *tamas*. In fact, you will see in here, when he discusses the types of people, the two types of people, he puts *sattvic* people in one category and in the other category, he puts the *rajasic* and *tamasic* people together. You always find *rajas* and *tamas* together.

Rajas is *vikshepa shakti*. *Vikshepa* means projecting. It is that 'coffee energy', a good, strong Starbucks coffee. You know how buzzed you feel, how energetic you feel, how your mind is really, really perking, cooking, that's *rajas*. That's *rajo guna*. It is the mode of passion. It is the *guna* of desire, the *guna* of passion, the *guna* of action. *Rajas* is disturbance and pain. Whenever you are in pain or disturbed by your desire, that is *rajas*.

Tamas is fear and *rajas* is desire. You always have them together. The stock market teaches you right away about greed, which is *rajas*, and fear, which is *tamas*. Everybody knows that. Those are the two powers that are operating there in the matrix, fear and desire. Hopefully, a good trader will be somebody with a lot of *sattva* who could manage his or her emotions.

That is why we encourage the development of *sattva*, because in *sattva*, you actually get some dispassion, you get clarity and then you can manage your emotions. You can see what they are and gain control over your emotions, the *rajas* and the *tamas*. *Rajas* is the intense need, intense desire that produces intense activities. *Rajas* is projection and *tamas* is denial.

All of our problems stem from *rajas* and *tamas*. When we don't look at certain things in ourselves, that's *tamas*, and because that is uncomfortable for us to deal with, we project it on others. If you have problems in your relationships, it is because you are projecting on the other person and they are projecting on you. So they are not seeing what you actually are, what's happening with you directly. Their psychological stuff is creating a false person on you. It is turning you into something other than what it is and you say: "I didn't say that". They say, "Yes, you did". "No. That's not what I said. That's not what I meant." "Yes, you did. That's what you said and that's what you meant". It is always this. Maybe the person said 'X', but what did you hear? You heard 'Y'. There was maybe some tone or inflection in the voice, or maybe that particular way that person communicated reminded you of somebody you had a problem with, like your mom or your pop or someone like that, and then immediately the communication got twisted. So they heard something that wasn't actually what you said or what you meant. That is called projection.

Owning your projections, recognizing them and owning them, is the *sadhana* we are doing here. If you want a good relationship with yourself and others, then you need to understand this mechanism of projection and denial. That is what is producing all the uncomfortable relationships with *Isvara*. *Isvara* means your environment.

Whereas with *sattva*, it is clear what is going on. When *rajas* is projecting and *tamas* is denying, you cannot actually tell what is going on properly. You don't have a clear read on the situation. So you can't respond appropriately. If you project on somebody and they project back on you, then you start relating to their projections, and they relate to your projections, and pretty soon the person is completely lost. All you end up doing is arguing unnecessarily, fighting unnecessarily about stupid projections, stupid ideas that have nothing to do with the actual, or real communication. So the problems don't get solved, with your family, your wife, your kids, your boss, your neighbours, and so forth.

So *rajas* is called *vikshepa shakti* and it is an insatiable need to act. These are the 'soccer moms'. They have two point two kids, and the SUV, and their kids are enrolled in ten different programs in different places throughout the day. They have to go to school, and they have to go to soccer, and they have to go music lessons, and so forth and so on, and the moms have to feed them. She gets up at six in the morning, cooks them breakfast and then she runs Sally to here, and she runs Pete over there, and she is off to here, and off to there, and she is going, going, going. She stops at MacDonald's and has a coffee because she is getting tired and she goes more and more *rajasic*. She calls someone on the phone, and then she has another thing on her list and she gets more anxious because there are more things to do..... You know that state of mind? That is called *rajo guna*. It's doership. "Unless I do all these things, my life is going to fall apart."

Actually, it is sometimes good to let your life fall apart and just be happy. But, you can't. You depend upon all these actions for your sense of self worth, for your sense of self esteem. You tie your self esteem up with what you are doing. That is not always bad, but your self esteem should come from knowing that you are OK, irrespective of what you do. You don't have to do anything to prove that you are OK.

Look at the world, look at the way you have grown up. Why do your parents ask you what you want to be when you grow up? Why do they ask you that? Because they want you to prove to them that you are not going to be a burden on them later on in life. They want to get you good and *rajasic* so that you go out and pursue all these ends, and all these goals to get you out of their hands. Why do you say, what you are going to be when you grow up, when somebody asks? That puts a big anxiety in you, it increases your *rajas*. *"Oh! I am not OK now. I have to be something."* To be somebody, I have to do something, to be something other than what I am.

So you start to validate yourself through all of these activities. Your parents, of course, encourage that. You need to do more and more and more. It is competition against each other. You have to run faster, you have to study late at night, you can't do this, you can't do that, and so forth and so on. Gradually that anxiety builds up.

If you look at the generation of kids now, they have a whole class of people and drugs that are meant to deal with *rajas*. The *rajas* has become so pervasive in society, that all the kids are completely neurotic. They are anxious all the time. They are full of desires and demanding things and never, ever satisfied. No matter what you give them, they are not satisfied. They call it Attention Deficit Disorder. Their attention is hopping from one thing to another so fast that they never accomplish anything. The anxiety, the *rajas* is driving them, so they are in a state of pain and frustration.

You get the same effect from *rajas* that you get from *tamas*. You have so many things that you can't process them. You want to process them, but you can't process them, because there are so many that you are forced to leave all kinds of things undone. If you go to the house of really *rajasic* people, in general, and open their drawers and the cupboards and the cabinets, and look in the basement and the garage, it's a jumble, it is a mess. On the surface it all looks good. It looks clean and tidy, but you open the kitchen drawer, there are like six hundred small items in that kitchen drawer. *"They don't deserve to be there but I haven't had the time to throw them out. I don't use them. I think I'll need this one day."* So stuff just piles up and piles up. I can't clean the house. If something new comes in, they put it in that drawer. When that drawer fills up, they stick it in the cupboard underneath. When that fills up, they put it in the basement. The hoarders. They are full of fear and full of desire.

There was a guy I met recently, a brilliant guy, but totally *rajasic* and *tamasic*. He was a computer type. He had six storage warehouses. He was paying six hundred dollars a month to store his stuff. Eventually he fell behind on the payments. They locked him out. They had an auction and he lost everything, all his stuff, stuff that he had been keeping for years. This is like fifteen years of accumulated stuff that he had been hoarding, that he just did not want to process, didn't want to deal with it. It somehow made him feel secure. Suddenly, it was all gone. He couldn't pay anymore. He lost his job, couldn't pay and they locked him out. I told him from the beginning, *"You are hard up for money. Sell off that stuff, clear it all out and save a hundred dollars from this warehouse and you get three or four grand out of it. That will keep the wolves at bay for a little while"*. He kept pushing himself more and more and more, pushing to the limit, because that fear of insecurity was driving him to act. Insecurity. *"I have to have all of this stuff behind me, or I can't be comfortable."* Pretty soon, what happens? You just stop, you can't function anymore. You get totally neurotic. So that is *rajo guna*.

Now, if your mind is clear and present and not driven by dullness or activity, that is *sattva*, the mode of knowledge. *Sattva* means 'sat'. awareness is called sat. Satchitananda. *Sattva* is the pure energy of awareness. That is the most subtle energy in creation. We call *rajas* the projecting power and *tamas* the concealing power. We call *sattva* the revealing power. When *sattva* is operating, objects are revealed for what they are. You see what is actually there. With *rajas*, it is distorted by desire. With *tamas*, it is covered by fear, but with *sattva*, you see what is actually there.

If you see what is actually there, you can respond. If *sattva* is your predominant *guna*, you will have good values. With *rajas* and *tamas*, your values are skewed. You are materialistic, sensualistic and pleasure seeking, basically. Your values are bad. They are going to distort how you react, but with *sattva*, you have good values. You not only see clearly, but *sattva* inclines the individual to honesty, integrity, and so forth. We are going to see here as we read these verses.

So when something happens, I can actually determine what it is, and determine the response. The response is actually built in, but when your mind is disturbed, you can't feel it. You can't operate naturally and appropriately from a position of your own dharma. When it is *tamas*, your dharma is hidden from you, and so you can't respond naturally and appropriately. But when your mind is *sattvic*, you are in touch with your own dharma, and your own dharma will cause you to respond appropriately. You will respond according to your dharma. That will be an appropriate response and then your life will flow.

Sattva inclines a person to simplicity and beauty. These are qualities of this *guna*. Simplicity is the most valuable, because it means you have less stuff to deal with. You understand when you are *sattvic*, that less is more, that the more stuff I have, the more cluttered and crowded my mind is, and the less effective my discrimination is. So you keep your life very simple, so you don't have a lot of stuff to deal with, and when you do deal with stuff, your mind is not disturbed by *rajas* and *tamas*. So you can lay it to rest quickly. So that is the value of *sattva*.

There is a downside to all these *gunas* also. There is an upside and a downside to the *gunas*. Remember, when we are with the *gunas*, we are in duality. They are called the dvandvas. Everything here (pointing to the chart) has an upside and a downside. We have to take into account both the upside and the downside when we are studying our psychology. Obviously, we are talking about the *gunas* from the point of view of our psychology, our *sadhana*, what we can do to make our minds qualified for *moksha*. *Sattva* has some inbuilt prejudices and negatives, and *rajas* and *tamas* have some positive aspects, but generally, we are negative about *rajas* and *tamas* and positive about *sattva*. Don't think that every *rajasic* impulse is a bad impulse, and a *tamasic* impulse is necessarily a bad impulse either. We have to be clear about this, and understand both the upside and the downside if we are going to work on ourselves.

Why do we want a *sattvic* mind? So far, we have been talking about normal, everyday people, the normal person. What about us? We are not normal. We are the weird crowd. We are a strange group. We don't seem to want anything from the world. We have figured out that the joy is not in the objects. So we are not pursuing any particular result in the world. We want a different result. We want, as the Gīta says, **we want a result that is free from limitation**, which is a very strange result. All the results we know here, are not free from limitation. We want self knowledge, that is free from limitation. Why? Because the object of knowledge, the self, is limitless. What we are going for is self

knowledge. That is tantamount to *moksha*. Tantamount means the same as *moksha*. Why? Because I am already free.

The whole point here is to transform your *gunas*. We want self knowledge, and that means the instrument of knowledge needs to be free of *rajas* and *tamas* so that our knowledge is clear. When you have *rajas* and *tamas*, your knowledge is not clear. In the story of the snake and the rope, what do we have? We have *rajas* and *tamas* operating globally, that means it is twilight. There is some light and there is some darkness, so it is easy to make a mistake. This is a projection. That is why you see a snake when there is only a rope.

So when you hear these teachings, you don't want to have your mind covered by *rajas* or *tamas*. If your mind is *tamasic*, you won't get what we're saying. If your mind is *rajasic*, you won't get it either. You will think you have got it, but what you will be doing is distorting those teachings according to your own notions, your own desires. That is what *rajas* does, it twists things so that the object, the knowledge, gets distorted and you hear something other than what is actually being said.

That is why we have the qualification of dispassion. A dispassionate person is capable of getting into a *sattvic* state and listening for an hour or so, without projecting. That is a big skill, a great skill. You have your projections, you have all your stuff, but if you can set your stuff aside for an hour or so and actually hear what is being said, that is called *vairāgya*. You have *vairāgya*, dispassion.

If knowledge is our goal, and this is the instrument of knowledge, then we want an instrument that is suitable for knowledge. The instrument that is most suitable for knowledge is *sattva guna* because it allows you to see what is, as it is. It allows you to appreciate yourself as it is. In an experiential way, when your mind is *sattvic*, you start experiencing the reflection of awareness in a pure way. You start feeling the peace. We are not saying that you need to have a mind-blowing cosmic epiphany. You notice in these talks at times you feel satisfied and peaceful, you don't feel disturbed in anyway. It feels good. You feel a sense of well-being. That means your mind is *sattvic*, and awareness is shining on it. You are enjoying the bliss of awareness experientially. The clarity comes, that click comes, the click of understanding.

That only happens because your mind is *sattvic*. We produce this through the teaching. If you pay attention and I am on my game, then you will get this *sattvic* state, we will create this *sattvic* state, this group *sattvic* state. Then knowledge will take place. You will grow just by listening, by being in this *sattvic* environment. So I want a *sattvic* state of mind. *Sattva* has a downside too.

Let's read the text now and see what it says about these three *gunas*. Everything said here is based upon the text.

Chapter 14

The Three *Gunas*

Verse 1 - Krishna said, **self knowledge is the most exalted form of knowledge because it frees the self from attachment to the body. Those who have realized my non-dual nature do not come into being when creation happens, nor do they die when the world is dissolved.**

He is speaking here, as *Ishvara* on a macrocosmic scale. He is talking about how these *jivas* that have self knowledge, are eternal, but we are not going to interpret that in that way, because what does that mean? Who cares! Does anybody really, really care about self realized people, and that they come into being when creation happens and don't die when the world is dissolved? Is that one of your burning questions or burning doubts? I don't think so. In fact, you probably never even thought about it till you read this. So we will interpret birth and death in a simple, direct, esoteric way.

We will say that those people who understand that they are awareness and that awareness is non-dual, do not identify with a thought, or a feeling, or an impulse when *Ishvara* presents that thought, or feeling, or impulse to them. That is called creation. If you don't identify, you don't create any karma. You only create karma when you identify with a particular desire or fear or object that appears in you. ***Nor do they die when the world is dissolved.*** In other words, it doesn't matter when anything goes, because awareness remains, and they know they are awareness.

He has said this many times now. This is such a great teaching. It is a simple teaching, but it is a great teaching. Just understanding this is probably all you really need to know. When something appears in you like a thought, or a feeling, you don't appear simultaneously with it, you are already there prior to the appearance of it. When that impulse, or feeling, or thought, or event goes, you don't disappear. In other words, when things are created, you don't appear and when things are destroyed, you don't disappear. That is your own direct experience. That is just a matter of experience. You may not quite understand it, but when you think about it, isn't that true?

Whatever experience comes, you have to be there prior to the experience to experience it. When it goes, you succeed it, the experience goes. You don't go when the experience goes, otherwise, your experience would be intermittent. Your experience is not intermittent, your experience is continuous, and that is because the self is continuous.

If, when something happens, I appear and when something happens, I disappear, then the next thing that happens, I re-appear, and when that ends, I disappear, then what is my life going to be like? Flashing on and flashing off. Being here for some time and some time I won't be here. But that is not how it is at all. I am a constant background presence in which objects appear and disappear.

So that is the meaning of '***self realized people***'. self realized people know they are the awareness and they are identified with the awareness. So they are free of creation and destruction. There is no creation, or destruction for them, for awareness. '*Them*' is not the right word. There is only one of us, awareness.

Just before he gets to the *gunas*, he has to explain that. He has to put the background here to provide the context for the *gunas*.

Now, what is creation?

Verse 3 - When I illumine the Unmanifest all beings are created. In whatever material womb beings are born, Arjuna, the Unmanifest is the mother and I am the father.

When I illumine the Unmanifest, all beings are created. There are no beings until awareness is shining on the causal body. There are no beings or objects. It is just pure darkness, pure ignorance, but as soon as awareness turns its attention onto the causal body, then all beings, all objects, all events, all stuff starts to happen. So creation is a combination of insentient matter, prakriti, and awareness puruṣa. Those two things working together.

He makes a nice statement. The next statement is very nice. I love this.

In whatever material womb beings are born, Arjuna, the unmanifest is the mother and I am the father. The seed of awareness or light hits the womb of matter and out pours children, babies, experiences. Out comes experiences. Without awareness you have no experience. With only awareness you have no experience either, because there are no objects in awareness. When you put awareness with objects, then you get experience. Now I have experience. That is the very first stage of creation. awareness connects to the causal body and that produces experience and then what happens?

Verse 5 - Three qualities colour the Unmanifest and bind the self to the body: *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.

Experience is these three energies. That is all it is, in some sequence. Actually, it is not fair to talk about it sequentially, although we need to discuss it sequentially in terms of time. Actually, all three are operating all the time. Everything here is on all the time. So *sattva* is always present, and *rajas* is always present, and *tamas* is always present. Just like the causal body is always present, the subtle body is always present, and the gross body is always present. Now, think about it, we are talking *Isvara* here, before we get down to the *jiva*. We are still talking *Isvara*, we haven't got to the *jiva* yet.

Now, for there to be a creation, you need a substance. You have to have some substance out of which to create. At the same time that *rajas, tamas* and *sattva* appear, *tamo guna* produces five elements. Out of the *tamasic* energy in the creation, five elements are produced. Now you have a substance which *Isvara* can work with.

Isvara is awareness plus pure *sattva*. To have a creation and to create something, you need to have an idea. Now, I have the substance for creation, but I don't have an idea. Why don't I have an idea? Because I need *sattva*. So *sattva* provides the blueprint for the creation. The whole structure of the creation is contained in *sattva guna*. This whole knowledge, this whole creation is nothing but knowledge working out in the form of substance and activity. It is knowledge.

What is a human being but knowledge? A human being is a particular kind of knowledge, a program that is operated by *Isvara*. A tree is a particular kind of knowledge. Plato called it 'The Realm of Ideas' in the Platonic system. He said, '*you can't have creation without ideas*'. When you look at creation, you see that this is consciously put together. Everything is working seamlessly and harmoniously with everything else, and everything follows its nature. If it is a chaos, a random chaos, then you will not get out of bed in the morning. The purpose for work will be impossible. But in fact, everything is thought out carefully before it even starts in the mind of *Isvara*, and this idea is pure *sattva*.

There is no evil intention in it at all. That is why you can't blame *Ishvara* for the problems. When *rajas* and *tamas* come in, psychologically, then you have to blame ignorance or *Ishvara*, but you can't blame *Ishvara*, because *Ishvara* created this pure, beautiful creation. I call it 'beautiful, intelligent ignorance'. One of my friends, Billy who is a great artist from England, he coined that term and I snagged it. Beautiful, intelligent ignorance. It is so beautiful. *Ishvara* is so beautiful. Look at this, isn't it a wonder? I mean just us sitting here with this text and understanding it, and communicating, that's wonderful, it's beautiful. Look at the beautiful day today, how warm it is and lovely. This is the middle of January and look at it. Even where it is cold and freezing at the polar vortex over there, that's beautiful too. It has its own particular kind of beauty. Everything here is beautiful, and it all works.

We are all worried it will stop working. It is not going to stop working. We are doing our best to gum up the works by the way we live, by our greed and all that, our consumerism, but basically, it is going to keep on working. People worry about us human beings ruining this thing. They won't ruin it. *Ishvara* will have it under control. They just make trouble for themselves and *Ishvara* will figure some way to either save them from it or destroy them, one of the two, and it won't matter to *Ishvara* at all. It will do what is necessary according to the laws of the program. The whole thing is a setup here.

It is so hard to understand how this awareness which we can't see, smell, taste, touch or feel, suddenly becomes alive. How does that happen? That is pretty weird. Nobody knows. Even the sages are perplexed. Krishna says that. We don't know. We know it is *Maya* and that it does this. How *Ishvara* does it, no human being is capable of understanding. Our little brains are only so big. *Ishvara's* brain is soooo vast, it contains the whole knowledge of everything, and how to make this dream of existence work. That is all *Ishvara's* mind. You can't fathom that, how that works, how it goes about that. 'It' is not a He or a She, it's an It. **es feel-able, touchable, taste-able and smell-able.** (This sentence was truncated somehow)

So now I have the substance and I have an idea, so I have *sattva* and I have *tamas*. How am I going to get this idea to change the substance according to the program? Enter *rajo guna*. *Rajas* is the power I need to impose my idea on the substance, to shape the substance into the whole creation, the material world.

If this is the cause, in other words, if these *gunas* are the cause, sitting right here at the apex (pointing to the chart), at this interface between creation and awareness then isn't it reasonable to assume that the effect is what is manifested? (pointing to chart) This is unmanifest, we can't see this, we can infer this. Our knowledge here is inferential. Inference is a valid means of knowledge. We cannot say that inference is not a valid means of knowledge. We can't see it, but we can infer it.

