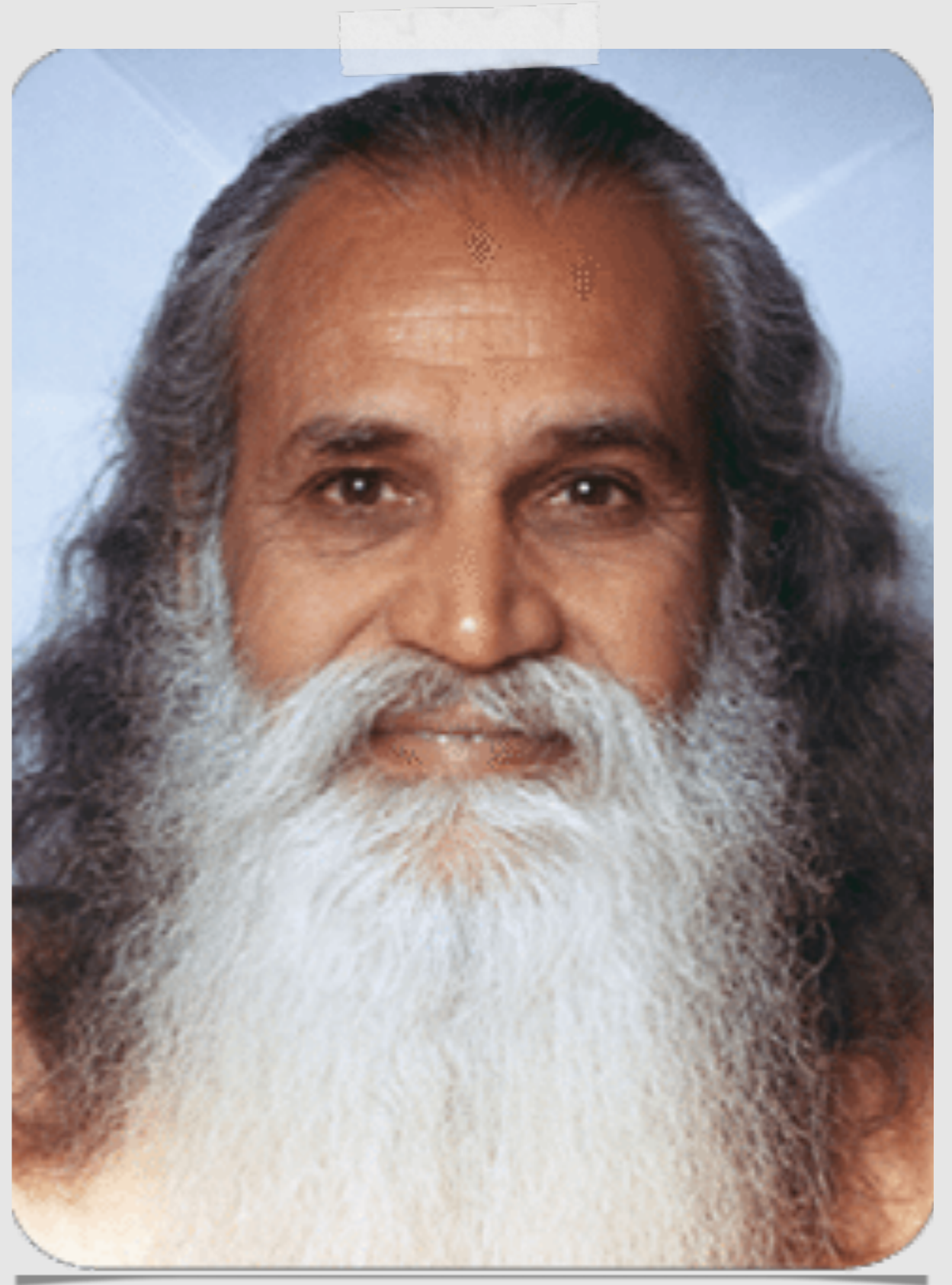


Satchidananda

A Path for Personal
Spiritual Transformation

The Bhagavad Gita



Karma Yoga

The Yoga of Action

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter Three: 7

7. In order to excel, mentally control the senses, let go all attachments, and engage the body in Karma Yoga, selfless service.

Commentary

- That means the mind is totally in control,
- but one just allows the body to do certain acts for the sake of the actions themselves.
- Here a kind of discipline is necessary.

- For example, you might be preparing food to be offered at the altar.
- This food would be called *prasad* in Sanskrit.
- You might make quite delicious dishes.
- From the very beginning, your feeling is that you are doing something for God.
- It should be very fine and tasty.

- According to the Hindu way of thinking, you shouldn't even smell or taste it.
- If you've already tasted it by your senses
- through your eyes, nose or tongue
- it's already eaten.
- It becomes unfit to be offered.
- Complete control of the senses is necessary.

- Of course, in preparing something for another, sometimes you taste it,
- but not for the sake of your own tongue.
- You want your guest to have a delicious dish.
- The action is not for your own sake.

- If you do the act this way, you are cooking,
- and yet you are not cooking,
- because you aren't cooking for your personal enjoyment.
- This is a case where even though you act,
- *you personally* are not acting.
- It's called inaction in action.

Sanskrit

- In Sanskrit a sacrificial ritual is called a *yajnam*.
- But that's only the outward expression.
- Anything you do for the benefit of others is a true *yajnam*.
- If some benefit does just happen to come to you, all right, let it come. Don't be repulsed by it.
- But don't do it for the sake of what will come to you.

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter Three: 8-10

8. Do your duty; such action is better than doing nothing. If you attempt to renounce all actions, it would be impossible to maintain your body.

9. The world is bondage when actions are done just for your own sake.

Therefore, Arjuna, make every action a *yajnam* (a sacrifice), utterly free of personal attachment.

