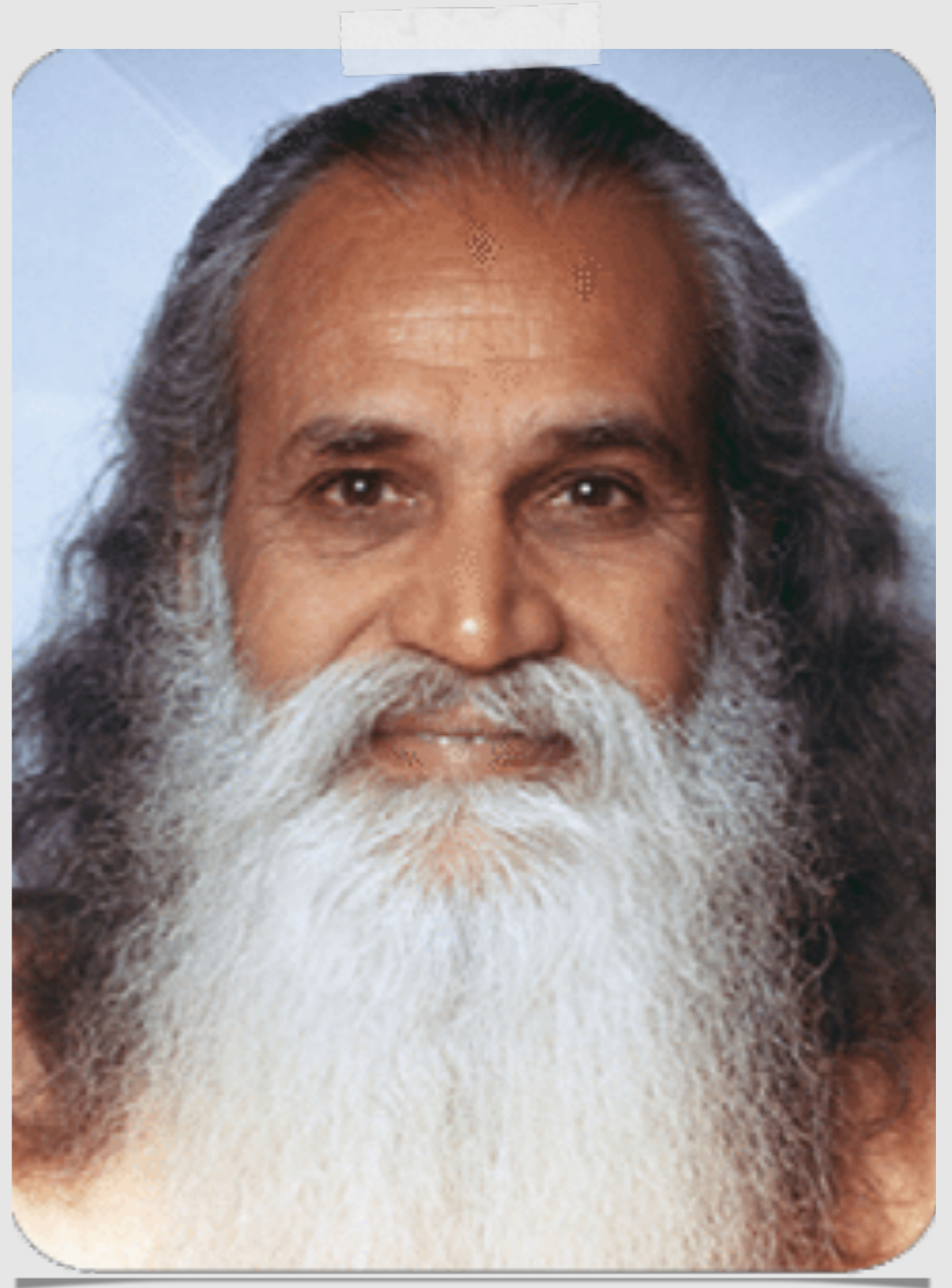


Satchidananda

A Path for Personal
Spiritual Transformation

The Bhagavad Gita



Introduction

- Our subject: Sri Swami Satchidananda's commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*
- Our primary focus will be on verses with practical spiritual advice

Karma Yoga: The Yoga of Action

- Up to now we have seen something of the philosophy about the Self or *Atman*
- and touched on the practical side of Karma Yoga,
- which helps us to go about realizing the *Atman*.

Karma Yoga: The Yoga of Action

- We also covered the qualifications of a realized person whom the *Gita* calls one of steady wisdom.
- In this chapter, The Yoga of Action, we'll learn the secret of action.

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter Three: 1-3

I. Since you teach that the path of wisdom is better than the path of action, Krishna, why are you encouraging me to do this terrible act (of war)?

2. I am confused by what seems to be a contradiction. Please tell me a sure way to attain the highest.

3. The Blessed Lord said:

Arjuna, in the beginning I gave the world a two-fold path:

the way of discerning wisdom (Jnana Yoga)

and the way of selfless action (Karma Yoga).