Then isn't it reasonable to assume, that if this is the cause and this is the effect, then everything that is inherent in the cause, is going to appear in the effect. Yes. In fact, the effect is just the cause in a form. The cause is formless, unseen, unknown and then it becomes manifest, it appears as the subtle body and the gross body. It appears as noble, experienceable objects. Which means that everything here - *Ishvara, Maya* - is combinations of *rajas, tamas* and *sattva*, and everything here - creation - is combinations of *rajas, tamas* and *sattva* also.

Student - So it is the same?

James - It is the same.

Now, when *rajas* and *tamas* come in, *Isvara* becomes a *jiva*. Apparently. *Isvara* never 'becomes' a *jiva*. *Isvara* appears as a *jiva*. That is why *jivas* have problems. If a *jiva* had pure knowledge - was pure *sattva* - that would be fine. But *Isvara* is not contaminated by *rajas* and *tamas*. *Isvara* wields *rajas* and *tamas* to create a world. So *Isvara* is the operator, the wielder of those elements. It is not under the influence of those elements, but when those elements appear as the subtle body, then *Isvara* appears as a *jiva* and the *jiva* is under the power of *rajas* and *tamas* and *sattva*. Then the *jiva* has a problem because the *jiva* is subject to denial and projection.

Jiva is capable of knowledge but subject to the two forces that prevent knowledge, *rajas* and *tamas*. If I am a *jiva*, the knowledge of the *gunas* is essential. self knowledge is not just knowledge of awareness it is knowledge of awareness in form. In other words, *satya* and *mithya*, because *mithya* is awareness in form. awareness minus *Maya* is awareness. awareness plus *Maya* is also awareness.

Om. Purnamadah. Purnamidam. Purnat. Purnamudacyate.
Purnasya. Purnamadaya. Purnamevavasisyate.

You subtract *Maya*, the whole creation, from awareness what do you have? awareness. You add the whole creation to awareness what do you have? awareness.

So knowledge is knowledge of *satya* and *mithya*. That is complete knowledge. This is where the Neo's fall down. They won't tell you about *mithya*. They say that doesn't exist. "Hey! Wrong!". Any of you Neo's are sitting here, you are wrong. It does exist. You can't say it doesn't exist, unless it exists, because the person who is saying that it doesn't exist, exists in this world. We take you seriously when you say that. You are just wrong about what you say. This does exist. They have to say it doesn't exist because they have no science to explain it. Sorry! I am getting excited now.

self knowledge, is knowledge of *satya* and *mithya*. That is why we have to discuss the *gunas*, because I find myself as a *jiva*. I am not a *jiva*, but I think I am a *jiva*. awareness is pretending to be a *jiva*. So, I better understand how to help this *jiva* here, wiggle its way out of this partial knowledge, this incomplete knowledge and get complete knowledge. For that, I need to understand the *gunas* both for self knowledge and for purification.

This *guna* knowledge is great for both. For *sannyasis*, they don't need to do any transforming of the *gunas* because they are already established in *sattva guna*. So a *sannyasi* just discriminates awareness from the *guna*. Problem solved. Since all experience falls under the category of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and I know that *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* appear in awareness all I need to do is discount *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* to keep my attention on awareness as awareness and problem solved.

But for somebody who is not a *sannyasi*, I need to use this knowledge to prepare myself to become a *sannyasi*. In other words, to become *sattvic* and qualified for this knowledge, I need to understand how these *gunas* work and what I can do to transform them into the kind of instrument that is suitable for achieving my goal.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 8 - Session 2
Chapter 14, Verses 6 - 16

So, if you want your life to flow and be happy and have some sense of movement, some kind of purpose, then you need to cultivate *sattva*. If you want a nice frustrating life with a lot of anger and lot of disappointment, then cultivate just *rajas*. If you want a real dull, lazy, indolent, slothful life, then just cultivate *tamas*. It is up to you. You can choose whatever you want. Those three are the only options available. *Sattva*, *tamas* and *rajas*.

Now we are going to see how the text explains the *gunas*, just so you can see I am not making it up. I could not make it up because everybody knows those energies. Has anyone not experienced those three *gunas*? Raise your hands. See, no hands, everyone knows what we are talking about here. This is not anything mystical from India. "Oh, the three *gunas*." No, it is just the experience of every human being, anywhere on the planet. Only these three *gunas* are going to be operating in the human mind, and in fact, in the minds of all creatures.

What is that dog here who runs up the road and chases cars? What is his predominant *guna*? *Rajas*. *Rajas*! He is one *rajasic* little puppy. Boy, he yips and dances and he gets right in front of your car when you are going up the hill. He is totally excited and *rajasic*. What about the old dog? His days of *rajas* are over. Tamo *guna* for him. *Bhagavan* says you've done your share of *rajas*, barked at every damn thing and now you get to lumber up the road. He just goes a few steps and he wears out.

What about *James*? *Sattva guna* No not really, but mostly *sattva*. It is a little hard to teach unless I am a little *sattva*. I had to get rid of the *tamas*, and how did I get rid of the *tamas*? I just slept. The sleep satisfied the tamo *guna*, the *vṛtti* it is called, the thought or the *vṛtti tamās*. *Vṛtti* is there in my mind, "Go and feed and you get rested and then you come back". Blissful. Where is the bliss coming from? *Sāttva*. At first there was a little narcotic pleasure left over from a good sleep, and then I thought, "Oh my God! I have a couple more sessions today so let's have a cup of java." That perked up the *rajas* a bit, and now, we will get through this in no time at all. Everything is *gunas*, and whether or not you know you are manipulating your *gunas* by your actions. We will see.

Let's talk about *sāttva*.

Verse 6 - *Sattva*, of the nature of awareness binds by attachment to bliss, purity, beauty and knowledge. *Rajas*, colours the mind with passion and attachment, afflicting the self with a binding need to act. *Tamas* the child of ignorance confuses and deludes the Indweller. It stupefies the mind and binds by sleep, indolence, indifference and sloth. *Sattva* causes bondage to pleasure, *rajas* to action, and *tamas* to apathy.

***Sattva*, of the nature of awareness binds by attachment to bliss, purity, beauty and knowledge.** Binds? The word *guna* means 'rope'. That is why he uses the word binds. That is why they are called *gunas*. Why are these 3 *gunas* ropes? Because they bind you, awareness down to these qualities, down to these behaviours, down to these emotions and thoughts. They tie us down. How does awareness get tied down? Because *Maya* is operating, and awareness has forgotten it is free.

awareness does not know it is free anymore. Then the *gunas* take over and start controlling it and regulating it. awareness becomes a *jiva*, and as a *jiva*, awareness is under the spell. In other words it is bound by those *gunas*, and this is why we behave the way we behave.

Attachment to bliss, well what is wrong with that? What is wrong with attachment to bliss?

Student - You won't have a burning desire for *moksha* if you are attached to bliss.

James - Well that is true. If you are attached to pleasure you won't have a burning desire for *moksha*, unless you know that *moksha* is the greatest pleasure. In that case, you will be attached to *moksha* because it happens to be *paramasukha*, the greatest pleasure there is.

But attachment to bliss means experiential bliss, wanting to feel good all of the time. Whenever you get what you want, the desire or the fear operating in your subtle body is satisfied, or released. Then immediately, the subtle body goes to the causal body in the waking state. The causal body we said is always present in all waking states. Now normally, the subtle body is extroverted, it is all fixated on what is happening outside, but once you get what you want then, for a minute or two, or maybe longer, the subtle body goes into the causal body for a few moments and you feel blissful. That is the joy. It is not in the object, the joy is in the causal body, in the self.

So then what do you do? You get attached to doing all the things that produce bliss, this is the problem. The feel gooders! There are some people who don't care about money, or power, or any of that stuff. All they care about is feeling good so they just chase pleasure, they just chase bliss. So, if this is a problem for you, then it means you are attached to *sattva* and purity.

Attachment to purity, well what is wrong with that? Why shouldn't I be pure? Well yeah, you should be pure but what is the downside of purity? The ego co-ops it and it thinks it is pure. Haven't you seen these smarmy people in the spiritual world, with the gurus and all their holy clothes, and their beads and eating the right kinds of food, and doing their spiritual practice all day long and smiling and hugging everyone? And they think they are so cool, so special and they look down on people who do not know what they are experiencing. It is like the Christians, *"We have Jesus and you don't have Jesus. You are really the devil and under the spell of Satan. We are not. We are pure people because we have Jesus."* So if you have that vanity that you are special, that you are pure and holy, then that means *sattva's* got you, beauty has got you.

I have a friend who is an artist and particularly likes architecture. A drive for him through an American city was hell because he knows all the old buildings that have been torn down and replaced by featureless, modern blocks. He was just angry the whole time. Every time he saw a new building he would say, *"You know what used to be there? It used to be the symphony of the fine arts"*, and la de da. *"Oh there used to be a beautiful building there, late Victorian and incredible, and look at what these troglodytes, these morons have done."* He'd get ranting and raving. It was just awful.

In Berlin, these beautiful old eighteenth-nineteenth century buildings that the Americans came along and bombed, of course wiped out a lot of them. Then the Germans did not have any money after the war so you couldn't build the same quality, or kind of buildings. A lot of just useless, featureless like

Soviet stuff, awful, ugly buildings were built. Blocks and blocks of them were built and you drive through there and wonder about this modern stuff. The beauty is gone.

Well *Isvara* is beauty, and *Isvara* is ugly, and you better get used to it because there is plenty of this here. If you only want your life to be beautiful, if you can only stand beauty, you are going to have to be agitated all the time you are in the presence of something that is not beautiful. In other words, this is attachment to beauty, to *sattva*.

Student – When we talk about seeing action in inaction isn't the same as realizing beauty is ugliness and ugliness is beauty?

James - Yes, for sure you could say that. They are both the same basically. They are just *Isvara*, consciousness, so yes, beauty and ugliness are just pure consciousness. If you see that, then you are not going to be disturbed at all. Understand. That is the whole point, to see everything as *Isvara* and know that *Isvara* is both the good and the bad, both beautiful and ugly, both dharma and *adharma* and leave it at that. Not to get agitated, not to be wanting it be one or another way, or get angry that it is not the way you wanted. So yes.

These are problems of *sattva*. Attachment to knowledge is a good thing isn't it? Up to a point. There are some people in the Vedanta world, who are totally attached to knowledge, and they don't realize, that what we are talking about is the self. So they think, they have to get the knowledge, '*have to get the knowledge*', and they miss the one who has the knowledge, so they get stuck in the Vedanta world. Now, it is a nice world to get stuck in, but it is not *moksha*. Mind you. Vedanta is just a means of knowledge.

Once I hear a sound with my ears, I don't need to hear the sound anymore. I heard the sound, so I know the sound, and I can put my ears aside. I don't need them. Once I see a sight with my eyes then what? I don't need to see it again, because I have the knowledge of what it is. So why do I need to keep looking at it to gain knowledge? I don't, I have the knowledge. But some people get fascinated by the means of knowledge, and they just keep chasing knowledge. Remember, knowledge means I am the knowledge. In other words, I am what knows. If there is any knowledge, I am what makes it possible.

You will see in spiritual literature that the self is called Knowledge with a capital 'K'. We distinguish relative knowledge from self knowledge. There is no end to relative knowledge, no end to it. There is an end to self knowledge because once you know it, you don't need to know it again. Once you know it is 'you'. We said, if you think it is an object then you turn it into relative knowledge, and then you keep seeking for it, and you never feel that you know it. But once you understand it is 'you', the need for that knowledge disappears. Why? Because you are always present and you can't ever forget it. Knowledge means what you can't negate it, it's what you can't forget. There cannot be some subsequent you, or experience that will come along and negate 'you'. There is nothing that can negate you, remove you, nullify you, because 'you' are always present.

Student - Is the subtle body going into the causal body, or is the attention going from the subtle body to the causal body?

James - You could say that the subtle body folds into the causal body and you get to experience bliss, you just get to experience the causal body directly. Like when I went to sleep. I just had a nice two hour sleep, but was it my intention to go into the causal body, or did my subtle body just dissolve into the causal body?

In the waking state, you could say attention goes to here, rather than the objects, that is a good point. But you could also say, the subtle body merges into the causal body and you experience bliss until the next desire comes up. Then, the subtle body emerges again, attention is extroverted and you begin pursuing an object, you become attached to the next object.

So what about *rajas*, what is the story of *rajas*? ***Rajas, colours the mind with passion and attachment, afflicting the self with a binding need to act.*** Like those dogs, when Bill is driving up the hill. Are they attached or what? They are so attached to Bill, that when he's driving away they just go crazy. They start chasing him up the hill and making a huge, huge fuss. They are running after Bill. They are attached. So they need to act and to chase Bill up the road. When he comes back, they all race up the road to meet him.

Tamas, the child of ignorance confuses and deludes the Indweller. It stupefies the mind and binds by sleep, indolence, indifference and sloth. Indifference means you don't care, sleep means you sleep your life away. You need sleep. We are not saying you don't need sleep, but you don't want to be asleep in the waking state. You want to be asleep in the sleep state, not in the waking state. That is what we are talking about. Sloth means sloppy, lazy indolent.

Sattva causes bondage to pleasure. Why? Because you go to the bliss sheath and you get stuck in pleasure. ***Rajas to action.*** You get stuck in action and doing. ***Tamas to apathy.*** Indifference, you just avoid everything. You deny and avoid. These are the problems with the *gunas*.

Verse 10 - When *sattva* predominates *rajas* and *tamas* recede. When *rajas* predominates *sattva* and *tamas* recede. And when *tamas* predominates *sattva* and *rajas* recede.

I like to visualize a wheel, a circle. I am sitting behind, awareness. I am the screen, and I am just providing light. I am the substrate providing the light for observing what is going on here, and there is always something going on in front of me, always. There is never, not something going on. When *tamas* is there, I need a sleep, or I am really sleepy. When you go to sleep, you are still there as awareness. You are not there as a subtle body, but you are present there as awareness. Since there is no subtle body, there is this experience of bliss, constant, steady bliss. So *tamas* is there.

The *gunas* are always changing. Everything here is in a constant state of change, of flux. So when *tamas* is predominant you got really sleepy, then, as this wheel of the *gunas* changes, the *tamas* starts to recede and what comes from behind *tamas*? Let's say *rajas* comes. So you are a little bit sleepy, but now you are starting to be a little active, you are starting to wake up, or starting to get perky and alert if you are in the waking state. Then what happens? Slowly the *rajas*, the activity comes, and *tamas* goes away. Then the predominant *guna* is *rajas*, and then you are a little bundle of energy doing all sorts of stuff. By this time the *tamas* is down here at the bottom, the *rajas* is starting to go away and then the *sattva* is coming up. As *sattva* comes up and predominates, the *rajas* goes down, and what is right behind *sattva* ready to come up? The *tamas* again. So your experience, is constantly nothing

but these three *gunas* operating. One of them predominates at any time, and the other two are present but not predominant.

Sometimes, you can be wired, but tired. In other words, you can be *rajasic* but *tamasic* at the same time. It is an awful feeling, wired but tired. You can't get anything done because you're tired, and you can't sleep because you are wired. It's awful. It's terrible because *rajas* and *tamas* are equally balanced, and are both fighting for supremacy. When *tamas* predominates, then you can fall asleep, *rajas* becomes less important.

How would a *sattvic* person, committed to self knowledge - by that I mean to discrimination - how would a *sannyasi* deal with these *gunas*?

Students - They would see that it is not 'me'.

James - Yeah, that's right. See that it is not 'me'. In other words, remain as a witness and not identify. Identification with the *gunas* is going to produce what? Attachment to activity, purity, sloth and indolence. In other words, you will be born into that *guna*, and experience that *guna* until that *guna* dissolves. But, since you have an attachment to a *guna*, the attachment will remain and when the next *guna* comes up the attachment will shift to that *guna*. *Jivas* that are not self aware, don't have proper discrimination, and don't have clear minds. They are constantly attached to the *guna* that is playing out in front of them. When they are *sattvic*, they want to be clear, high, happy and knowledgeable all the time. When they are *rajasic*, they just get involved in activities all the time, and when they are *tamasic*, they become slothful.

In other words, a *sannyasi*, is somebody who does not identify with the *gunas*. But it is very easy to identify with the *guna*, isn't it? Is it not natural to say, "*I am tired*". Isn't that natural? Everyone says that all the time. Now is that true? It is not true, is it? What would be an accurate way to communicate that situation? The *guna*, of *tamas*, or *tamo guna*, or sleep, has presented itself to 'me'. *Tamo guna* is appearing in 'me'.

Now it's perfectly fine to say, "*I am tired*". It is OK to speak as if I am identified or attached to the *gunas*, because there is nothing more boring than someone who talks about themselves in the third person, and objectifies every damn thing. Those people, I just hate them. Those precious spiritual types want you to know they are not the *gunas*. So, develop in your mind, know that when you say, "*I am tired*", that it's just normal to say that. Just speak normally, but when you say, "*I am tired*", you should know, what? That the 'I' is not tired. It is just knowledge. You don't have to change anything. Know that the 'I' is not tired. The 'I' can't be tired, can it? It is not a doer. It is infinitely awake, it is unborn, doesn't change, so how the hell is it going to be tired? The 'I' is never tired.

The *guna* of *tamas* is covering my subtle body, and I think I am a *jiva*. When I think I am a *jiva*, I identify with the content of my subtle body, and I say, "*I am tired*". When you say, "*I am doing... Hey! Stop bothering me. I am doing this. I'm busy!*" If you say, "*I am busy*" what *guna* is operating? *Rajo guna*. Your *rajas* is operating on the subtle body, and the 'I' is identifying with the busy-ness, with the *rajas* that's operating in the subtle body. You don't want to say, "*My mind is with the guna of rajas, and that is why I can't do what you want me to do. I am very busy doing*". No, you just know what *rajo guna* is, and know the *guna* does not belong to the 'I'. The *guna* belongs to who? *Isvara*!

There are no *gunas* until *Isvara* gets into the picture. Everything is fine until *Isvara* enters the picture. As soon as *Isvara* gets into the picture, I get tied up with the *gunas*, and I say, “*I am tamasic. I am rajasic. I am sattvic.*” The ‘I’ is not *sattvic*, the ‘I’ is not *rajasic*, and the ‘I’ is not *tamasic*. The ‘I’ is what? It is the knower of *sattva rajas* and *tamas*. Now, there is a very simple and powerful tool to know how the *gunas* operate, through an analysis of my speech and behaviour. This is what we are going to do in our book. We are going to tie the *guna* to typical statements and typical actions that emerge with the *gunas*, so people can identify the *guna*. You should be able to feel the *guna* intuitively and know what state of mind you are...I nearly said what state of mind you are in...James wrong! I am not in a state of mind ever. All states of mind are in me. Krishna says, **the ‘I’ never joins the state of mind, never joins the guna.** The ‘I’ is always *triguna atīta*. In the chant we say, “*tri guna rahitham sad gurum tham namami*”.

So you are always beyond the *guna*, but when you hear yourself say, “*I am busy, I am tamasic, I am sattvic*”, I know that pesky *Isvara*, that *Maya* has made me think I am a *guna*, and made me identify with the *guna*. Then the ‘I’ joins the *guna*, I suffer and endure the experience of the *guna* for as long as the *guna* is operating. It is very simple, we suffer and endure.

The rebirth we are talking about here, is simply identifying with a particular *guna*. That means you are born into that *guna*, and you suffer that *guna* as long as it is there. When that *guna* goes, you die to that *guna*. Unfortunately, *Isvara* causes you to identify with the next *guna* that comes up, and then you say, ‘*I am this*’, and the next *guna* comes up and you say, ‘*I am that*’. Well can that be true? It cannot be true. The ‘I’ cannot be three different *gunas*. The ‘I’ is what knows the *gunas*, it doesn’t ever identify with the *guna*. However, *Isvara* makes it think that you are this *guna*. So that is for *sannyasis*. That is the purpose of this knowledge for *sannyasis*. They don’t have to worry about all the other stuff. They just have to continually discriminate the *guna* as an object.

In other words, the *guna* means what? My experience. If you want to get rid of all of the three *gunas*, and not worry about that, and make it even easier, then just discriminate, know the difference between what you are experiencing at any given moment, and the knower of the experience. No need to worry about the *gunas*. All experience is just some combination of those three *gunas*, all the time. So who cares which *guna* it is? It is just experiences on going, and I am the knower of the experience. The knower never changes does it? The knower, the seer, awareness never changes. It is just clear, just steady. The *guna* changes, but the awareness just sits behind it all the time knowing.