10. After creating humankind together with *yajna* (sacrifice), the Creator said: Through sacrifice you will increase yourself and get everything that you want.

Commentary

- When God created the beautiful Garden of Eden,
- he didn't say a word to all those plants, fruits, flowers, trees and animals.
- He could have said at least something to the dogs and cats.
- No. He just created them and allowed them to play around.

- He didn't even say anything to the snake or the scorpion.
- He could have said, "Don't sting anybody."
- But no, he didn't say anything.

- Only when he created humans he opened his mouth and said,
- “My little boy, don’t eat the fruit.”
- Why? It’s because only at the human level have we been given the freedom to choose right and wrong.
- So, naturally there should be guidance also.

- According to Sloka 10, the guidance from the Lord is:
- “Well, humanity, I have created you, and I am giving you the ability to sacrifice, to make an offering.”
- By this you propagate yourself.

- Let this *yajna* or sacrifice be your milking cow.
- Of course, it doesn't mean just a regular cow.
- This cow represents: everything that you want, you get.

- According to Hindu mythology, there is a cow known as *Kama-dhenu*.
- *Kama* means desire. *Dhenu* means the giver.
- Whatever you want, you get.
- If you have *Kamadhenu* at your home, all your desires are fulfilled.
- You simply want it, you get it.

- Do we have such a *Kamadhenu* today?
- We do.
- It's not that there is only a mythological cow somewhere.
- No, everybody has been given a *Kamadhenu*, a boon-giving device.

- There is also a tree known as the boon-giving tree.
- I feel that this is the tree that became transformed into the Christmas tree,
- a tree with all the gifts underneath.
- It's a boon-giving tree: just go there, think what you want, and you get it.

- The great woman saint *Avvayaar* once said,
- “Even after having gone and sat under that boon-giving tree,
- if you ask for bitter fruit, that’s your destiny.”
- It’s ready to give everything, but it won’t give it to you unless you ask.
- And you should know what to ask for.

- Once a fellow went into the jungle and became very tired.
- He found a beautiful tree and sat beneath it.
- But the ground was thorny.
- He couldn't lie down anywhere.
- “How nice it would be if I had a small cot!”

- The minute he thought of it, he found himself sitting on a cot.
- “Oh boy, I have a cot!”
- He lay down.
- “This is very comfortable, but I’m also hungry. I could use something to eat, maybe a banana.”
- Immediately a bunch of bananas appeared.

- “What’s this?”
- He couldn’t believe his eyes,
- “It seem that whatever I want I can get here.
- Then how about some gourmet cooking.”
- Immediately, plates filled with delicacies, delicious dishes, pudding and deserts appeared.

- He ate sumptuously and then thought,
- “It would be nice if there were someone to massage my feet to put me to sleep.”
- Even as he thought of it, there was already a beautiful angel-like person there massaging his feet.
- He became excited.
- “Oho! It looks like whatever I’m thinking I’m getting.

- Now I have a comfortable bed, a good sumptuous meal, and somebody to massage my feet.
- But what if, while I'm getting the massage,
- I fall asleep and suddenly a tiger comes from the jungle.
- What will happen?"
- Immediately he heard the roar, and a tiger appeared and devoured him.

- What to do with such a person?
- He was under a boon-giving tree.
- Whatever he wanted, he got.
- Sometimes people are like that.
- They can get everything but they don't know what to ask for.

- That's why sacrifice (*yajna*) was given by the Creator:
- “Don't look for anything just for yourself.
- Let your life be a sacrifice, *yajna*.
- If you use this guidance which I give you, certainly you'll prosper.”
- In order to prosper, the most important thing, the one and only thing is living a dedicated life.

- Let your entire life be a sacrifice.
- This means renounce all your personal interest and personal desires.
- Live for the sake of others.
- Sacrifice is the law of life.

- This is said only to mankind because all other species are already doing it.
- Everything in this creation seems to exist to be used by others.
- Their life is a sacrifice.
- They live not for themselves, but for others.
- They are all still under that direct guidance of nature's law.

- No other species in this creation has the freedom humankind has.
- In nature's college they are still under the control of the cosmic law.
- In simple devotee's language, every minute
- God simply tells them what to do and they do it.
- They never misbehave.

- Remember we all lived that life before.
- During our evolution we got all the lessons.
- When we were grass we learned something.
- When we became a little bush, we learned something else.
- When we became a worm, we learned something

- We learned when we were cats, dogs, scorpions, foxes and cows.
- Sometimes traces from the past are revealed.
- We hear people say, “Don’t trust him, he’s cunning like a fox.”
- Why? Because that fox-like memory seems to be predominant even in this life.

- “Look at that woman; for every little thing she barks at others.”
- That part was predominant.
- “My goodness, he stings you for everything.”
- Or, “Don’t stand thee like a tree, man!”

- We lived all those lives.
- We all have these *samskaras*, mental impressions,
- buried as part of our subconscious treasure.
- After having learned all that directly under the guidance of the Lord,
- now at the human level the Lord says,
- “Okay, I taught you everything.”

- “I held your hand, walked you everywhere,
- and told you what to do.
- Now I want to test you.
- That means I give you the freedom.
- Let me see how you can use your education.”
- That’s what is happening at the level of humanity.

- “I have been bringing you up to live the life of sacrifice,” says the Creator.
- “I’m simply reminding you
- that if you continue to live the same sacrificial life,
- you will prosper.”

- So, if any individual wants to prosper,
- to lead a comfortable and peaceful life,
- a life that's headed upward,
- he or she should keep in mind this question:
- “Am I leading a dedicated life?
- Is my life a sacrificial life?

- The entire world is a sacrificial altar.
- We should be constantly sacrificing ourselves.
- That's *yajna*.



Om, Shanti