Commentary

- For active people, there's the path of karma, action.
- And for people who can sit and analyze, depending entirely on their intelligence,
- the path of wisdom, *jnana*, is recommended.
- Some will immediately think, "Okay, I'm intelligent, *jnana* yoga suits me very well."
- It's normal to think this way.

- Even if I suggest that you get involved in some work, you may wonder,
- “Does this mean he thinks I’m a little dull?”
- Why can’t he recommend the path of wisdom for me?”
- That’s a natural reaction.
- So, Lord Krishna explains: ...

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter Three: 4 & 5

4. Ceasing to do things will not make you “action-less.”

Nor will you rise to perfection simply by renouncing actions.

- The karma, or desire to act, should fall away by itself, like a fully-ripened fruit dropping from the tree.
- If an unrepentant fruit, seeing the ripe fruit dropping from the tree, also wants to drop off,
- it will have to force itself.

- Renouncing action should come automatically instead of you forcing it by insisting: “I renounce.”
- Instead of trying to push the desire out,
- you can develop a natural state of desirelessness
- in which you don't feel the need of anything.

- *Then you've truly renounced.*
- You can't force renunciation.
- But you can prepare your environment for this and let yourself mature.

5. No one is free of actions even for a moment, because everyone is moved to do things by the qualities of nature.

- The qualities of nature, known as the three *gunas* (*sattva, rajas and tamas*) are the three qualities that function through *prakriti*, or nature.
- They are similar to positive, negative and neutral forces.

- We have the three *gunas* even in an atom: protons, electrons and neutrons.
- What are the difference between the elements?
- The number of protons, the number of electrons, the number of neutrons.

- In the same way, if *sattva* is a bit predominant in someone, that person is said to be a spiritual seeker.
- Someone with a little more *rajas* (a few more electrons) just runs around.
- After all, what are the body and mind?
- Nothing but the same *prakriti*.

- Nature is composed of natural elements which themselves are the expression of the subtle essence which is pure consciousness.
- Everything that has manifested, you can call *prakriti*, the Mother Nature.
- All expressions of that essence are called the Mother,
- the unexpressed one is the Father.

- The Father, the essence of everything, cannot express himself.
- He must express, or manifest, through the Mother, or *as* the Mother.
- Therefore, know that anything and everything that is expressed is the Mother.

- In this sense we see nothing but the Mother.
- Don't think that only when you have a feminine body you are a mother.
- We are all part of nature.
- That's why we say Mother Nature.

- As long as we are still identifying with our bodies and minds, we'll be tossed constantly by these three *gunas*.
- That tossing about can be called action.
- Even your hunger and thirst is action.
- To fulfill the hunger and thirst, there's more action.

- Everyone must pass through *prakriti*,
- but gradually when you're ripe enough in your wisdom,
- you just drop away from her;
- the *prakriti* won't affect you anymore.
- Though you have dropped away, you haven't disappeared.
- You're still in the same cosmos, but *prakriti* won't affect you.

- It's something like a patient who goes to the hospital to be cured.
- Until he's well, he has to be there.
- He can't just jump up and say, "I came for a week only; I'm going now."
- While he's there, he makes use of the hospital and its facilities in order to be healed.

- On the other hand, after he's completely healed, he might still say,
- “This bed is so comfortable and the food is so good.
- There are sweet looking nurses all around.
- Why can't I stay a couple days more?”
- But now, he'll be pushed out without his even trying to go.

- Renunciation comes the same way, automatically.
- Even if you don't want it, it will come when you're ready.
- The Mother, *prakriti*, will nip you until you get out.
- The mother bird pecks at the young one:
- “Now you have grown wings. You can go by yourself. Go!”

- That's what we see in Nature.
- That's Mother Nature's function.
- When you're ready, she won't bother to have you here constantly feeding you.
- She has too much to do.

- There are so many children to take care of.
- But until that time you should wait.
- Be under her loving care.
- Learn all you have to learn.

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter Three: 4 - 6

4. Ceasing to do things will not make you “action-less.”

Nor will you rise to perfection simply by renouncing actions.

5. No one is free of actions even for a moment, because everyone is moved to do things by the qualities of nature.

6. Whoever stills the body as if seated in meditation, but mentally continues to think about sense objects, is deluded and a hypocrite.

Commentary

- Many times we think, “I’m fasting. I’m not going to eat anything today.
- But what about tomorrow morning? What shall I eat then?”
- Physically, we may not be eating, but mentally we are.
- An action is evaluated by its motive, not by the action itself.

- Crimes committed without any planning are even pardoned sometimes.
- Even murder, if you prove that you have not concentrated on it ahead of time
- and that is just came up all of a sudden,
- unpremeditated,
- then you might be excused.

- But even if you don't actually commit the crime,
- if it's proved you were concentrating on it
- and planning it,
- then you'll get the punishment.

- This shows that the mind is more important than the action.



Om, Shanti