And *moksha*, is just identifying yourself as that awareness that does not change, and knowing that the *gunas* are producing this illusion of action and so forth.

Krishna is explaining to Arjuna how to identify the *guna* that is operating at the time. Arjuna is so *rajasic*, Krishna is going to help him. I love Krishna for this as he makes it practical, he explains about different situations and how to identify the *gunas*.

Verse 11 - When the senses and the mind are particularly aware and capable of clear knowledge, *sattva* is predominant. When *rajas* predominates, the Indweller is overtaken by extroversion, greed, restless craving, and in an intense desire for enjoyment. Darkness, inactivity, confusion and lethargy are experienced when *tamas* predominates.

The trading floor of the stock exchange. What is that? Pure *rajas* all the time, pure excitement. *Rajas* and *tamas*. There is a lot of grief when you lose a bunch of money. You feel terrible. When you get a bunch of money, you feel good. Always bouncing up and down between *rajas* and *tamas*. The stock market is a good example of *Isvara* and the *gunas*.

Since my operation, I have had a lot of *tamas*. I am not *tamas*. I have experienced a lot of *tamas*. It is a trouble to move and do things. There isn't a lot of *rajas* to motivate me. I have to sleep a lot, and I sit a lot because *tamas* is working, because I have been wounded. They cut me wide open and sewed me back up, and the consequence of that is lot of *tamas*.

Verse 14 - If *sattva* is predominant when the body dies, the Indweller enters the pure worlds of those who know the truth. If *rajas* is predominant when the body dies, the Indweller is reborn as a doer, committed to karma. If *tamas* predominates at death, the Indweller is reborn without discrimination.

If sattva is predominant when the body dies, the Indweller enters the pure worlds of those who know the truth. It is called *satya* loka. In other words, if you are basically a *sattvic* person when you die, before you are reborn, you will get the experience which is called heaven. When *sattva* predominates, then you are inclined to the truth and you feel clear, blissful, and happy, a lot of the time.

If rajas is predominant when the body dies, the Indweller is reborn as a doer, committed to karma. Same idea isn't it? If *rajas* is there, you are going to find yourself doing, doing, doing and you are going to be committed to karma and action.

If tamas is predominant at death the Indweller is reborn without discrimination. Ooh! Not good. These are your emotional people. They are stuck in what we call the lower worlds, the hell ramps, because they have no discrimination. They just make mistakes right and left, they make the wrong choices and they suffer more, and more, and more, if *tamas* is predominant.

Verse 16 - *Sattva* is the cause of virtuous activities, motivated by a pure mind free of distress. Pain and sorrow is the result of *rajas*, and ignorance is caused by *tamas*. From *sattva* is born knowledge and wisdom, from *rajas* greed. Apathy, ignorance and delusion come from *tamas*. Those who cultivate *sattva* evolve upward, those who cultivate *rajas* remain the same, and those who cultivate *tamas* degenerate.

Sattva is the cause of virtuous activities, motivated by a pure mind free of distress. They are called dharmies, *sattva* people follow dharma. If you follow dharma *shastra*, and live according to the injunctions in the dharma *shastras*, your mind will become *sattvic*. In fact, the purpose of the dharma *shastras*, is to produce a *sattvic* mind, and that will lead to inquiry and knowledge. So, at the end of each section of karma kanda, is another section on knowledge. You may get stuck in heaven or hell, in other words, in experience for a quite a while. The more *sattvic* the better you feel, the more heavenly you feel, and the more you impeccably follow dharma. So there is more a sense of righteousness, rightness, goodness, wholeness, beauty and purity in your life. Remember, you can get stuck in *sattva* but normally, when *sattva* begins to predominate you start to inquire, you start to

become curious. *“Who am I, what is going on here? I want to understand what is going on here.”* You realize you can't control the experience, but you realize that maybe you can understand what is going on and that is the virtue, the upside of *sattva*.

Pain and sorrow is the result of rajas... Whenever you experience pain it is a result of *rajas* operating, and ignorance is caused by *tamas*.

From sattva is born knowledge and wisdom, from rajas greed. Apathy, ignorance and delusion come from tamas. If you are like, *“Oh, its alright. Well whatever, oh whatever man! Never mind, just give me this, give me that.”* That is apathy. It looks like dispassion, but it is not. You are just lazy and unconscious about what you need or want. You go to a restaurant and somebody orders for you and they order you a plate of eggs, bacon and steak. You know very well it is no good for you, but you eat it anyway, because it is there. *“What the hell. This won't help me. I'll just eat it anyway, blah blah blah.”* *Tamas* is a state of mind.

And what about this statement? ***Those who cultivate sattva evolve upward, those who cultivate rajas remain the same, and those who cultivate tamas degenerate.*** They go down. So you are speaking evolution here. If you want to grow, cultivate *sattva*. If you want to stay the same, cultivate *rajas* because you will do enough virtuous activities to counteract your adharmic activities, and you will probably pretty much stay the same.

You know when some people come in, they come in with a certain store of karma, and this incarnation is set aside for you to exhaust that karma, to work out that stuff that is in you. Now you can either, what? You can either add to that store by the way you live, and evolve downwards or you can subtract from that score, in which case you evolve upwards. You can create as much as you exhaust and stay the same. It is up to you.

So, if you cultivate *sattva*, your karma is going to go way down and you find yourself more and more peaceful, more and more happy and more aware, all the time. Sorry!! You will find your mind becoming more and more bright and clear and capable of understanding. See how easy it was for me to slip into the *‘you'll become more Aware’*. The *jiva* will become more aware, more apparently aware because the *sattva guna* is purify the mind. You won't become more aware, you are just the knower of the *sattva*, the knower who knows that the mind is becoming more *sattvic*.

If you say *‘I am becoming more sattvic’*, the implied meaning of that statement is what? That I change, but *‘you’* don't change. Why? If you change along with the *sattva*, then you would not know where you were before, would you? But that is not how it is. You never change. The *guna* changes. If you are the one that is changing, then how are you going to accurately say, *“I was like this before and I was like this now?”* You always remain as this (referring to the chart) and you apparently change. *‘You’* meaning your mind. Your subtle body apparently changes.

It is like going to a symphony. I used this example the other day. It is a good example. If you are at a symphony and you start talking, and chattering once the symphony starts, everyone gets really pissed off at you, don't they? Why? They need to establish themselves in silence, or the melody does not mean anything. The melody only means something if the whole audience is silent. The audience assumes the position of awareness and the *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva* play in the silence. Then they can

say it was a great performance, and they can watch it, because they are watching it from behind. During the break, the interval and the sound disappears, becoming one big *rajasic* bundle of blah, blah, blah. Then they all come back in from the break and get silent again so they can evaluate the meaning of this symphony and enjoy the symphony.

So if you say, “*I am changing or I am improving or I am getting worse*”, are any of those statements true? It means, you are not getting worse. Can you see? Action in inaction, inaction in action. You are not changing. It just looks like you are changing.

So if you want to grow, cultivate *sattva*. If you want to devolve and get worse go to *tamas*. If you don't understand what we are saying, it is because there is too much *tamas* in your intellect. These *gunas* operate, since they are the creator. The *gunas* are the creators, they are the cause. Then all the effects have got the *gunas* in them too, right? There is no manifest object that is free of a *guna*.

Those *gunas* can apportion themselves differently, in different aspects, in different parts of the subtle body. So *rajas* can control your emotions to a large degree, and at the same time *tamas* can control your intellect. This often happens. This is real common. When the emotions are really *rajasic*, the intellect will often be very *tamasic*, and that is the way *rajas* wants it. Then the intellect won't think for itself. It will be real dull and what will it do? It will reinforce the bad ideas that are keeping you *tamasic* and emotional. So, you will have all these justifications and rationalizations for why you are doing what you are doing. Sometime the doer is quite active. There are *sattvic* doers, *rajasic* doers, and *tamasic* doers, with *sattvic*, *tamasic* and *rajasic* intellects. There are *sattvic*, *tamasic* and *rajasic* emotions.

Once you learn to understand these *gunas* you can observe your thinking. Our whole thing is to work on the intellect and introduce a cognitive change into the system. If you work on the intellect, then the emotions will clear up, and then actions will become more *sattvic* and pure.

So, Vedanta is only for those who understand the value of knowledge. On the chart, why do we have the intellect here at the top? The intellect is here, because it is the closest thing to awareness and it should be guiding our search. But, if our emotions are on top and our intellect is secondary, then I am going to value feeling, and I am going to be unable to discriminate because my feelings, my emotional energy, will overwhelm my intellect. My intellect won't be able to discriminate properly. Remember, we define *moksha* as discrimination. So, I have to establish my intellect as the ruler of my life. I have to operate my life from understanding and knowledge, not just the self knowledge, but knowledge of *Isvara*.

If I am emotional, how am I going to gain knowledge? You can't gain knowledge when you are emotional. When your emotions are too *rajasic*, or disturbed, or too dull and *tamasic*. Depression means *tamo guna* has got you. Depression is *tamas*. The manic depressive, the bipolar, is a condition where the subtle body switches from intense *rajas*, to intense *tamas*, with no *sattvic* in between. There is no reflection - or maybe just a little glimmer, or hint of clarity - but not enough for them to latch onto, so they just bounce back and forth between *rajas* and *tamas*.

I had a friend, he is dead now. He was killed by his bipolar situation. It just destroyed his discrimination. Back in the late seventies early eighties, I was an antique dealer, and I had an antique

store in downtown San Francisco. That is how we supported ourselves. I had a little ashram down there, and we supported ourselves by doing antiques. A lot of my friends were antique dealers. We used to buy and sell to each other, give each other tips, and so forth. One day, I was driving down the street, and I saw a little antique store I had never seen before. So, I thought I should go in and see what they had. I met this fellow, a well bred, good, middle class fellow. He was a nice lad and he liked me.

We became friends and we used to trade information. He was a bit of a sucker, so I could squeeze good buys out of him. I would also give him things too. Basically, he just liked to hang out with me. I was a cheerful, friendly guy and I liked him. He was a manic depressive, and I didn't understand this.

One day he was on a run. In other words, he had been *rajasic* for 10 days straight, so he had not slept for 11 days. Just going, doing, doing, doing, and he had his antique pick up truck, and he was going up Haight Street. Haight Street runs through what is called the ghetto. It was a predominantly black area, and pretty seedy. On one corner of Haight, there was a place called Hanks 500 Club. You only walked in there if you were a hardened criminal carrying a weapon, because that place was low life. You could not get any lower. On the street, there were all these prostitutes and drug dealers. Just useless humanity. I used to go there a lot. Not to Hanks, but for other delicious little experiences that were available. There were many hotels and rooming houses that were for sale, and people were selling their junk. I bought people's junk and sold it as antiques. I was always rummaging around, talking to people, meeting people, reading the ads and so forth.

Well, Michael was also familiar with the area too, because all the antique dealers used to buy down there. One day he was on a run, going down Haight Street and he passes the Hank 500 Club, and finds himself behind a huge Cadillac convertible. There is a black guy and he is 'the man'. The man - big muscles, tattoos, his cool hat - is just creeping up the street. He is like, '*I own this street*'. That was his view, and he did, nobody was going to mess with him. He has lots of money and he is packing a weapon. You just don't mess with him. He 's driving maybe five mph and Michael is behind him. There is traffic coming the other way, and there are people behind him. They are all irritated, because this guy is going really slow, and whenever he sees one of his dealers, or his girls on the street, he stops and they come sauntering over really cool. It is like the street is their front room. They talk business for a few minutes, and then the guy moves up the street a little more.

Well Michael is stuck. When you are *rajasic*, every thought is like torment. You have to keep going fast to remove thoughts. But now, thoughts are standing up, and he is getting angry because he is not getting what he wants, which is to go up the street. So what does he do? He hits the horn. Suddenly, everything goes dead silent on the street. Nobody, nobody honks at the man, the big man. No one messes with him. But the guy is so cool, he does not even look, or move, or pay any attention to Michael at all, which further enrages him even more. So he hits the horn again. The guy knows it, but just pulls over and stops and starts talking to someone on the street. Michael can't get around him. You can imagine now with this *rajas* that's been going on for days, the anger is really starting to build up in him. He puts the car in reverse, he backs up four to five feet, revs the engine, puts it into low gear and pops the clutch. WHAM! But that is not good enough. Michael does it again. BOOM! He hits the car and keeps going. Michael just pushes him right across the street into a parking meter and into a store front window. Glass comes shattering down on this guy and suddenly the cops appear.

They grab Michael, but he is still *rajasic*, and he does not want to be restrained, because he's got things to do. So the cops handcuff him, and Michael starts to abuse them. "*I'm f-ing your wife, you SOB.*" So of course, what do the cops do? They beat the shit out of him. They took him to county jail, and beat the shit out of him, and they charge him with a serious felony. He had no money, so he could not get out of jail. He sat in jail for a week or two, and at this point the court is required to supply him with an attorney. The attorney realized this man is a 'nutter', not a criminal. There is something wrong with his brain. So, the judge sent him to the nut house to get an evaluation to see what was going on there. Sure enough, they found he was bipolar, they call it manic depression. So, they put him on lithium, it makes you *tamasic*. It covers over the *rajas*, so you just become kind of placid. They think it is better than all these ups and downs and so forth.

OK. Time to quit.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 8 - Session 2, Continued
Chapter 15, Verses 1- 20

Chapter 15
The Supreme Being

In the Krishna consciousness movement, BhaktiVedanta Swami calls it ***'The Supreme Personality of Godhead'***. 'Supreme' is really an unfortunate word. These are experiential words, hyperbolic words. They need to be carefully unfolded or you will get the wrong idea about *moksha*. So 'Supreme', like the word 'Brahman', immediately when you see them, your mind goes *'gah gah'* and you think some big space, and *'oh that's like infinite'*, and all that sort of thing. But 'Brahman' just means that which does not modify. It means unlimited, it does not modify to the objects appearing in it. So there is nothing big about the self and there is nothing small about the self. The Upaniṣhads say, ***it is bigger than the biggest and smaller than the smallest.*** That means it can't be big or small.

'Supreme' is another word. 'Supreme' means, beyond which there is nothing. If we understand it that way, beyond which there is nothing, it is also a difficult term, because 'beyond' is spatial terminology, so it makes you think you need to go somewhere other than here, to know or experience it. So the words 'supreme' or 'beyond', means there is no place to go, because reality is non-dual. There is only what is here, right now, present at any moment. So whatever is 'beyond' is also present. It is easy - if you are not taught properly - to misunderstand the meaning of these word.

The phrase is actually 'uttamapuruṣa'. It is a term from Sāṅkhya, a spiritual tradition that is the basis of yoga. There are two concepts. 'Puruṣa' which means the man or person and 'prakṛti' means nature. So there is this first person, original man...You see the problem when you use the word 'puruṣa', and use the word 'person', then we start thinking it is a literal use of the word, and that the self is a person.

That immediately makes a problem for the Dvaitins. They are dualists. The dualists interpret the scripture completely differently from the way we do. We are advaitins, that means non-dualists and we look on this scripture as *moksha*. But the dvaitins do not believe that the *jiva* - the individual and the total - they don't believe that they are one. They don't believe that there is no difference between myself, the consciousness in me, and the consciousness in you. They think there is a big consciousness somewhere else, and this is a little consciousness. This little consciousness, has no particular relationship to the big consciousness except dependence. Now, it is true that if you take yourself to be an individual, then you are dependent upon consciousness, because there is no individual without consciousness.

So you can see how the problems come when you have the scripture. Anybody can interpret it, in any way they please. In our tradition, we look to the original source, and then we look to the total logic of the teachings. We can see that this chapter is not talking about some big personality, some big God sitting in some heavenly realm, some place else, or in other words, a religious concept. Not that we are against religion in any way. The religious attitude is a good attitude. The religious state of mind is a good state of mind.

Student - Would you relate the use of 'Brahman' and the use of 'puruṣa' in this....

James - Uttamapuruṣa is the same as Brahman. It just means awareness. awareness is not big or small, or here or there. awareness is just you. It is what knows. It is the knower.

What I have been trying to do in the years I have been teaching, is to simplify the language so that it does not scare off people and give them the wrong idea, or make them think this is some arcane science that you have to study for years, and go to India and know Sanskrit to get Vedanta. You know like the orange clothes and the beads and the big hair.

I want to make a point about language. Language, the words, is all we have. If the self is always present, and I am it, and I don't know I am it, then the only thing I have is words. A student sent me an interesting essay he wrote about the use of words, and about how Vedanta uses words. For example, can you describe what sweetness is? Tell me what sweetness is? Get out your pencil and pen and write it down. Can you do it? You can't do it. It is impossible to describe, in words, what sweetness is, but everyone has experienced sweetness. So, if I have experienced sweetness once, but I can't describe it directly, I can still use the implied meaning of words and examples to make you understand that you know what sweetness is.

The same is true for the self. You already know the self. You already are experiencing the self, but there is some disconnect in your understanding about what the self is. The way Vedanta works is, we use words to reveal something you already know, something you are already experiencing. The direct meaning of the words does not always work, it may, but the indirect meaning of the words conveys the knowledge. You can convey knowledge by implication, by implied meaning.

Scripture said earlier, **that by implication and reason, these teachings reveal the self to us.** So words are really important. Like the rebirth story - you see this over and over again. The reincarnation idea keeps popping up, and the language keeps popping up in almost every chapter. I felt the need to re-define that concept of rebirth, insofar as nobody really cares if they are going to be born again. Nobody is working for their next birth. You are working to solve your problems in this birth. So our idea of *moksha* is '*jivanmukta*', liberation while here. So we are not focused or concerned about whether or not the *jiva*, the individual, appears again in another body, or in another place in time. It isn't going to matter.

So we define birth and rebirth differently. We define birth as identifying with objects that appear in you, and death as the non-attachment to the appearance or the removal of that object. When you identify with a thought, or a feeling, or an impulse that comes up, then you are bound by that nature of your identification to perform actions and get results, in other words, you get *vasanas* for that particular action, whatever it is. So, you are continually reborn to that same idea. It is like an addiction, like coffee, or sex, or music or anything. You keep getting yourself stuck in that cycle.

There is a certain ecological logic to the idea of the subtle body being born, because science tells us that the physical substance of which the earth is made, continually recycles. If this is a non-dual reality, then the same principle that applies to the physical substance is going to apply to the psychological substance. So there is enough inferential evidence for us to believe, that the *jiva* does, apparently, move from one body to another until the *vasanas* are worked out.

But that is not a really helpful concept. It is just not really helpful. We are interested right here and now in understanding who we are. All that is required to do is to discriminate in the present, between awareness the knower, and the known objects, between the seer and the seen, between the field and the knower of the field.

Verse 1 - Krishna said, “*Maya* is like a great imperishable tree with its roots in awareness its branches stretching far below into the world of men. The Vedas are its leaves. The one who knows it is a knower of the Vedas. Nourished by the *gunas*, its foliage spreads both upwards and downwards. The sense objects are its buds. Secondary roots stretch down into the world of men binding them to the karmic wheel”.

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The sense objects are its buds. Out on the tips....the sense objects.

Secondary roots stretch down into the world of men binding them to the karmic wheel. Those are your *vasanas*. They bind you to action.

Verse 3 - In this world, it is not possible to understand its nature because it has no end and no beginning and seemingly no source. Cut its well entrenched roots with a firm ax of non-attachment and the path from which there is no return...self inquiry...will open to you. To succeed on that path surrender to that Being from whom this eternal creation is projected.

In this world, it is not possible to understand its nature because it has no end and no beginning and seemingly no source. In other words, it is a dream, a projection. It is never the same from one moment to the next. So, it is impossible to determine the actual nature of *Maya*. This is why we suffer so much, because we think there is something solid and substantial here, something we can grasp on to, whatever it is... love, security, you name it, power, pleasure, all these are forces or appearances that operate in here, but none of them are secure. None of them are what they seem to be.

If we knew that this tree was actually apparently real, then you wouldn't chase these experiences. You would not identify with these impulses in your mind. But we actually believe this is a real tree, and we keep trying to get real knowledge about this tree. The difficulty is that the more you know about this, the more you don't know about this. There is no end to it.

Look at science, in its quest for the origins of the universe. You'd think if these guys were so smart, why wouldn't they have figured it out by now? They are never going to figure it out, because it is in this

indeterminate reality that is never the same from one moment to the next. It is made up by its very nature of knowledge and ignorance, so you can never tell what it actually is.

Student - It has no beginning, and it means that the whole thing has no beginning?

James - Why does this have no beginning? Because awareness has no beginning. This tree of *samsara* is a power that is inherent in awareness. If awareness does not have the power to appear as something other than what it is, then it is not limitless. Then suddenly, awareness becomes limited. But it is our experience, and it is the statement of the scripture that awareness has no limits. In other words, anything is possible, including the possibility that awareness forgets what it is, that awareness does not know what it is. Obviously, it is not a real unknowing or not knowing. It is an apparent non-knowing, and therefore, we can remove that apparent not-knowing, that apparent ignorance.

It seemingly has no source. It is *Maya*. This is very tricky, a very subtle point. Is *Maya* or ignorance a power that is in awareness? In other words, if that is true, then awareness is not non-dual. From this, *jiva* point of view, we can't see ignorance. This is why when you tell people about the self, who have not had some experience, they say: "What are you talking about?" They don't even know there is a self to be ignorant of. Ignorance, seemingly has no source. In fact, it is like a stand-alone principle. It is not even a power in *Maya*. It is the non-apprehension of awareness as it is, and the subsequent mis-apprehension of the identification with some object here, that is born of non-understanding and identification. This is a very subtle point here.

From this point of view, where does ignorance come from, and does it have a beginning? Well, it does not seem to have a beginning. When did you become ignorant of the gagabuguy? Swamiji's favourite words. I have been forever ignorant of the gagabuguy. It is only when I use words to tell you what a gagabuguy is, then you are no longer ignorant of this gagabuguy. Now, obviously there is no such thing as a gagabuguy.

Student - So it has no beginning from the point of view of the *jiva*....

James - It has no beginning from the point of view of the *jiva*, and it doesn't exist from the point of view of awareness. So, where does it belong? (Pointing to the chart) That is why we have this extra thing on the side of the chart. It is just not knowing. That is all it is. It is just not knowing that I am awareness that I am whole, complete, actionless, non-dual, ever-present awareness. Now what can be done about this mess, this not knowing, this tree of ignorance, this tree of *samsara*?

Cut its well entrenched roots with the firm ax of non attachment and the path from which there is no return...self inquiry...will open to you. The path of no return means that you can't forget who you are when you know it is you. If you think awareness is something other than you, then you can forget that you are awareness. But if you know that awareness is you, how can you forget it because you are always present? Think about that. People think, "I've got to get it, that I am awareness". But awareness is you. The awareness that is trying to get it, is you. That is awareness that is trying to get it. When you understand that, then game over. How can you forget you? You can forget anything that is not present - a thought, an idea, an experience - but you are always present. So you can't come back from that understanding. That is the point.

Yadgatvā na nivartante. taddhāma parama mama

That is what it says. Once you go there, you are not coming back. Coming back to what? To ignorance. Just like the man who sees the rope. Once he saw the snake, but now he can't see the snake again. He can't come back and make himself perceive a snake, because the ignorance is gone, and all he sees is the rope.

Student - Can he still see the snake?

James - I know what you are trying to say. In the case of a mirage, the mirage remains when the ignorance about the nature of the mirage is removed. But, in the case of a snake and rope, once you have been told that it is a rope, your eyes won't put a snake back there. You can see how your mind generated a snake there, because you can look at the similarities of the shape of the snake and the rope, and you can understand that the conditions around the twilight - the tiredness of your mind when you were there, your mind was tired and sleepy - and a fear came up and projected a snake there. There was no snake, but the fear took advantage of those conditions to generate a snake. There was none there. Now, once somebody tells you that it is a rope, you can't put it back. That is the idea here.

Student - You can seemingly forget though. You can seemingly forget yourself, but

James - If you say I forgot myself, then all you have to ask is, "*Who forgot?*" If you say, "*I don't know myself*", that is not true, because the self is the one saying: "*I don't know myself*". So the self is always present. The self is just you. We don't have to worry about knowledge and ignorance, we have to know what knowledge is, and what ignorance is. Knowledge is, "*I am awareness and not this person, this apparent person, that I think I am.*"

Well, anyway, how do you get out of this? ***Firm ax of non attachment.*** Non-attachment to the objects appearing in you. An object is anything other than myself.

Student - It talks of fixing the mind on awareness in the Gita. So, if I fix my mind on an object, I am still fixing my mind on awareness as long as I am aware of that.... no contradiction?

James - Well, no. What does fixing your mind on awareness mean? It means, keeping the knowledge that I am awareness in your mind all the time, until you no longer need to dis-identify, or detach from the objects. We are already awareness. Then what is the access to awareness if I am already awareness? What is the only access to awareness if I am already awareness and I don't know that I am awareness? Knowledge.

The experiential crowd says, "*The only access to awareness is action, is doing something*". They say, "*Go to a guru. Hang around. Get in the energy. Or huff and puff and do your kundalini ,and get it zipping up your spine, and whatever it is....do all these practices...*" They say the only access to awareness is through action, but that just can't be true. That whole idea is based upon the idea that reality is a duality. Even if reality is a duality - we can give them that if they want it, because there is an apparent duality here - you can't get what you already got by doing something.

So the self has got to be you. You don't have any doubt that you exist, that you are aware. So, the only access is not through action, because action is born of ignorance, and the self is fine with ignorance. So, the self is fine with action. People go on, "*Oh, Ramana sat in silence, and you Vedanta people, all you do is talk a bunch of words, but Ramana transmits in silence*". What they don't know is that the self has no problem with ignorance. You can sit in silence, and be dumb as a loaf of bread forever, and the self is not going to do one damned thing about it.

There is this bias, this tremendous prejudice against knowledge, "*because it is all intellectual*". Well, it is intellectual that there is, "*something wrong with knowledge*" too!! (Laughter). If you are going to dismiss knowledge as intellectual, then you will have to dismiss the idea that knowledge is intellectual, as intellectual. Therefore, this action argument, does not hold up, So action, is no access to awareness because awareness is prior to action. Before you act, you have to be there. You cannot act, unless there is something there prior to the action, because action does not do itself. Not possible.

So how do you keep your mind on the self? By this teaching. By keeping your mind with the knowledge, with the idea - it's an idea, the knowledge - that "*I am the self*". Then what happens? All this other stuff comes up. "*I want this, I don't want that.*" In other words, there is content appearing in you, in awareness. So with that knowledge that I am awareness what do you do? You cut off - that is why he calls it **the firm ax** - you firmly cut off the appearance, the impulse that is appearing in you.

Remember the definition of a realized person that we had a few chapters back? It says: **A realized soul is someone who can give up the desires as they arise in the mind.** A *jnani* does not have to practice, but a person who is not a *jnani*, in other words for whom the knowledge is not firm, they have to struggle, because for such a long time I have believed in my desires and fears. I bathed in them, allowing them to tell me that happiness is in doing what you want.

Our notion is: No, **happiness is your own nature.** You are not going to get happy by doing something. You are going to get happy by understanding. In this case here, knowledge is fighting the ignorance. It is a fight. That is why the Gita is formulated as a war. It is just a symbol of the struggle inside - that we have with our tendencies, those of us who want freedom - our tendencies to identify with what is not real.

There is nothing wrong with anything here. It is just that it is not real. If you pursue it thinking it is real, you are going to be disillusioned, because it is not going to last. It is not going to last. Nothing here lasts. Who is satisfied with temporary happiness? Nobody. So the method or the technique is to apply this knowledge to your mind at all times.

To succeed on that path surrender to that Being from whom this eternal creation is projected. In other words, to yourself. What does surrender mean? Accept the fact that you are awareness. Stop this resistance to what the scripture says. We call this faith. Faith is, "*I accept what the scripture says*". Don't keep doubting it. If you keep doubting it, you are never going to succeed.

Verse 5 - To gain that imperishable end from which there is no return, fix your mind on the self, and free yourself from the need for respect, from attachment to objects, and from the push and pull of the opposites. Do not feed your desire for objects.

To gain that imperishable end from which there is no return, fix your mind on the self and free yourself from....

What are these *vasanas* that they are talking about? What are the objects appearing in you?

...the need for respect... The big one, wanting people to like you, wanting people to notice you, wanting and expecting people to validate you, and say you are OK. That is a big one for human beings. That is a huge one.

...attachment to objects.... That is an object, the need for respect is an object. Object here, I suppose, means anything other than you. You think you need whatever.

...and from the push and pull of the opposites. In other words, the mind has these two tendencies, *rāgas* and *dveṣas*, running away from something and running towards something. How do you free yourself from that? You just know what they are, and you just observe your mind pushing and pulling you. That is all. You don't have to do anything about it. You just have to see, there is an upside and a downside to everything.

Actually you know this. So when you are looking at the negative side, there is actually a positive side. When you are looking at the positive side, there is actually a negative side. Which means, you know there is no way to gain anything here. Through any action, it will be neutralized by the duality of *Maya*. So you can't gain.

Do not feed your desire for objects. That does not mean you won't have a desire for objects, that it expresses. It means just don't feed it. That non-feeding, that non-identification, will gradually burn out the desire. It is hard. Like security and pleasure, those are the two big ones. Those are really the two basic ones. In our tradition, they lump everything under security and pleasure, *artha* and *kama*.

An object is not wanted for the sake of the object. An object is wanted for the sake of the freedom from the insecurity that is produced - that you believe the object will remove - put it that way. You don't want money for money's sake. Money doesn't mean anything. What can you do? You can buy stuff, but money in essence, doesn't mean anything. It is just green paper. But what does it do to me psychologically? It frees me from financial insecurity. So, I don't really want the money, I want freedom from the financial insecurity. A relationship - what does that free me from? I want love - that's *kama* - because I am lonely. So if I can get a relationship....I don't care about the relationship. What do I care about? Freedom from the sense of loneliness. If you want to neutralize these objects, this is how you do it.

Knowledge destroys the objects. Think of the logic. When the desire or fear comes up, work it out and trust it. It takes a great amount of trust. You have to trust the knowledge. So you stand up to something. You are insecure..."*Oh my God, is the knowledge going to fail, or should I just forget the knowledge and go for the object?*" You stick with the knowledge. You say, "*I don't need this. I can do without it. This can't hurt me. There is no loss here. There is no gain here*", and understand why - that is the nature of *samsara*. Then you can destroy this attachment to objects.

Verse 6 - Neither the sun, nor moon, nor fire illumines That from which one does not return. That is My limitless abode. It means you don't need a mind to know who you are. You don't need a mind to know who you are. You know who you are by your own self. There is no light that can shine on awareness. No light that can reveal awareness. A person thinks, "*I am this awareness and I am going to know this awareness*". No. This awareness that you think you are, is an inert subtle body, an inert reflector. Reflected awareness can never know awareness because it is just a reflection. It is like the moon trying to see the sun with reflected light. It can't do it. We always only know awareness by awareness when your ignorance is knocked off. Then you see that, that is true.

Student - Does that mean that people with Alzheimers don't know who they are, always?

James - Could be. I don't know. They are pretty cool in a way, because they have no memory. They may be what they are, but not know what they are, and not be troubled by the not knowing. We are troubled by our not knowing. The average person is not troubled that they don't know who they are, really, and Alzheimer's patients are not troubled either. The thing that is creating the problem, is that the mind is not functioning properly. There is no doubt there. We are caught up in this doubt. It is a belief, really. You do know who you are, and you are who you are, but we have this doubt. So, we are stuck. No?

Student - I know a lot of them.

James - If you say they know who they are, who knows who they are? The Alzheimer's patient is a person who knows this (pointing to OM in chart)? Well, no.

But it is this (*jiva*) that knows this (OM) when your ignorance about who you are is removed. That is what you see. That is why people who say "I got knowledge, I gained knowledge", they are not correct. They remain as gainers, or doers of knowledge, as gainers of enlightenment. But enlightenment, freedom, is knowing I am awareness and knowing that I can't be gained, and that this person that is gaining, this apparent person, is only an apparent person, and can't gain anything.

In other words, it is just a reflection that seems to be conscious. *Jivas* are seemingly conscious. They are actually awareness but they are seemingly conscious as *jivas*, as individuals. A seemingly conscious entity cannot know anything. It can seem to know something. It will have seeming knowledge. It will have apparent knowledge. It will not have knowledge. The only way it works is to get rid of the ignorance by understanding the logic here. You understand the logic and the ignorance goes.

Verse 7 - In the world, a part of me exists as the indweller, the eternal individual. When the Indweller leaves the body, it gathers the five senses and the mind and enters a new body, just as the wind carries the fragrance of a flower far afield. Presiding over the ear, the eye, the senses of touch, taste, and smell, and the mind, this eternal person experiences the sense objects.

It is called *jivatman*. Now we have the reincarnation idea which I don't want to deal with now, we have been talking too much reincarnation.

Verse 10 - The deluded do not see the *guna*-driven one, experiencing through the body now, or when it departs. But those with the eye of wisdom see. By making an effort, yogis apprehend the self shining in the mind. But immature people who lack discrimination do not see the self shining there...even if they make an effort.

The deluded do not see the *guna*-driven one experiencing through the body now or when it departs. But those with the eye of wisdom see. What does this mean? Why don't they see it? Because, they are not there to see it. Because, it is only the *vasanas* that are re-constituting themselves in the form of a new *jiva* later on. So nobody really understands if they are reborn, and you are not reborn, that is the point. That is why you don't see your rebirth, because you are not actually reborn. You are this (OM) when you are appearing in this particular incarnation, and when this body goes, then you are still this (OM) appearing in another body. You are not this person that keeps hopping from one to another, but that is how it sounds.

See the seemingness, the difficulty of the scripture, and how it has to be parsed very carefully.

But those with the eye of wisdom see. What do they see? They understand the *vasanas*. They understand how the *vasanas* create. It says, ***The guna driven one.*** It means the *vasanas*, the *gunas*. So, that is what is driving it. This person (*jiva*), never sees what is coming from here (causal body), because this is subtler. It is what's driving you, what's behind you. But the person who knows this (OM), they are the One. This is ***the eye of wisdom*** - awareness knowledge, self knowledge - is ***the eye of wisdom***. It tells you that, what is actually happening, is unfulfilled *vasanas* are creating a new body, through this really beautiful mechanism of birth, apparent birth.

By making an effort, ***yogis apprehend this self, shining in the mind.*** What is that effort? Application of knowledge, understanding.

But immature people who lack discrimination do not see the self shining there....Now that is an interesting statement. Shining where? In the mind. Why is it, that the mind seems to know things? Because awareness is shining on it. The mind is nothing but inert thoughts, but it seems to know. It seems to understand, because awareness is shining on it, giving it sentiency, apparent sentiency.

Yogi means - these are the experience oriented people. Now we are going into yoga, and Vedanta deals with yoga. We are talking knowledge, and we are talking yoga. Many people think they have not experienced the self, actually you are always experiencing the self, but you have not experienced the self as an object, as shining in the mind. Actually they are better off, because as soon as you experience the self as an object shining in the mind, what happens? You get attached to it as an object shining in the mind, and you start pursuing that experience.

A *jnani* is a person who may see the self shining in the mind, but knows it is just reflected awareness and that actually what he or she wants is to understand that *"I am that awareness shining in the mind"*. When you have an experience, there is always awareness. Whether it is a spiritual experience, or a worldly experience, the awareness of the experience never changes. So, we are only interested in separating the experience from the awareness.

But when I see, in other words, when my mind gets clear, and it fills up with light, or peace, or love, or whatever, which are just reflections. Now reflection does not mean light necessarily, reflection means love, or means peace. Sometimes, when we meditate, or have a particularly nice satsang, you can feel the peace here, you can feel the silence, the stillness. Well that is just the self reflecting in your mind. That is the experience of the self in the mind. That is where you will experience it. It is here, all experience takes place in the mind. So, no problem.

But until I discriminate the reflection from the objects, that is, the thoughts and feelings, I am not free. That is why you can realize the self. The best *samdhi* for realizing the self, the only *samdhi*, is *savikalpa samdhi*, when the mind is active. There you discriminate the reflection from the thoughts, from the ideas that are appearing in it. You can understand that the knower of the reflection, in other words, the knower of this experience, is Me. Then freedom is there.

But immature people who lack discrimination do not see the self shining there...even if they make an effort. That is why people are chasing. Immature people, chasing experiences, experience of the self. They won't get it. Most people give up meditation and yoga after a while, as far as self realization goes. It is good for managing your disturbances, for stress relief. It is good there, but until you are mature enough to make a discrimination here, then you are not going to see the self shining in the mind. It does not make any difference if you see the self shining in the mind, or you see the self shining on an object. There is no difference. The self is the self. People think, "Well, James, you must be having some kind of special experience?" No. I have the same experience you have. I just experience the same things as you experience. The only difference is, I know I am the light that is shining on the experience. Whether it is a worldly experience, or a spiritual experience, it does not matter to me. It can be either way. I am the one who makes the experience valuable or useful, not the experience. Without me, where is it? What good is it?

Verse 12 - The light, because of which the sun and the moon shine, the light illumining all the worlds is Me. I also enter the earth and sustain beings with my energy. I nourish all vegetation, and am the essence, the soma, of all things. I am the digestive fire in the bodies of all living beings, and I cook the food. I have entered the hearts of all beings. Because I am in them, they gain knowledge, remember and forget. I alone am the object of Vedic knowledge. I am the author of the Vedanta sampradāya, and the knower of the Vedas.

Verse 16 - Two selves, one perishable and the other imperishable, exist in the world. The conscious beings and matter are perishable, the Unmanifest is imperishable. But other than these, is the self beyond the selves, the limitless changeless awareness that has entered the three worlds and sustains the, _____ Because I am beyond change and changelessness. I am indestructible. Therefore, I am renowned as the supreme being. If you know me in this way, you become a knower of everything, the self of all.

Two selves... Oh no! We have a problem here. They are bringing two selves. "But you have been telling me all along, James, there is only one self and now scripture says there are two selves. What are we going to do here?"

...one perishable and the other imperishable....

“What? I thought the self was imperishable. Oh, one self is perishable and the other is imperishable. My God, there must be another one, a self beyond the self here!” Yes, there is. This is a tricky verse. I misunderstood this the first time I read it. I had to have it explained to me carefully.

Two selves, one perishable and the other imperishable..... Where do they exist? In the world. What is the world? It is a psychological or spiritual term here. ‘World’ means, in your experience. Like, there is the world of sports, the legal world, the political world, the medical world. All those worlds, are just different objects, just different experiences that people have, whatever it is. In our case, the world means all objects. So, the world here, means all the various worlds there are - the sports world, the legal world, the world of animals, the world of nature - all of these lokas, or fields of experience, in which there are all these beings operating. It says, ***in the world*** - from *Maya* down - there are two selves, one perishable, and the other imperishable.

Now, that’s funny. Where does that leave the self, because I am told the self is imperishable. So, if this is imperishable, and is in the world, then where did the self go? *“Oh! Big problem. It has disappeared. There has to be a third self.”* No, there is not a third self. Apparently there is a third self. The self is the awareness of what is perishable and what is imperishable.

Now what is imperishable in this world? *Maya*. It has no beginning and seemingly no end. When they say seemingly no end - actually after four hundred and sixty five billion years, or a long, long time, the world disappears, but it reconstitutes itself later. So did it actually disappear? No. It just comes out again in a different time. This blueprint, that is creating the objects in awareness is eternal, is imperishable. It doesn’t change. It is manifest at some time, and unmanifest at other times.

With reference to our small little lives, our seventy years, we are very perishable. We have a short shelf life. It is a nice life, all right, I may get another 10 or 15 years out of it, but it is still a short shelf life. Whether I get 70 or 80 or 90, it is still very, very perishable. I, little person *James*, am a very perishable commodity, a very changeable commodity. I am here for a while and then I am gone. But this great unmanifest - he calls it the womb, ***I am the seed and this is the womb*** - this womb from which everything comes, is eternal.

So what does that make the self? The knower of what changes and what doesn’t. You can’t say the self doesn’t change. You can, but is it strictly speaking true? The self also changes. If everything is the self and the self doesn’t change, as this (OM), but does change, as this (creation, *jiva*). So saying the self is unchangeable is not quite correct. The self is always present but, it doesn’t change as the causal body, and it does change as the manifest universe, as the experiential reality. So, the self is that because of which the eternal and the non-eternal are known. In other words, it is the knowing principle. That is a hard one. That is a tough one.

So, we have the unmanifest which is permanent, and the manifest world which is impermanent, comes and goes. He is describing what these are.

The conscious beings and matter..... There are only two categories here, sentient and insentient. You have conscious beings, the *jivas*, the living beings, and matter.

...are perishable and the unmanifest is imperishable. But other than these is the self beyond the selves, the limitless changeless awareness that has entered the three worlds and sustains them.

Now, it hasn't **entered** - another tricky word. It hasn't actually gone from here (OM) down to here (creation) and entered... "Oh, to keep the worlds going, I have to take a vacation", so awareness tells its wife, "I will be back after a hard day's work. I have to go down and enter into all the objects to keep them functioning. I'll be back this evening!" No, it is not like that. awareness is always present, and as it shines on what is eternal and what is not eternal, those things come to life. If awareness withdraws its attention from the eternal and the non-eternal, they collapse. It is the nature of these two to appear and disappear, to manifest. Why? Because they are not real.

What does **sustain** mean? Take it personally. What sustains all your thoughts and your feelings? That is your awareness consciousness. That is what keeps them there. If you withdraw your consciousness from a thought or feeling, what happens to it? No feeling or thought! That is the idea in *nirvikalpa samdhi*. The yogis had figured it out. They take their attention - attention is just awareness or consciousness functioning through the subtle body - they can remove it from their thoughts until the mind dies, and there is no sense of separation. So what is sustaining the objects, it's just awareness shining on them. In other words, everything depends upon you.

Because I am beyond change and changelessness, I am indestructible. Therefore I am renowned as the supreme being. There is your basis for the whole Krishna consciousness idea, the supreme being. As I put it over here, to take the piss out of those Dvaitins, **Supreme** means, nothing other than, or, the buck stops here, let's put it that way. Supreme means the buck stops here. Where does the buck stop? At awareness. There is no other awareness beyond the awareness to override it or overrule it. All you need is one simple awareness that is always present and never changes.

If you know me in this way, you become a knower of everything, the self of all. In other words, just understand this and you are a self knower. There is nothing more to understand. What more is there to know? The *vasanas* - the things that are generating my experiences - and the awareness that knows them. That is all you need to know. What more? It is very simple.

Verse 20 - O! Arjuna, this is the most profound teaching. Knowing this, you are enlightened and have accomplished all that needs to be accomplished in this life.

Well, sort of enlightened. But Krishna is taking Arjuna seriously as a person. So that is OK. He knows that Arjuna can't see that he is awareness. So he says what enlightenment is, knowing this.

It is OK, unless you get stuck on the idea that you are enlightened because you are not enlightened. You are the light. You are that, because of which enlightenment happens. People say: "When did you get enlightened?" I say: "Well, 1973. Well, in India in 1971...blah...blah...blah". But, did I get enlightened then? No, I had to be there as awareness for me to get enlightened. If I wasn't there as awareness how is Jim going to get enlightened? I understand that Jim didn't get enlightened, that I was the one that observed the experience of Jim's doubt going away. Then I knew that Jim's doubt went away. That was the end of it. But I didn't hang on to the idea that I was Jim who had his doubt removed. I knew I was the background, the screen, the awareness in which that experience of enlightenment happened. Once that experience was over, and in a sense it never was over, because it established in my understanding, the fact that I was awareness. But once the circumstances around

that dissolved, I continued as awareness. So I was never not awareness and Jim apparently became enlightened at that apparent time. Understand.

...have accomplished all that needs to be accomplished in life. Meaning, this is what everybody is going for. This is what everybody wants. They want to be free. Once you understand you are awareness and are free, then there is nothing more for you to do here. People write me - quite a few people are realizing they are awareness and the seeking stops - and they write me: *"What am I going to do now?"* (Laughter). They understand how absurd the question is but there is a remnant of the *jiva* there, the ego there, that is still looking for something to do. The *jiva* knows there is nothing to do. So it is snookered. It is stymied.

What we say is: *"Well, just give the jiva some good work. That's all."* If it wants to do something, then give it some good work. But you, awareness give it some good work because you have compassion on that *jiva*, that person you thought you were. You say: *"Oh, that Jim, he's not a bad guy. Let's give him some good work."* I knew in my case, that I would get into trouble, that Jim would get into trouble if I didn't intervene. So I said: *"OK, Jim, you are going to study the scriptures. You are going to write Vedanta. You are going to teach people when you can. That's good work to do that, to share your knowledge and to develop your understanding. So here is some good work for you."* That keeps Jim busy. He needs to be busy because he is a *rajasic* type. So give him some work.

But actually, you have done everything that needs to be done.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita

Spain - January 2014

Day 8 - Session 3

Chapter 16, Verses 1- 24

Chapter 17, Verses 1- 8

Chapter 16

Helpful and Unhelpful Mentalities

Verses 1-24 - Now I will describe in detail the impulses and thoughts of a sunless personality: hypocrisy with reference to dharma, a tendency toward anger and frustration, a need for respect from others, a lack of discrimination, an inability to know what needs to be done, an inability to remove oneself from uncondusive situations, inner turmoil, a tendency toward improper unbecoming conduct.

These people are born out of lustful unions and are consequently driven by passion and little else. They believe the universe was an accident, that it serves no purpose, and that there is no God. Materialists to the core, they see themselves as the body and believe that creation is merely a matter of a sperm inseminating an egg. Ethics mean nothing to them; they play fast and loose with the truth, and are so obsessed with what they want, they readily bend the rules to suit their purposes.

These enemies of the world are incapable of reason and exhibit a tendency toward deceit and cruelty. Because they are pretentious and grandiose they desire things that are nearly impossible to obtain and are therefore continually frustrated and disappointed. Filled with pride, they demand respect from others.

They live on hope and engage themselves in the pursuit of material goals for the purpose of sense enjoyment. Willful to the core, they feel that what they have is the result of their own cleverness, and depend for their self esteem, on whatever material good they have managed to accumulate. They think of themselves as masters of the universe and revel in the destruction of those who stand in their way. *"I am an enjoyer, a big success, powerful and happy. I am from a good family, a classy cultured person. I am generous. I will perform acts of charity to show the world how good I am,"* is how they think. Because of their arrogant self-glorifying delusions they continually suffer pain.

These hateful and cruel wrongdoers are the barely human, and birth after birth I repeatedly dispatch them into the lowest and most painful wombs. As long as they continue to think this way, they will never realize who I am.

The three doorways to this mentality are desire, anger and greed. Impelled by these unholy urges and contemptuous of the scriptures, these souls rarely mature. Nor do they find happiness in the world, much less a higher life.

But the one who avoids these three gates to darkness, follows what is good and reaches a higher life. Should you have a doubt about what to do in this life, let scripture guide you in what is to be done."

Krishna is going to get a little rude here, a little heavy. I love Vedanta for that. You can see the guru is not trying to be a warm, fuzzy, huggy, little love Guruji and never say a bad word about anybody. That's duality. You are not supposed to say anything bad about anything in a non-dual world, because that is impure and that is duality. We are talking about duality. It is not good, and it is not bad, and we have to understand the upside and the downside of duality.

The worst of this world is *rajas* and *tamas*, with *rajas* probably being the worst. The reason *rajas* is so difficult, so troublesome spiritually is because you think when you are doing, that you are really doing what you are supposed to be doing, and that you are a doer. You feel that there is virtue in what you do. Maybe there is and maybe there is not, but when you are *rajasic*, the society in particular gives you a great incentive to keep being really busy and really doing. You look around you in the society and they all prize doing, prize action at the expense of thinking. "Well, yeah. Work hard. Do, do, do."

Now Krishna is going to get heavy duty and is going to say some things that might disturb you. I am sure in this crowd you are all dispassionate, so you won't be disturbed. He is not really criticizing people here, OK? These are just tendencies in yourself, and if you see any of these tendencies in yourself, then those are things you should have a look at. He is talking about the sunless personality.

Now I will describe in detail the impulses and thoughts of a sunless personality: hypocrisy with reference to dharma, a tendency toward anger and frustration, a need for respect from others, a lack of discrimination, an inability to know what needs to be done, an inability to remove oneself from unconducive situations, inner turmoil, a tendency toward improper unbecoming conduct.

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These hateful and cruel wrongdoers are the barely human, and birth after birth... Look at TV. That world is full of them. You turn on the TV to these reality programs, and you wonder if these people

are really human. This family is always in turmoil. The father is having an affair. They all hate each other. They have guys on the stage that are there to keep them apart. When they start insulting each other, accusing each other, they lunge for one another and these big guys pull them apart. The audience is clapping and everything. You've probably seen The Jerry Springer Show and various other shows. It is really weird to see what is happening. Oh no, here we go. I can feel a rant coming on, sorry!

...are barely human, and birth after birth I repeatedly dispatch them into the lowest and most painful wombs. Their *vasanas*, their actions. Through their actions they do what? They get these *vasanas* and are reborn into this kind of behaviour, over and over again. The people who work with prisoners, with criminals, they are so frustrated. They say they are really good people they just made a mistake, so on and so forth, and they try to rehabilitate them, but what they find is, it is virtually impossible to rehabilitate them. Because even though they want to change, the *vasanas* are so strong that they slide back into old patterns of behaviour. They are born into that behaviour pattern over and over again. Female officials and social workers they really get burned out after a while dealing with this kind of people. If you have these kind of values and you indulge in them, you can end up as an addict or a compulsive person, unable to function properly.

As long as they continue to think this way, they will never realize who I am. An implied meaning of that statement is what? Change the way you think and then maybe you can realize who you are.

And he is going to give you a little clue to this mentality. **The three doorways to this mentality are desire, anger and greed.** You may have a little anger and be a little greedy here and there. Don't enter that door! Don't enter that door thinking it is a solution. Don't indulge you anger, your desire or your greed, because it can lead to this kind of wasted life. It is not necessarily just criminal people. Criminals are just good examples of this. There are many respectable people who are caught in this situation.

I don't know if you have been following the scandal, but Francois Hollande who is now the leader of France, he got caught with his pants down the other day. He was cheating on his wife with a mistress, and then he meets another girl who is twenty years younger and he cheats on his mistress. The mistress is furious. The wife is not very happy. He looks like an idiot. What is driving him there? Greed. Greed and desire.

Dominic Strauss Khan is another good example. Another Frenchmen who was head of the IMF. He assaulted a maid in a fancy hotel in New York. He was arrested and now he is the laughing stock of the world. He lost his shirt. Formerly, apparently respectable persons, get into these *vasanas* over and over again.

Andrew Cohen is another one. For 27 years he was a guru, famous, with lots of disciples, a big ashram, blah blah blah. He was using people, and he gets away with it for quite a while, but eventually, one day, *Isvara* says, "OK, game over! That is enough!" What was his problem? Anger. I saw him on Conscious TV and in another interview somewhere else, total anger. *"The world is full of ignorance. It is my job to bust that ignorance and I am going to kill it. People are suffering and I am going to save them from suffering."* Anger. Oh my God. Now this man is finished. His own people, his own disciples threw him out. After a while they got tired of the abuse and they threw him out. He

apologized, stepped down and he himself said, *"I am not a good person. I will go back to the drawing board and get myself corrected."*

So when you see the impulses of desire, anger and greed, and everyone has them, you have to be very vigilant and see to it that they are under control.

Impelled by these unholy urges and contemptuous of the scriptures, these souls rarely mature. They can't mature. I was a bit of a demon in my 20's. I was extremely greedy. I had lots of desire and anger but mostly I was really, really greedy. I just wanted money and sex. Those were two things I wanted all the time, and honestly, if someone had told me when I was 23 that I would be teaching Vedanta, well.... If someone had actually told me that I would have thought they had gone off their head. Vedanta? What? God? I never thought there was a God. I never thought there was anything other than what I wanted. I was real arrogant, real vain, but for some reason I did finally grow up. *Bhagavan* gave me a vision of *Bhagavan* and somehow it was a huge relief for me to know there was something more than me. Then I began pursuing that vision, and gradually, within a few years I grew up. I can remember I was 28 or 29, and I realized, *"Hey, you are starting to grow up. A third of your life has finished and you are just starting to grow up."* So if you follow these impulses, it is going to take you a long time to mature. Vedanta is for mature people. The *sattva* has got to come in there, and self-reflection, or this teaching won't satisfy you and you will just keep on suffering.

Nor do they find happiness in the world, much less a higher life. That is the sad part about these people. They do not find happiness. The scriptures' spiritual path is not open to them, and the world does not make them happy, so they keep trying even when they are sixty, seventy, eighty years old. Look at the American presidential candidate Mitt Romney. The guy's worth three hundred million dollars. He is powerful. He has everything, a beautiful wife, kids and all that kind of stuff and now he wants to be president. You would think he would just be happy, but no, he is not happy, and he lives on hope. Even on election night it was clear he was going to get his clock cleaned, but no, he is still thinking we are still winning. Just living on hope. They were not winning and it was clear. Sure enough Barack Obama won the election. Living on hope and expectation means there is frustration and big depression. People are not satisfied by what they have, that is *rajas*.

In fact, if you want a rule of thumb on *rajas*, just look and see and ask yourself, *"Am I satisfied or not?"* Every so often check in, and if you are feeling dissatisfied even over small things - you can be dissatisfied about if the bed is made or not, or whether the mail man delivers the mail. You can get yourself all excited or angry, all because the mail man had not delivered the mail at one o'clock, when it is supposed to be delivered. The mailman had a flat tire, so he didn't deliver the mail until three o'clock,, but you wanted it at one o'clock. So between one and three you are fuming and stressed, because you are not getting what you want. Dissatisfaction on any level is *rajas*, and with that dissatisfaction, you just have to look into why you are dissatisfied. What is there to be dissatisfied with when I am awareness? Or never mind awareness just count your blessings. Sit yourself down and enumerate all the good stuff that you have, and that should take care of it. We say, *'realize you are awareness'*, and in the psychological field they say *'count your blessings'*, because you have as much good stuff as bad stuff. *Rajas'* glass is always half empty, it is never half full.

But the one who avoids these three gates to darkness follows what is good and reaches a higher life. Higher life means contemplative life, a life of self inquiry, a life of purity.

Should you have a doubt about what to do in this life let scripture guide you in what is to be done.

Scripture here he is talking about karma kanda section of the Vedas. Its the section in the Vedas about how to live and how to behave. The karma kanda is the *shastra* on karma. It's about how you should live, and it just takes care of everything if you have a doubt.

There is a reason why the *jnana* kanda is at the end of the karma kanda section. If a person follows the karma kanda, they become a dharmi, living according to the rules, according to *Isvara*. They will naturally become inquirers eventually, ending up seeking self knowledge. So that is why *Bhagavan* put *jnana* kanda at the end of the karma kanda. It is a natural progression from action, from dharmic living, to freedom. It's a natural progression.

Chapter 17

Three Religious Dispositions

He is now going to look at the *gunas* again. You are getting your full dose of *gunas*. Everything is looked at in terms of these *gunas*. So this knowledge is good both to purify your mind, and to discriminate yourself from the mind. The Gita is so beautiful because it covers both *moksha*, knowledge and dharma or action and lifestyle. So chapter seventeen, is how the *gunas* affect your spiritual disposition, or your religious life.

We are all for religion. Not the mindless belief sort of religion we are talking about, but reconnecting the mind to the self. Yoga is the same word as religion; to relink, like a ligament links two things together. It is called religion, to re-link. It is not blind belief. Obviously you won't try to connect to God, to understand God unless you have faith, but it is not blind faith. In our tradition we tell you what God is. We don't believe in God, we know God. We tell you what God is and show you how to reconnect. So for the purpose of reconnecting your body to God or *Isvara* this analysis of the *gunas* is very useful. So now we are going to talk about how the *gunas* affect your religious or spiritual disposition.

Verse 1 - O! Krishna, what is the basis of the priorities and values of people who perform rituals according to the scripture? Is it the three *gunas*? Here it follows the verse above, just let scripture be your guide.

Verse 2 - Sri *Bhagavan* said: People's priorities and values depend on whether their minds are *sattvic rajasic* or *tamasic*. People are little more than their priorities and values.

People's priorities and values depend on whether their minds are *sattvic rajasic* or *tamasic*. We are going to see. We have discussed already these values that are now playing out in this sphere.

People are little more than their priorities and values. I lifted that, almost word for word from Swami Dayananda's commentary on this verse. What are you, but what you want, or what your values are as a person? Exactly what are you? Basically, you as a person are just what you value and what you want. In other words, your goals, what you want as a person. When you meet people, what do you do?

First you are trying to find out what kind of person they are, what they are going for, and what their priorities are. Priorities, are what I am seeking, what I am chasing.

Verse 4 - People in whom *sattva* predominates worship for knowledge of God and the purification of the mind. *Rajasic* people worship to gain certain things in the world. *Tamasic* people worship out of fear or to achieve ignoble ends.

People in whom *sattva* predominates worship for knowledge of God and the purification of the mind. That is us. OK. We want to know God and we want to purify our mind, so that is why we are worshipping.

Rajasic people worship to gain certain things in the world. They want power. These *rajasic* people, they have a religious impulse. Just because you are *rajasic* does not mean you do not have a religious nature or religious impulse. They know there is some factor other than their own actions that causes things to happen. So they are aware of *Isvara*. What do they worship *Isvara* for? *"Hey God, I will make a nice donation to the church if you seal this business deal. These guys, you just fiddle their minds so they say yes, give me a high price and you will see a nice big statue of you in the church yard within six months, no worry. We will make a big donation to charity."* Making business with the Lord. Or, *"Oh! My son needs to get into a good school. Whatever it takes. If you want me to make a donation to the church. Sure! But hey, you need to look after my kid. He is struggling a little bit and he needs to get into this school. Let's do this bit of business here. You'll be happy, I'll be happy."*

Love relationships are another area where people do business with the Lord. *"Please send me Mr Right"*. Then you are off to match.com, praying to *Bhagavan* that you will meet this beautiful person who is going to solve your emotional problems. That is *rajasic* worship.

Tamasic people worship out of fear or to achieve ignoble ends. These are good people, but they do not want to make any mistake because they are afraid that God is going to whack them. Whenever you get a whack, it is God that is whacking you. You don't have to think you are whacking yourself by your actions. You don't think like that. You think it is all coming from the outside. So, I need to take care of the guy with the big stick, so I am going to love you God, so please do not punish me. These are fear orientated people. *Tamasic* people take care of their fears by worshipping God.

A lot of people do good because they know good is good, and it feels good to do good. But a lot of people do good because they are afraid of the consequences of doing bad. A lot of well meaning people are doing the right thing for the wrong reason. They are doing it out of fear. You don't drive down the freeway at sixty mph because you want to. You drive down the freeway at sixty because you know there is a speed camera somewhere, and they are going to whack you if you speed. So you are good, but are you really good? No, you are only good because you are going to get whacked. That is the mentality we are talking about here.

...or to achieve ignoble ends. There was a great criminal in northern India. India is a really good place for criminals. In the lower house of congress, twenty five percent of the people in there have criminal records. There was this great criminal named Virinpa. He was a Tamil from south India and he lived in the forest in the jungles of Karnataka. He was actually responsible for killing more than one hundred and thirty people with his own hands. He destroyed, I don't know how many elephants, and he

denuded forests of sandalwood. Sandalwood is very valuable, and the theft of sandalwood is a huge issue in India. He eluded capture for almost thirty years. He was a tough guy. Once, he had fifty cops chasing him, so he got into a stream. He just laid down in the water under the bank breathing through a reed tube for hours and hours until the whole thing calmed down. He was tough and mean and he worshipped Kali who protected him for many years.

He was also very religious, and in India, everyone believes in God. So he is worshipping to get ignoble ends. Why? Because when you worship you feel comfortable, and if your faith is strong, as *Ishvara* says, and you offer your actions in a sincere and humble way, *Ishvara* will give you your results according to your actions in order to make your faith strong, irrespective of your motivations. That is really weird isn't it? Whether you want it for noble or ignoble ends, if you do the right actions, you will get the result. Why? To make your faith strong in *Ishvara*. Never mind that it is good, and never mind that it is bad. Why? Because, in the long run, your belief in *Ishvara* - in some other factor other than you, will lead you to self knowledge. That is why he said that. This is a very sophisticated teaching, sophisticated because you see it involves a lot of discrimination.

Tamasic people worship out of fear or to achieve ignoble ends. How do you identify these people, this part of yourself? He is really talking about those parts of yourself.

Verse 5 - Those with sunless dispositions are riddled with pretension and self importance, motivated by passion and longing, lack discrimination and perform physically harmful religious disciplines not enjoined by the scriptures. Not only do they violate the rules of the body they injure themselves spiritually.

Those with sunless dispositions are riddled with pretension and self importance... The masters of the universe.

...motivated by passion and longing, lack discrimination and perform physically harmful religious disciplines not enjoined by scriptures. These are the guys that mortify their flesh as their penance. They are *tamasic*. One time I was in Rishikesh and I heard this noise 'pah, ssspah'. *"That's wierd, it sounds like a whip. Sounds like someone is whipping an animal."* I walked in the direction of the sound and I saw a man standing in the middle of the market with all the shops. He has just got a little dhoti on, his shirt is off and his body is streaming with blood. He has a big whip and what does he do? He throws the whip out and he snaps it back and the whip goes around him and turns out some flesh and he is bleeding. Then he walks over to the shop keeper, or anyone else that is there, and asks for some rupees. *Tamasic* worship. He is doing it for God. I am punishing myself for being a bad person. That is *tamasic* worship.

Or another one I came across, in south India. It was some festival and we were in a taxi out in the country side. Suddenly, we realized we could not move forward because there were all these people coming towards us, moving kind of slow. In the front you. These men, who just had dhotis on, had these big iron rods, huge iron rods, that were ten feet on either side stuck through their jaw, through the flesh, and they were bleeding. It must have been extremely painful. And they are walking. They have to walk all the way to this temple with these big iron rods on. It was really bizarre. You have to get into a high state to do that. If the only way you can get into a high state is to injure yourself, you are an idiot frankly.

So that is what Krishna is saying here. Not only do they violate the rules of the body, they injure themselves spiritually. That is the totally wrong idea. It is all guilt and punishment and shame, and they are going to make it right by punishing themselves. Well you don't make yourself right by punishing yourself. You make your transgressions right by forgiving yourself, accepting yourself, loving yourself. It is the only way it works.

And then Krishna continues. This one we can all relate to. It is a food thing. This has been a problem in my life. My weakness is food, all the time. Now I am really satisfied. *Bhagavan* finally said, "OK, you have a food greed then I will give you what? What did I get? I got heart disease because I like fat and salt." The salt makes my blood pressure high, the fat then bungs up my arteries and pretty soon by the time I am seventy-one, I am slowing right down. Way, way down. *Bhagavan* says, "I will show you about greed. I will deal with your greed. I will give you a heart attack". I did not end up with a heart attack mind you, but I was out for five and half hours while they put in some new pipe, and now I cannot look at the kind of food I used to eat.

It is true, I did not have to suffer for much, but I had about one year of continually diminished capacity. I kept shrinking, shrinking, shrinking as my energy slowly disappeared. This is just *Bhagavan*, *Isvara* delivering to me the fruits of my actions. So, I was greedy and I was worshiping God through food. *Bhagavan* said, "You like food? You worship me through food? This is what I give you. I give you heart disease." Just natural, just normal. So I need to look at my food. Not just me, everybody does. I have friends who are totally unconcerned, couldn't care less what they eat or not. Others, manage their food extremely well. They've thought about it very carefully, studied the chemistry, understood the psychology of the food and eat very consciously and enjoy it. So we are looking at food too.

Verse 7 - The way one eats, performs religious ritual, disciplines one's self, and gives charity depends on the predominance of a particular *guna*.

Here we are. Food has an impact on your *guna*. If you eat *tamasic* food for a long time, your subtle body will become *tamasic*. If you eat *rajasic* foods, your subtle body will get *rajasic*. If you stick with predominantly *sattvic* foods, your mind will slowly get clear and still and peaceful. It is just amazing the connection between food and the state of mind. So he is going to enumerate this connection for our edification.

Verse 8 - Foods, which increase longevity, mental clarity, strength and health, are pleasing to taste and look at, are loved by *sattvic* people. Bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, astringent, and burning foods that give pain and regret and cause health problems are sought after by *rajasic* people. Leftovers, putrid and inadequately cooked food from which the energy has gone and is unfit as an offering is preferred by *tamasic* people.

Foods which increase longevity...Now which foods would that be? ***Mental clarity, strength and health are pleasing to taste and look at are beloved by *sattvic* people.*** Last night, Sundari fixed for me a lovely meal, beautiful vegetables, all the different colours, lightly steamed with a bit of lemon on them. They were really just pretty. Plus, we had a lovely piece of salmon and some bulgur wheat cooked with a little mushroom puree. It was really tasty. It was really beautiful to look at. I did not want to eat it. It looked so pretty and beautiful. That food was so lovingly prepared, too. Oh my God! I ate too much! Give me an Alka Seltzer!

Bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, astringent and burning foods that give pain and regret and cause health problems... Hey, there you go. If you have health problems, look into your diet. It could be very much connected to your love of *rajasic* or *tamasic* foods ***...are sought after by rajasic people.*** We just say *rajo guna* compels you. That is better. *Rajo guna* means you will like these things. There is nothing wrong with bitter, sour, salty, pungent, astringent burning foods in moderation. You can have some condiments. You need a little *rajas* in your food, particularly if you are a little *tamasic*. If you have a kapha constitution, then a little *rajas* is really good for you. So, you could have some cayenne, some stimulating food to stimulate the gastric juices, stimulate the *shakti* to keep you moving. But if you are obsessed, you have a strong tendency for this, then it is *rajas* operating in you. This is a really hard one to fix.

Food! Food because food starts when you pop out of the womb. You get more pleasure from food than any other thing. Think about it. You get a lot from sex, music, art, exercise and all that, but the amount of pleasure you get over a life time from food is huge, and it all starts with your parents. You can blame your parents, or you can blame *Isvara*. Parents manipulate their childrens emotions with food. They can't talk to them reasonably. You can't say, "You little brat, shut up", but if kids are playing up, "I will take you for a Big Mac, if you are nice". So little kiddy keeps his mouth shut, and gives his mum some relief for a couple of hours. Then she drives him down to the Golden Arches and she feeds him a Big Mac. Oh my, lots of fat and lots of salt, and of course he wants a milkshake or something sweet on top of it. By the time you are five, *tamas* has you for the next seventy years, maybe.

It is really hard to overcome these things. They are really, really deep. If you find yourself eating food to make yourself feel good, Oooh, not good, not good. You should look at the reasons, the causes of your emotions and not try to paste them over with *tamasic* or *rajasic* foods. What are these *tamasic* foods? Left overs are a good example. Those two slices of pizza that have been sitting in the fridge for three days and have curled up at the sides, and the cheese is as hard as a rock. You are in a hurry, and you just grab that, and you put it into a microwave to make it a bit more digestible. So you just grab that cold, awful, putrid, left over pizza and out the door you go. When the *tamas* hits, you are in your car near to the coffee kiosk, three blocks down, and you are on your phone ordering a double latte right away. In thirty seconds you drive in, and you knock it down straight away. Now you have the *rajas* going to counteract that *tamas*, but *tamas* is still in there. I am sorry. I am getting carried away. But that *rajas-tamas* combination of food, wow. Trying to change the state of your subtle body with food is a big mistake, big mistake. Look into the cause. Find some other way to medicate yourself. Don't medicate yourself with food. Just eat *sattvic*, pure, simple foods and not too much, and what will happen? Your emotional stuff will disappear. Why? Because those frustrations and those depressions are coming from *tamo guna*. When you get predominately *sattvic*, the emotional stuff starts to clear away.

We are not just talking food. Activities, associations, friends have an impact. If you hang out with *sattvic* people, you will get *sattvic*. Hang out with *rajasic* and *tamasic* people, and you will get *rajasic* and *tamasic*. It is not only food we are talking about. Everything. It is a great model. It is such a great model. It applies to everybody, and it is impersonal, because really, we are just all awareness plus three bodies, and this is the science of awareness plus the three bodies. So there is nothing really personal about it. It is just knowledge given to make your life happy and good.

Left overs, putrid... that means rotting food...**and inadequately cooked food..** they don't cook it properly...**from which the energy is gone...** Oh you say, "I would like to eat some vegetables". So you boil them, and you boil them for fifteen minutes. Well hey? How much *shakti* is going to be left in those vegetables after fifteen minutes? How much energy is going to be left there? It is going to be gone! You will completely destroy the energy. Last night we had these vegetables. Sundari just steamed them lightly for maybe three or five minutes, not even up to high. You heat them up too high and the food loses its *shakti*, its energy, its vitality. Its vitamins get destroyed and various other things happen. So we need to adequately cook the food.

And is unfit as an offering. In India, they treat their God as a person. They bath it, they talk to it, they give it food to eat, they give it a plate to eat food from, they give it ghee, they give it everything. They wash it, too. They treat the deity like people. It is a good practice, a lovely practice. We have a couple of real nice Krishnas on the alter. I say, "Well Krishna, are you hungry today?" Krishna says, "Yeah, I am very hungry. Please give me some food". "Oh, I have a nice piece of pizza left over from the party last week, would you like that?" Hey, you can't do that. Believe me. It is not on! So these types of offerings that are *tamasic* and *rajasic* are not suitable. I need to offer something pure. In India you get some fresh bananas from the market, some little sweets, things like that. Those things you can offer to the deity, because basically, they are *sattvic*.

James Swartz - Bhagavad Gita
Spain - January 2014
Day 9 - Session 1
Chapter 17, Verse 11 - 25
Chapter 18, Verses 1 - 10

Verse 11 - Rituals enjoined by the scripture performed dutifully without expectation of a result other than the feeling of purity they engender is *sattvic*. Rituals offered to gain something in this world or to proclaim one's religiosity are *rajasic*. Rituals not sanctioned by the scripture whose mantras are not properly recited and do not involve the distribution of food and wealth are *tamasic*.

"Rituals enjoined by the scripture performed dutifully without expectation of a result other than the feeling of purity they engender is *sattvic*."

We are not begging *Bhagavan* for everything. It just feels good to worship. It just feels good to offer something to yourself. That is all. The feeling of worship is what we are after, that state of mind, that's what we are after. You don't have to do more than just offer a good feeling to yourself. If it takes some icon or idol or symbol to get that feeling of love flowing to yourself, then use that.

I love that form of Krishna. The whole idea there is so beautiful. I worship myself all the time but I love that symbol because it easily draws out the feeling of bhakti for the Lord. I know it is not that symbol. I know it is not that beautiful sculpture that Sundari made. It is really myself that I am

worshipping. Use an object if you need. Your environment should be a beautiful environment. Everything in your environment should remind you of the self.

Why do people like India? What is it that you really like about India? You like the fact that not everything there refers to itself or refers to some material thing. Everything there points to something else, something beyond, something extra. All those temples and the names of people.... all the time there is this sense.... if you are depressed, go for a walk in a slum or somewhere. I remember, I was in a slum walking, one time, and it was really an awful place because everybody was in a bad mood, the dogs were barking and it was almost dangerous for me to be there because it was not a nice feeling and atmosphere. Suddenly, right in the middle, over the sewer... there was a sewer in the side of the street... they built a little cement block and on it they had a Ganesh and there was some flowers and there was a little candle burning. Suddenly, your mind is lifted out of that negativity. Suddenly, you are happy again, you are peaceful again. Your mind has gone to your self.

That is what we want our environments to reflect. One of the students was walking down here and he had a hat on with an 'OM' on it. Where did my mind go immediately? To the self, all the time. So that way, keeping your mind constantly on the self, on that feeling of love, that feeling of peace, then *sānti* will grow and grow and grow. This is the beauty of worshipping. We say a prayer before every meal. Invoke the deity wherever you can in a conscious way for this feeling of purity and joy that comes when you worship your self.

“Rituals offered to gain something in this world or to proclaim one’s religiosity are rajasic.”

I was in Siddhi Yoga years ago and I stayed in the ashram of Muktananda. There were so many people who were worshipping to impress other people with their spirituality. I remember I was in Ramanashram and this yogi comes in and he is very beautiful, he is perfect. The women sit on one side and the men on the other side. He sits on the men’s side, he sits down, beautiful body and all the yoga paraphernalia and he gets into full lotus. He puts his hands on his knees and closes his eyes, gets that beatific smile of a yogi. He sits there and then opens his eyes a little bit; checks to see which of the girls are looking at him. He scans them. Those are the ones who he will hit on. They think he is really spiritual. This is all to get laid, basically. Totally *rajasic*.

“Rituals not sanctioned by the scripture whose mantras are not properly recited and do not involve the distribution of food and wealth are tamasic.”

Any desire to worship is good, but you should worship properly. When you worship you make an offering and you should distribute food to whoever is in your environment or give some money or something of value. You should give. That is why in the Hindu temples, you never leave empty-handed. They always give you something. It is usually a tulsi leaf, some vibhūti or a little sweet from the offering that has been consecrated on the altar.

Verse 14 - Physical discipline involves serving wise spiritual teachers, keeping the body clean and healthy, and non-injury to others. Speech which does not cause agitation to oneself and others, which is true, pleasing and beneficial ... including daily repetition of one’s own Veda ... comprise speech discipline. Cheerfulness, lack of a compulsion to speak, mastery of the mind through observation, and straightforward intent are called mental discipline.

“Physical discipline involves serving wise spiritual teachers,...” Emphasis on ‘wise’. Not so many of them these days...

“Keeping the body clean and healthy, and non-injury to others. Speech which does not cause agitation to oneself and others, which is true, pleasing and beneficial ... including daily repetition of one’s own Veda ... comprise speech discipline.”

Big *sadhana*, very important *sadhana* to be done: controlling your speech. Make sure you do not say anything that makes you feel bad or anyone else feel bad. Say things in a pleasing way... which is true pleasing... they put pleasing in there because some true things can be very unpleasant. So, make sure if you give bad news you give it in a pleasing way, in the right circumstances, so that it sugarcoats the bad news a little bit and the person does not get too upset. And beneficial... should be helpful to others.

Student - Please define **“one’s own Veda”**?

James – **“Repetition of one’s own Veda....”** Remember, this is written 2,300 years ago in India. India was a Vedic culture, which involved following *vedikā dharma*. So any brahmin or any person, when he is born into a family, that family is under the influence of a particular Veda. It is handed down. So, if you are born and your father was a Brahmin, his father would have been taught this particular Veda and you are meant to recite the whole Veda everyday. That is a big job. The Vedas are about the size of the New York telephone directory, so it will be a lot of recitation. So, they condense the whole thing into one mantra:

*Om bhur-bhuvahḥ suvḥ,
tat-savitur-varen’yam,
bhargo devasya dhīmahi,
dhiyo yo naḥ pracho-dayāt.*

It is called the Gayatri mantra. That condenses the whole Veda into one mantra and that mantra you are meant to chant everyday if you can’t chant the Veda or some more significant portion of the Veda. That means doing your spiritual work. Everyday, you should put aside an hour or two. If you can’t, then 15 or 20 minutes a day, if you are too busy. But you should somehow find the time.

I used to chant the Bhagavad Gita as good speech practice; it’s an excellent speech practice. Just read this out loud. Read the Bhagavad Gita out loud everyday or every other day. It takes about 45 minutes. But if you read it out loud carefully, you will be surprised how quickly you will grow. When you read it, identify with Krishna. Read it as if you are Krishna giving it. It’s a very helpful practice, very powerful practice.

“Cheerfulness, lack of a compulsion to speak,...” I have some work there. (Laughter.) I am not compelled to speak, I speak because you are here. If you were not here, I wouldn’t be speaking. So, you are sucking these words out of me. Don’t blame me. I do like to talk. I always have. So when you speak, speak properly and pleasantly. Speak when spoken to.

“Mastery of the mind through observation,...” Keep an eye on your thoughts all the time.

“And straightforward intent are called mental discipline.” Be clear about what you want. Be straightforward about what you want. Don't fool yourself. Know what you want and go for it. It is a discipline.

Verse 17 - self discipline that is observed by those who expect no result other than mental purity is called *sattvic*. Inconsistent and short-lived self discipline or discipline done ostentatiously to obtain the high opinion of others is *rajasic*. Discipline done from a deluded state of mind that involves bodily affliction or whose intent is to destroy is *tamasic*.

Verse 20 - Charity dutifully given at the appropriate place and time to a worthy recipient without expectation of return is *sattvic*. Charity that is painful to give and is intended to benefit oneself is *rajasic*. Charity given contemptuously at inappropriate times and place to unworthy recipients is *tamasic*.

“Charity dutifully given at the appropriate place and time to a worthy recipient without expectation of return is *sattvic*.” The appropriate place and time to somebody who is worthy of charity is *sattvic*.

“Charity that is painful to give and is intended to benefit oneself is *rajasic*.”

Just to make yourself feel good, you are charitable. Bill Gates gives away a million dollars. Is that charity? Well, not really, is it? It doesn't hurt. If it hurts, it is charity. It benefits yourself, but it also benefits the recipient. So, ***“Charity that is painful to give and intended to benefit oneself..”*** If Bill Gates gives away \$50 billion, that is a big benefit to him and a big benefit to the world, a nice gift he could give. But it is still done out of *rajasic* motivation.

Mother Teresa said, ***“Give till it hurts!”*** Well, hurts who? What she meant was don't give away something that doesn't have any value to you. Like if Bill Gates gives away a million, does that hurt? That doesn't hurt. It is not a meaningful gift for him. For me to give away a million... well, I can't even imagine, because I never saw a million dollars. If I had a million and I gave it away, that would be an act of charity, good for me and good for the recipient, assuming the recipient was reasonable and virtuous... then it would be *sattvic*.

“Charity given contemptuously at inappropriate times and place to unworthy recipients is *tamasic*.”

The people who give \$5 to a drunk on the street... that drunk probably doesn't deserve it but I always give to drunks. They will get another bottle of beer. I know I should take them down and feed them a nice, healthy meal but they are not going to eat a nice, healthy meal. Just give him \$5 and let him buy a bottle of wine. At least he is happy for a few minutes. Makes me feel good too, just by meeting his needs for a little bit. It is *tamasic*, but it is okay.

These virtuous people who say, ***“Oh, no, no. You should not give him \$5 because he is going to buy liquor. You should buy him an orange and an apple.”*** (Laughter.) No you shouldn't. He won't eat the orange or the apple. He will give it away. It is important to give. Look at the motivation behind your giving. See if it is pure.

Verse 23 - 'Om Tat Sat' are three words uttered in the beginning by the Creator that reveal the self and created the Vedas and their ritual sacrifices. Therefore Vedic rituals, charities and religious disciplines always begin with Om.

This is a difficult verse. It is very Vedic. What does that mean, **“Om Tat Sat’ are three words...”**? Om means ‘the self’. Tat means ‘that’. The self is. In other words, all is the self. The self is. What they are saying is that any ritual should invoke the self. It doesn’t have to say those particular words but the word should invoke or remind you of the self. These are good words anyway, **“Om Tat Sat’....”**

We always start from Om:

Om Brahmānandam....

Om always begins at the beginning. Om includes everything that is. Om is a symbol for everything that exists. Everything that exists is consciousness. So we invoke that at the beginning of every ritual. That Om, that idea, that vibration, that sound symbol, where did it come from? *Isvara*. *Isvara* uttered that at the beginning.

“Uttered in the beginning by the Creator...” That means there was this guy named *Isvara* who said, **“Om”** and then it is remembered exactly like that. That sound, that vibration, symbolizes or encompasses the whole idea of consciousness is all, consciousness is everything, consciousness is the source of everything.

“Therefore Vedic rituals, charities and religious disciplines always begin with Om.”

So everything you do should begin with Om. Not just to say Om, but what you should do is to dedicate it to the self. That is karma yoga. Karma yoga is you dedicating your action, whatever it is, or thought or feeling, whatever, to the self, to *Bhagavan*. That is consecration. You consecrated that action. You won’t be offering some ritual or service to some unfortunate or negative value to the world... the world being *Bhagavan*. The world is the self, and so whatever I offer I need to consecrate with Om so I won’t offer *rajasic* and *tamasic* things to the self. I will only operate out of *sattva* because I have reminded myself of what my purpose is.

Verse 25 - After saying “tat”, rituals, religious disciplines and charitable activities are performed by those who want liberation without the expectation of a result other than a pure mind. The word ‘sat’ is used to help create a righteous life and sanctify one’s karma. Performance of ritual, religious discipline and giving, is called ‘sat’, and actions done for the sake of the self are also called ‘sat’. ‘Asat’ refers to rituals, disciplines and charity performed without faith that produce no results now or later.

“After saying “tat”, rituals, religious disciplines and charitable activities are performed by those who want liberation without the expectation of a result other than a pure mind.”

Tat means 'that', the self. Om means the self. *Sattvic* people want liberation. What do they do? They only want, as seekers, a pure mind. We don't want the result from the world. We want the result of a pure mind. You gain that by offering your actions to the creator.

"The word 'Sat' is used to help create a righteous life and sanctify one's karma."

Sat means 'what is'. When you say that word, you are meant to think about your lifestyle and living. Sanctifying your karma means doing pure actions, good actions, holy actions.

"Performance of ritual, religious discipline and giving, is called 'sat', and actions done for the sake of the self are also called 'sat'. 'Asat' refers to rituals, disciplines and charity performed without faith that produce no results now or later."

Or produce negative results now or later. The only result we are interested in is a pure mind. It is nice to get *Bhagavan's* stuff, but the best for us is a pure mind. Once our mind is clear and pure, then this is going to be easy to understand and it will be easy for you to appreciate that you are whole and complete, that you are okay.

Chapter 18

Liberation and Renunciation

Verse 1 - Arjuna said: "I would now like to know the truth concerning sannyasa and tyaga."

"Arjuna said:..." The poor man, the poor guy. He comes back with the same old questions. So, what this means is that we are going to get a review of what we have heard before.

Verse 2 - Krishna replied: "The wise say sannyasa is renunciation of actions for desired objects and that tyaga is the renunciation of the results of action."

He is defining now sannyasa and tyaga. Sannyasa is purely straightforward, isn't it? Sannyasa is renunciation of actions for desired objects, apart from a pure mind. Obviously, in this case the object we want is a pure mind. But this verse means samsaric objects: security, pleasure, virtue, and so forth. A sannyasi is a person who has reduced his or her footprint in life. In other words, does not have much contact with the objective world. He realizes that 'less is more'. The less things I have to do, the less objects, the less relationships, the less stuff I have to do here, the less objects I feel responsible for, the greater my peace of mind is going to be. That is a sannyasi.

A tyagi, what does a tyagi do? He is somebody who renounces the results of actions. It doesn't necessarily mean that he reduces the activities. He is a tyagi, therefore a karma yogi because the karma yogi has renounced the results of the action. What does that mean, renounce the results of action? It doesn't mean you don't get the results of your action. It means you know the results of the action are not up to you. That's renunciation. If you think the results are up to you, your mind is going to be disturbed. But, if you realize it is up to *Bhagavan* then you won't have a disturbed mind, because it is not up to you. If it is up to you, then you can get upset. If it is up to *Bhagavan*, then I don't get upset.

Verse 3 - Some of the wise say that action, which is inherently defective, is to be given up, and others that ritual and charitable actions and religious disciplines should not be given up. It is my considered opinion that ritual and charitable actions and religious disciplines should not be given up because they purify the mind. But these actions should be done without attachment to the results.

“Some of the wise say that action, which is inherently defective,...” What does that mean, that action is ‘inherently defective’? It sometimes produces the results you want, sometimes it doesn’t, and sometimes it produces a result you don’t want. That is a defect. Effective action would be one that always produces the results that I wanted. But you can do the same action ten times and get five results ‘a’ and five results ‘b’ or who knows what you are going to get. So, action by its nature is inherently defective in terms of producing lasting satisfaction. I only do the action because I want satisfaction. Sometimes the action produces satisfaction, or seems to, and sometimes it doesn’t. So, there is an inherent defect in action.

“Is to be given up,...” That is good. You can give up action. Give up, up to a point. But, can you actually stop acting? No. He is saying: *“Some of the wise say that....”*

“And others that ritual and charitable actions and religious disciplines should not be given up.”

So, obviously it means the wise say that worldly action should be given up, but the desire to act should be converted into religious and charitable actions. In other words, *sattvic* actions that purify the mind.

“It is my considered opinion that ritual and charitable actions and religious disciplines should not be given up because they purify the mind. But these actions should be done without attachment to the results.”

Because you don’t know. So, whether you are doing worldly actions for the results or spiritual actions... and you are always doing actions for the result... it should be done with the attitude of *tyaga*, which is: leave it up to *Bhagavan*. *“I do all these wonderful things and nothing ever comes of it. I just spend all day long helping and serving the world and nothing good ever comes.”* Jesus Christ, that is so awful.

No. I don’t care what the result is. It is not up to me. That is a *tyagi*. That is a true *sannyasi*. A true *sannyasi* or a *tyagi* is somebody who does what is right and leaves the results to *Bhagavan*, whether spiritual or otherwise. Because, even spiritual results you can’t guarantee.

Verse 7 - It is *tamasic* to give up scripturally enjoined obligatory action. It is *rajasic* to give up scripturally recommended action out of fear of physical discomfort. If one does so, he or she will not gain the result of renunciation. It is *sattvic* to do scripturally recommended karma without the idea of personal gain but simply because the scripture recommends it.

“It is tamasic to give up scripturally enjoined obligatory action.”

Scripture says there are certain things you have to do as a human being. Never mind if the scripture says there are certain things you have to do like eating, sleeping, providing for yourself, and so forth. If you try to give those up, then it is a *tamasic* state of mind. You are too lazy to do what you need to do.

“It is rajasic to give up scripturally recommended action out of fear of physical discomfort.”

“Oh, no. I can’t go to meditation this morning. It is so cold in that meditation room. I have to sit on the floor and cross my legs. I would like a nice comfortable easy-chair and then I can go to meditation. That is better.” There are people like that. I was like that. I hated to sit in the meditation hall, on the floor: I just hated it. I always tried to figure a way to get two or three blankets and prop myself against the wall, etcetera. I didn’t like the discomfort. I was so spoiled: I didn’t like the discomfort. *“I don’t want any kind of pain. I have to do my spiritual thing. But don’t make me suffer at all.”*

“If one does so, he or she will not gain the result of renunciation.” His renunciation is useless, in other words.

“It is sattvic to do scripturally recommended karma without the idea of personal gain but simply because the scripture recommends it.”

Scripture comes from *Bhagavan*. *Bhagavan* says do this. I do it because it is *Bhagavan’s* will. Simple. Now the karma is on *Bhagavan*, not on me. So I am happy. I have done my duty and I do it simply because it is the right thing to do.

Verse 10 - The one who does not hesitate to perform a disagreeable action nor is attached to doing agreeable actions is a true renunciate because he or she is free of confusion concerning the purpose of renunciation. As long as you have a body you cannot avoid performing actions, but renunciation is letting go of the results of one’s actions. If you do not renounce the fruits of your actions the results will be desirable, undesirable and a mixture of the two. But there are no results for renunciates.

“The one who does not hesitate to perform a disagreeable action....”

I think Mark didn’t want to stand up and make that speech. It wasn’t particularly agreeable. It was an intention there, because we are such a bunch of slobs. We are *jnanis*; we are not yogis. The yogis come here and they love to do *sevā*. They love to clean everything up. They are conditioned to do this kind of stuff.

But the *jnani* people, the Vedanta people... *“Never mind, we are too busy to do any of this stuff. We have paid our money too. Plus we are not doers. So how can I do this.”* (Laughter.) It was a disagreeable and difficult action because you are telling us we are a bunch of jerks. That is not a nice thing to do. *“You people are a bunch of slobs. You are jerks. You are messing up the place and the poor woman is suffering on account of you.”* That is hard to say, but he stood up and made a nice speech and converted that negative energy into positive energy. I noticed she started to smile a little bit. That negative state of mind she had before was gone.

“Nor is attached to doing agreeable actions....”

These are your do-gooders who just have to be doing something useful every five minutes. What is the problem with them? They are building an identity as a doer. So easy to get off the spiritual track and think this is all about doing good. You are not attached to doing good actions and you do not hesitate to perform disagreeable, unpleasant actions. You do what is required in the moment. That is it. It is not driven by ego. It is driven by *Isvara's* demand on you.

Mind you, every minute, *Isvara* is asking something of you. *Isvara* is now teaching you Vedanta and *Isvara* requires you to pay attention. If you are not paying attention, you are not doing your duty. That is your job. You sit here for an hour; you have to pay attention. *"Oh my God! When is all this over?"* It is *tamasic* in the afternoon. I see people thinking, *"Oh my God! Wish we didn't have to do this now. I am so tired. James is just running on and on and on!"* But that is not the dharma of an enquirer. If you sign up for this trip, this Vedanta *sadhana*, then it is your dharma to pay attention for an hour at a time. I try to make it easy and entertaining.

Then what do they do? A true renunciate does what needs to be done.

"Is a true renunciate because he or she is free of confusion concerning the purpose of renunciation."
The purpose of renunciation is peace of mind, purification of the mind.

"As long as you have a body, you cannot avoid performing actions,..." Same idea as in Chapter 3.

"But renunciation is letting go of the results of one's actions. If you do not renounce the fruits of your actions, the results will be..." What kind of results will you get?

"Desirable, undesirable and a mixture of the two." Partially desirable, partially undesirable results.

"But there are no results for renunciates." Apart from what? The satisfaction of doing the right thing.

This is a good place to break. He will talk about the *kāraṅkas*. We mentioned the *kāraṅkas* earlier in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. He will review the *kāraṅkas*. The *kāraṅkas* are the constituents of action. It will be right after dinner and we will all be perky and cheerful and ready to hear the great wisdom of Vedanta. (Laughter.)

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Chapter 18, Verse 13 - 66

I feel so sorry for the trees because this warm spell has fooled the trees. Have you noticed? They've been deceived by *Isvara*, so they think it's spring. Their buds are coming and their leaves are starting to come. And now *Bhagavan's* going to pull a cruel trick on them. If the temperature drops and it freezes, it'll ruin their harvest because the fruit won't sprout at the right time or it'll just be killed by the frost, the buds will be killed by the frost. They don't know. They're living beings, but they don't understand about *Isvara*. They are *Isvara*. And they're just doing *Isvara's* will without thinking about it. I mean, what if a tree could think? The tree would think, "*Hmm, let's check the calendar here. It is not logical that it be 22 degrees (Celsius) on the 15th of January. Therefore I think I will not send out my leaves or throw any buds. I think I'll wait.*" No, it can't help it. They just respond to the heat.

Verse 13 - The Vedanta says five factors are necessary to produce the result of an action: the physical body, the doer, organs of action, the five physiological functions and the *vasanas*. The activities that a person undertakes with the body, speech or mind will be the result of these five factors. When someone is ignorant of the actual causes of action he or she believes his or herself to be the cause of action. The one who has no sense of doership does not kill even though he kills. And the results of those actions do not affect him or her.

"The Vedanta says five factors are necessary to produce the result of an action:..."

What are we getting at here? We're getting at that the doer - we're going to negate the doer. We're going to get to the notion that you're doing. It says you're not these five factors. The doer's not these five factors. It says there are five factors "***necessary to produce the result of an action: the physical body, the doer,***" - the doer's one of them - "***organs of action,***" - organs being in the Subtle Body; instruments of action. That should be included with organs of action - "***organs of action, the five physiological functions and the vasanas.***"

Student - Why does it say, "***produce the result of an action***" instead "produce an action"?

James - Well, an action or a result, either way. The action's the front end and the result's the back end, but for it to produce an action you need these, and to produce the result you need these (*James's* pointing to his chart). It's just looking at it from different points of view. You know, you can look at the teaching from the point of view of the *vasanas* or you can look at it from the point of view of karma. But the *vasanas* are the karma, and the karma is the *vasanas*. There's no actual difference here, is there? Because the *vasanas* are born out of karma and karma's born out of *vasanas*, so what's the difference here when you look at it from the gross level or the subtle level? So, the same thing is true for action and the results. To do an action you need all these, and to produce a result you need all these, so it includes both. The result's the back end and the action's the front end.

“The activities that a person undertakes with the body, speech or mind will be a result of these five factors. When someone is ignorant of the actual causes of action he or she believes his or herself to be the cause of the action.”

See the problem? You think you’re doing it. But hey, well, you’re one factor in this matrix of factors. This is very important now. This is how you negate the ego. We say *moksha* is what? When the binding *vasanas* have been rendered non-binding and when the ego has been negated. Now, this is how you negate the ego. Negating the ego doesn’t mean busting the ego, or beating the ego, or getting rid of the ego. Negating the ego means understanding that the ego is not the cause of action, nor is it the giver of the results of action. It’s one of five factors. All that ego-busting experiential enlightenment idea is not scientific. There’s no analysis of what? Of action. This is why we have a certain amount of, the word’s not contempt, maybe the word’s pity. We have a certain amount of pity for these people who have no intellectual rigor. They haven’t actually investigated action itself. They just heard this teaching “*you’re not the doer*” and therefore they assume what? “*You’re not the doer,*” means *Isvara’s* the doer. But, of course that’s easily misunderstood and to think that the doer’s not the doer. But the doer is the doer! It’s just the doer’s not what? Initiating the action, nor delivering the results. Understand.

You want *moksha*, then just get this clear. Because what? Because when someone’s ignorant of the actual causes of action, he or she believes his or herself to be the cause of action. Well, that can’t be, can it? It makes sense, doesn’t it? If I’m the doer and I don’t have a physical body, organs of actions or physiology, the *prāṇas*, or *vasanas*, how am I going to do action? How are you going to do it? Yeah, you’re the doer but hey, you need help, buddy. You need help. You need the help from these four other factors. So how can it be you? How can you say, “*I did this and I caused this to happen*”? Can’t say that. It’s not truthful. It’s not factual. Understand. We’re not trying to kill the doer. We’re just trying to identify the doer in this chain of causation here.

I presented it slightly differently when experience enters the senses from the world. It’s passed on to the mind, which has questions about how to respond. The mind is called the doubting function, *manas*.

Then what? Since the mind is incapable of reasoning, it needs to refer to another factor in consciousness which is what? The intellect. The intellect is capable of reasoning, discriminating and remembering. Memory is here so it can remember. It can reason and discriminate. So the information is passed on to here. The intellect has to make a decision, but on the basis of what does it make a decision? Well, only on the basis of what it knows. What does it know? Only what it’s experienced. In other words, its conditioning is driving it, so it checks with its conditioning and responds according to its conditioning. So the *vasanas* are involved here. Then what happens? Then the intellect says, “*Okay, you need to do this.*” But the intellect is just a knower, a gathering function. It’s not an action function. It’s got to generate the thought, “*I want to do.*” So the intellect generates that in the Subtle Body.

Then the next process is the Subtle Body generates the doer. And that’s the thought, “*I need to do this thing.*” I can’t do it unless I’ve got knowledge at all, can I? And I can’t do any actions. Then what do I have to do? Then the Subtle Body generates the next thought. See the chain? Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick.

It generates the next thought, which is the emotion. For every action there's got to be emotion. To 'emote' means to what? To move. To move from or towards something. So, an emotion is what moves you towards something or away from something. That's the feeling. And what does that emotion do? Now, I've got an emotion but that's not the end of the story, is it?

Then I've got to activate my sense organs so that the consciousness in the form of the Subtle Body what? Sends the impulse here through the prāṇas. And these sense organs - my hands, feet, speech and so forth and so on - my active organs are not going to function unless the prāṇas are there. Unless my digestion, excretion, absorption, assimilation is functioning. So I need the five prāṇas also to act. Without any one of these things the action's not going to take place.

That action that I do is going to disturb the creation. In other words, that's my contribution, whatever it is. That's going to produce a new experience. That's going to cause a new doubt, a new discrimination, and so forth and so on.

So this chain of causation is taking place all the time in about a fiftieth of a second. The stimulus is coming in and response is going out - snap, tick, snap, tick, snap, tick. And the doer is just one little thought in that whole transference of energy, that whole movement of energy, that chakra of energy. So, for awareness to identify itself as a doer is just what? A product of ignorance. So if the 'I' says, "*I'm doing,*" then the 'I' is deluded, isn't it?

All we have to do for awareness is what? Teach these factors so we understand that these factors are all contributing to action and therefore, take the burden of action away from awareness. Action doesn't belong to awareness in the first place. Action belongs in *Maya*, in *samsara*. This is the world of action. This, the self, is action-less so here's something action-less saying it's doing. What's wrong with this picture? There's a confusion. It has a confusion.

So by teaching the self, teaching these karakas, and getting it clear then what? The self can no longer say, "*I'm doing.*" If you want to just simplify it then you just say, look at it from the top on down. Then you just say *Isvara*, the Causal Body's doing it. That's why it's called the Causal Body because it's causing action. If it's causing action, it's causing the results because what's happening here is what? Action and reaction.

Isn't that that little pamphlet of Swami Dayananda's? 'Action and Reaction'? That's where he starts that nice little pamphlet that's out there. In here there's action. If you have action you have reaction because this is a duality. You don't have action without reaction. Every action produces an equal and opposite reaction. But the Causal Body, *Isvara*'s doing it. awareness is not doing it and the *jiva*'s not doing it. Understand. Understand where action belongs. It doesn't belong with the *jiva*. The *jiva*'s awareness plus the Subtle Body. It belongs with the Causal Body. The doer happens to be one of those factors in that chain of causation, of action and reaction.

That's a big, big verse. Fat, fat verse. You think about that and you assimilate that and you're good to go spiritually. Because all of your anxieties are going to disappear. What's all that emotional stuff about? Oh, my emotional stuff is about what? Getting results. "*Am I going to have enough money? Am I going to have enough love? Am I going to have enough power? Am I going to be smart enough? Am I going to be good enough? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah BLAH! What's going to happen in my*

life?" All the emotions are about that. They're not about what mom and dad did to you when you were young. Yes, your mom was a bitch and your dad was mean. But that's not why you're screwed up emotionally. You're screwed up emotionally because you're just taking responsibility for something that's not your problem. It's *Isvara's* problem to cause action and it's *Isvara's* problem to give results of action, and you're off the hook. Understand what we mean by that.

The beauty of this teaching is it de-personalizes it. And it leaves your ego alone. Don't bust your ego. You can't bust the ego anyway. It's not created by you. First, it's not real. It's not created by you. And yet you want to get rid of this ego? There's no logic there. And even if you are the ego, the ego's the last one to want to get rid of itself because if it's not there to appreciate its nonexistence, it won't surrender itself, will it? If you surrender yourself and turn it over to *Bhagavan*, then you're not there to appreciate it, are you? So the ego's always around to experience things, to appreciate what's happening. It doesn't have to come or go. It just has to know, "*I'm not the doer.*"

Ramesh, he made this teaching popular, but he didn't explain it. People loved that teaching. You know, they were flocking to Ramesh all over the place. And now the Neos, they have this "*I'm not the doer.*" But nobody explains it. So the *jiva*, the ego, the doer says, "*I'm not the doer.*" Excuse me? Yes, you are the doer. You don't become a non-doer. This is why Krishna says to Arjuna, he says, "*Be not attached to inaction.*" Why? Because this is what spiritual people do. They say, "*Well, I'm not the doer. I'm not doing anything.*" Of course you are. Of course you are doing something. And it doesn't matter. It's fine if you do, or you do not do. What's your job as a doer? To do. But at the behest of whom, or of what? We'll call it 'whom.' I like 'whom' because I like to personify *Isvara*, but you can also call it 'what.' At the behest of what, do I do? And it's always at the behest of the total.

Verse 18 - Knowledge, the thought corresponding to an object, the object of knowledge and the knower are the cause of action. The doer, the instruments used by the doer and the action itself are the threefold constituents of action.

"Knowledge,..." I was going to like zip through this so we could start fresh in the morning, but hey, I'm getting turned on by this. (Laughter.) What a teaching, huh? Look at it. Look at it. See how clear it is? See the logic? You can't fight with it. When it's laid out it's just a matter of your own experience. It's not like I'm trying to convince you. I don't have to convince you. I don't have to tell you either. I just have to present to you the logic and you'll see through your own experience that this is how it is. Now, whether you accept it or not, that's up to you. But if you have a hard time accepting it then you need to contemplate on it a little more. It doesn't mean this is not true.

"Knowledge, the thought corresponding to an object, the object of knowledge, and the knower are the cause of action."

You need knowledge to act. You need a thought corresponding to the object. You can't act without a thought. You have to have a thought before you can act. You walk into a room and you see dirty dishes. Now before you wash the dishes, what do you have to do? You have to have knowledge of the dishes. You have to have knowledge and you have to have knowledge that the dishes are dirty. So the object of knowledge is the dishes. The thought corresponding to the object is the dishes are dirty, and the knower - what's that? Who know it? awareness. Without awareness there's no knowledge

and no object of knowledge and therefore no action. It is just another way of looking at the same idea of negating the idea that you're the doer.

"The doer, the instruments used by the doer..." What are the instruments that the doer uses? Perceptive organs, *jnana* indriyas and active organs, karma indriyas. These are the instruments that are used by the doer.

"The doer, the instruments used by the doer and action itself are the threefold constituents of action." Action is constituted of these three factors. The doer, the instruments used by the doer, and action itself are the three constituents.

Verse 19 - Knowledge,... Okay, now, here we go some more...

Knowledge, action and the doer are conditioned by the *gunas*.

So all of these factors are what? Conditioned by *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*. So you've got to throw *rajas* and *tamas* and *sattva* into the mix too. Hey, the doer just keeps shrinking, shrinking, shrinking. The more you think about action and all the factors it involves, the doer just stops being so damn important and starts shrinking, shrinking, shrinking. You understand, "*Hey, what is this doer? Where is this doer?*" This tiny little thought here is just part of the whole process.

Verse 20 - That non-dual knowledge by which the many beings are understood to be one being is *sattvic*. That knowledge by which non-dual being is understood to be many different beings is *rajasic*. And that unreasoning dogmatic knowledge which takes one limited thing among the many to be everything is *tamasic*.

"That non-dual knowledge by which the many beings are understood to be one being is *sattvic*."

All objects are understood to be one, the same. And then what does that mean? That means they're all made out of consciousness. What's the only way you can have many different things be one? If they're all consciousness. And they are all consciousness. Why? Because you can't have an object without knowledge of the object and you can't have knowledge without what? consciousness. So you need the knower. All the objects are just the knower. And understanding that is *sattvic* understanding. It's self knowledge.

"That knowledge by which non-dual being is understood to be many different beings is *rajasic*."

See what *rajas* does? It fractures everything. See the nature of that kind of energy? Everything's just consciousness, but what? Now, when you're looking at everything through this filter of *rajas*, it looks like everything's different. It's like they're all separate. Everything's different. There's no connection between x, y, and z. They're all different.

"And that..." This is a good one too. I like this one, "***And that unreasoning dogmatic knowledge which takes one limited thing among the many to be everything is *tamasic*.***" You know those people? Here's a great example. It's about sick people. They cured some little problem by eating some special herb from South America, the 'whatcha-ma-call-it' leaf. And so every time somebody

gets sick, they tell that person, “Oh, you need the *whatcha-ma-call-it* leaf and that will solve your problem.” Or “Oh, you’re suffering? *Jesus! Jesus is the only answer.*” Same mentality.

Explaining everything away with reference to one thing. Well, the only thing you can explain everything away with reference to, is awareness. But if you’re trying to superimpose one object on another object and say that that explains everything, then you’re a little dull-witted. Doesn’t work because it’s not in harmony with reality.

Notice it says, “**one limited thing.**” It doesn’t say awareness because awareness is limitless. That explains it. awareness explains it, but no limited object, no belief, no opinion can explain it. The cause of cancer. You know, every researcher thinks that he or she knows the cause of cancer. “*It’s the pollution. It’s pollution, that’s responsible for everything.*” Well, yeahhh, but nooo, not really.

Verse 23 - An action done without attachment and not motivated by one’s likes and dislikes... Means your *vasanas*. ...with no binding desire for the result is *sattvic*.... We know that. ...But intense effort done with a sense of self importance and a binding desire for result is *rajasic*. That action done on a whim without considering the consequences ... loss to oneself or injury to others, for example ... or one’s own capacity is *tamasic*.

Near where I lived in Montana, there’s a big swimming hole. The river comes down out of a riffle and it scoured out a big hole. And in the summer it was hot, you know, in the 90s. All the kids go swimming. And there was this big rock outcropping. And you had to know where to jump and how to jump from this rock or what? You’d hit it. There was this submerged rock down below that was hard to see. This young kid, a nice kid, you know, but he’d probably had a couple of beers. He’s hot, the girls are with him. He strips down, jumps off, dives in and what? He was just showing off on a whim. And what? He hits the rock and ends up a paraplegic. *Tamasic*. Not looking. Not careful. Just what? Just on a whim or a fancy he injured himself.

People do really dumb things that injure other people because, “*Oh, I’m being spontaneous.*” Spontaneity is much overrated. Be cool. Sit back. Think about it. Consider the results. Consider the action. See if it’s reasonable. See if it makes sense. And then do the action. But if you just jump without thinking, you’re *tamasic*. You’re dull. You’re just ignorant of all of the things that can go wrong or right with an action. You never know what the results are going to be, so you better think about it.

Verse 26 - The doer who is free from attachment and egoism, who is endowed with resolve, enthusiasm and confidence, and is unperturbed in success and failure, is *sattvic*. The *rajasic* doer is attached to results, greedy, aggressive and impulsive. He or she is capable of hurting others and subject to elation and depression. A *tamasic* doer is undisciplined, vulgar, immature, irreverent, deceptive, cruel, lazy, procrastinating and given to depression.

Well, we said *gunas* color everything here. And the *gunas* color what? The doer. It’s just describing the different doers: *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* doers. It’s just analyzing the doer, this one small factor in the whole chain of causation from the standpoint of the *gunas*. See what a great psychological tool this *guna* teaching is? It’s a great subject.

A person in human resources could make a huge impact. Agents, people who hire people for corporations and other businesses, if they had this *guna* knowledge it's amazing how they could get rid of people by analyzing them carefully. They could match people. Match the doer with the jobs that they needed to have done. They could see what the capabilities of a person were, if they understood this knowledge. And they would set up an interview around what? *Guna* analysis, rather than what the person tells them. Although what a person tells you indicates their *guna* too. By observing their behavior, the way they think, they act people are indicting the *gunas*. You can gain a huge wealth of knowledge using this model. Just go through the whole thing, carefully analyzing everything, all of the factors that are involved in your situation in terms of this model. It's just great.

Verse 29 - Now please listen to how the *gunas* affect the intellect... Now we're going to look at the intellect. ...and one's resolve.

This is where you decide what to do. The resolution or resolve is decided here in the intellect. The doer's just the one that does it once you've made up your mind. Once you've made up your mind, then the doer kicks in and then the doer starts acting. But now, how does these *gunas* affect your thinking?

Verse 30 - The intellect which knows the difference between the pursuit of happiness through karma and the renunciation of karma, which knows what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, and the difference between bondage and freedom is *sattvic*. That intellect which is confused about what is right and what is wrong, what is to be done and what is not to be done is *rajasic*. The perverse intellect that thinks that what is wrong is right and takes a contrary stand on every issue is *tamasic*.

(James singing.) "You say yes, I say no. You say goodbye. I say hello, hello, hello. You say goodbye. I say hello." That's a *tamasic* person. Whatever you say, I say the opposite. It doesn't matter. You find this in husband and wife combinations all the time. You just do the opposite of what is. That's a very *tamasic* person. Children are like that. The *tamasic* ego is like that. "You did this." "I did not." "You're angry." "I am not," she says angrily.

Verse 33 - The patient resolve with which one controls the activities of the mind, one's energy level, and the organs of action and knowledge is *sattvic*. Whereas, Arjuna, the opportunistic resolve with which a result oriented person changes the mind according to prevailing circumstances in the pursuit of religious merit, pleasure and security is *rajasic*. That clinging persistent resolve motivated by improper thinking which refuses to give up sleep, fear, sorrow, depression and harmful habits is *tamasic*.

"The patient resolve with which one controls the activities of the mind, one's energy level, and the organs of action and knowledge is *sattvic*. Whereas, Arjuna, the opportunistic resolve with which a result oriented person changes the mind according to prevailing circumstances in the pursuit of religious merit, pleasure and security is *rajasic*."

Well, these people change their mind at the drop of a hat. When the wind is blowing favorably, they're on your side. But as soon as the wind shifts, then they're off with the wind. They're not steady. They're not clear about what they want. They're just opportunistic people taking advantage

of what's going on at any moment and their mind changes according to the prevailing circumstance, the prevailing winds.

“That clinging persistent resolve motivated by improper thinking which refuses to give up sleep, fear, sorrow, depression and harmful habits is tamasic.”

“I’ll let go.” “Nope.” Like this friend of mine, you know, he’s a manic-depressive and he had a lot of bad habits. Sex and drugs particularly, and bad food. And he associated with bad people too. And I used to help him, you know, I’d try to encourage him, in a nice way. I’d try to inspire him to get off his butt and change his habits and that sort of thing, you know. One time I was running on about it and I’m real enthusiastic. I’m one of these positive people that tries to inspire everybody. So I’m ranting and raving and carrying on. “Michael you shouldn’t do this. Michael you did that. What about this? I suggest you do this. I’ll come and help. I’ll give you a hand.” He listens to me running on and then he says, “Well, Jim,” he said, “it may be shit, but it’s warm, and it’s mine.” Pure *tamas*. “This is my habit. It’s shitty. It’s not good for me. It’s all screwed up.” But what? “I’m going to keep right on doing it because it’s all I got, baby. It’s mine.” That’s *tamasic* thinking.

Verse 36 - Listen to Me now, Arjuna, concerning the threefold happiness. That gradual happiness that comes from the application of self-knowledge to the mind and transforms suffering into sweet nectar is *sattvic*. That happiness arising from the contact with desired objects that is laden with pleasure in the beginning but gradually becomes painful is *rajasic*. That sensual narcotic happiness which is born of sleep, laziness and indifference and is self-deluding from start to finish is *tamasic*.

“Listen to Me now, Arjuna,...” Okay, happiness. Got *rajasic*, *tamasic* and *sattvic* happiness now, okay? We’re going to analyze it in terms of happiness.

“Listen to Me now, Arjuna, concerning the threefold happiness. That gradual happiness that comes from the application of self-knowledge to the mind and transforms suffering into sweet nectar is *sattvic*.” Get it here now.

“That happiness arising from the contact with desired objects that is laden with pleasure in the beginning but gradually becomes painful is *rajasic*.”

You know that one? You get drunk. Whoa! You’re so high and you feel so good. Everything’s great. You just think, “Oh, man, have another one.” And you slug it down, you know. And then suddenly what happens? Slowly, what happens? You start getting a little, you know, you’re not quite so happy. Pretty soon you start getting a headache and then you start vomiting and then (laughter) all that happiness, what did it do? It turned to suffering. That’s *rajasic* happiness.

“That sensual narcotic happiness which is born of sleep, laziness and indifference and is self-deluding from start to finish is *tamasic*.” They’re your druggies, your junkies and various other people that get stuck in some kind of habit that just makes them feel good and they just can’t get out of a loop. I love that, “***That sensual narcotic happiness...and is self-deluding from start to finish.***” You’ve got no awareness of yourself. You feel so good, but you are so stupid. Understand.

Verse 40 - No being anywhere in the creation is free from these three *gunas*.

“Oh, no, I’ve got the fourth *guna*. I have the fourth one. What’s the fourth *guna*, James?” The humor *guna*. There’s no fourth *guna*. The self is the fourth. I have a friend and she said the self is the fourth *guna*. It’s the humor *guna*. Because what? When you see this, then this is all just a big joke. When you see this, it’s a big joke. Even though it’s *nirguna*, it’s pretty funny. Life is pretty funny.

Okay, now he’s going to analyze society. He’s going to analyze your roles in society also.

Verse 41 - The duties of the spiritual, warrior, commercial and service class are determined by the predominate *guna*.

So what? The spiritual types are basically *sattvic*. The military, the police and the politicians are *rajasic* with a little *sattva*. The commercial class is *rajasic* and *tamasic* and the working class is predominantly *tamasic*. It’s the same everywhere.

“Oh, there’s no class system. This is a democracy. We’re all one.” Sorry. It ain’t a democracy. There is a class system and if you’re *sattvic*, you’re going to rise to the top. And if you’re *tamasic*, you’re going to what? Go in the other direction. And there’s nothing wrong with it. I mean you can’t blame these people. It’s just that the *tamo guna*’s got them and they’re stuck. They are working their butts off for a living, and living the difficult life because they haven’t got enough *sattva* to think clearly, and they haven’t got enough *rajas* to self-motivate, so they end up just doing work for others, being exploited and so forth. They’re not bad people, mind you. They’re just what? Under the spell of this *guna*. That’s the *tamas* predominant *guna*.

Verse 42 - Because of a predominance of *sattva* it is the duty of spiritual types to be - what is your dharma if you have *sattva*? How should you behave? If you’re predominantly *sattvic* it’s your duty to be composed, restrained, religious, clean, accommodating, and straightforward. They should accept the truths contained in the scripture and be committed to the ready assimilation of knowledge.

Verse 43 - Because of a predominance of *rajas* and some *sattva* in their minds it is the duty of the warrior and political class to protect dharma. They should provide courageous self-confident leadership, be resolved, fair-minded, generous and adroit.

‘Adroit’ means skillful. They should not avoid conflict. If you have a *rajasic* temperament, you should not avoid conflict. You need to fight. He’s telling Arjuna, Arjuna’s got that *rajas*. He’s a warrior and for him to avoid this conflict, he’s not going to work out his dharma. This is his dharma. Those are the people, their job in the society is to what? Fight evil, and to support dharma, by what? By vigorous actions.

Verse 44 - Because of a preponderance of *rajas* and some *tamas* it is the duty of the commercial class to provide and preserve wealth for the society through agriculture and commerce.

Because of a preponderance of *tamas* in their minds... which limits their ability to think clearly and initiate actions... it is the duty of the working class to serve. And how does one achieve success here?

Verse 45 - One actualizes his or her full potential by doing his or her duty with enthusiasm.

Listen to how this happens...

Verse 46 - By worshipfully dedicating one's actions to the Creator, the One by whom all this is pervaded, a human being becomes successful.

Verse 47 - One's own duty, devoid of merit, is better than the duty of another well-done. Doing action enjoined according to one's nature, one incurs no blame. The karma that comes as a result of following your nature should not be abandoned even though it is not to your liking ... because every action is imperfect.

"One's own duty,..." Remember we had this before and here he's repeating it. Big point. Important point. *Svadharmah* is the word. ***"One's own duty, devoid of merit,..."*** even if it's not good, ***"...is better than the duty of another well-done."*** *"Taking on somebody else's karma, solving somebody else's problem or trying to be like somebody else is fraught with danger,"* he says in another spot. Better to do a third-rate job on your own life than to mess around and try to fix someone else's life.

"Doing action enjoined according to one's nature, one incurs no blame."

Even if you're *tamasic* you will act according to your nature. And you shouldn't try to, if you're *tamasic* you shouldn't try to be a saint. Or you shouldn't try to what? Start a business. Or do something or create a work of art. It's not going to work. You're going against your nature. You're not suited for it.

You see these people that have this art *vasanas*, for example. They don't have any talent but they just want to be an artist, so they keep trying to be an artist. They make terrible stuff. And they really should be what? Getting a job somewhere, a proper job that will actually give them some kind of fulfillment and meaning and put food on the table. But they prefer to be a starving artist, and do rotten art and be frustrated all the time complaining about how the society doesn't appreciate them. So you need to follow your *svadharma*. You incur no blame.

"The karma that comes as a result of following your own nature should not be abandoned even though it is not to your liking..." Even if you don't like it you should do it. You should work it out. You have to work it out. Now we're so wealthy that we can afford, or we think we can afford, not to be what we are. So you have all these people trying to change their genders and who knows what. They don't like what they've been dealt. They don't like their karma so they just want to be something else and try to do something other than what they should be doing.

"Because every action is imperfect." So even if you do somebody else's dharma, what? It's still going to be imperfect. Why? Because every action's imperfect. So you might as well stick with what you've got. Understand.

Verse 49 - The one whose mind is free from attachment and longing and who has sublimated the impulses of the mind into the quest for self realization gains the most exalted end ... freedom from action ... through renunciation.

Now **“freedom from action”** doesn’t mean you don’t act. It means you understand what’s causing action and you act with the knowledge that I’m not the doer. In other words; the doer’s doing, but he’s not doing. That’s what we said, **“Action in actionlessness: and actionlessness in action.”** You know what the difference is, that’s all. You have no choice about action anyway, because as long as you’re alive you’re busy doing from the day you’re born till the day you die.

Verse 50 - Now briefly hear how the one who has gained a pure mind becomes ultimately established in self-knowledge.

Verse 51 - With firm and patient resolve one sublimates the desire for sense gratification into mastery of the mind by purifying one’s likes and dislikes. One lives a quiet life committed to self inquiry, eats lightly, disciplines the body, speech and mind and no longer expects objective circumstances to complete one’ self. As one lets go of the vain ideas of doership, ownership and the quest for power over objective circumstances the mind becomes increasingly confident in its innate wholeness, completeness and non-separation from Me. Confidence grows. This cheers the mind. You get more involved in your self-inquiry, in your life, in your *sadhana*. This cheers the mind and it no longer grieves or longs concerning things over which it has no control. At this time the limitless vision of non-duality arises in the mind and it gains the devotion in which there is no otherness. It sees everything as oneself. You see everything as yourself. This intense devotion stimulates continuous inquiry into who I am - into the self - which leads to the hard and fast realization that the “I” is non-dual.

Verse 56 - When the totality of one’s actions are dedicated to the pursuit of self-knowledge through karma yoga one gains self realization by My grace. May your mind always rest in the non-dual understanding that I am you and you are Me. With this kind of mind life becomes free and easy. But if you do not always live according to the vision of non-duality you will suffer.

Verse 59 - This resolve of yours not to fight is egoic and motivated by your disposition. If you stubbornly stick to this refusal to do your duty which has arisen from your own nature you will end up doing what you do not want to do.

Means what? If you think you’re not going to do it, *Isvara’s* got other ideas. You will do it. *Isvara’s* the boss here. Krishna is telling him right now. You go ahead. Whatever you think, you’re going to end up doing what you’re meant to do.

Verse 61 - The self is seated in the hearts of all beings, Arjuna. By its *Maya* it causes them to helplessly dance as if they were puppets on a string. By the power of this *Maya*.

Verse 63 - I have now told you the secret of secrets. Think about it carefully and do as you will. Do as you will, huh? (Laughter.) He already told him you’re going to do what you’re supposed to do, whether you like it or not. But he’s throwing a bone to the *jiva*.

Student - You skipped verse 72 (62?).

James - Oh, sorry.

Verse 62 - Whole-heartedly surrender to the self alone, Arjuna. By its grace will you be complete fulfilled.

Verse 63 - I have now told you the secret of secrets. Think about it carefully and do as you will.

Verse 64 - Because you are dear to me I will repeat the secret by which you will attain what is always good.

Verse 65 - If you fix your mind and heart on Me with a devotion that knows no otherness you will realize your identity with Me. This is My promise.

Verse 66 - Give up all karmas and dharmas and take refuge only in Me. I will release you from all karma - from all your sins, your *vasanas*. Fear not. Take it easy.

When I left Swami Abhedananda just before he died, I asked him, I said, “*Any advice?*” And he just, with the most amazing, beautiful smile, his hand just went up. He said, “*Take it easy.*” Just take it easy. It’s all fine. *Isvara’s* got everything under control. You’re on the right track. Life is good. Relax and enjoy. Surrender all this to Me. Let go of all those dharmas, all that stuff, over to Me. I’ve got it under control. Relax and enjoy. Good.

That’s a lovely chapter. It summarizes, brings it all together. What a beautiful chapter.