

Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 5
The Yoga of Renunciation

Introduction

The purpose of these talks is to give an overview of the Bhagavad Gita from an experiential level. But intellectual clarity will help you integrate what is being revealed in these classes in your life. I suggest you set aside some quiet time to contemplate on this chapter and these questions. This is the way to get the most value from this process.

Review

Renunciation at this stage of the journey arises spontaneously as the consciousness turns inward towards the Self. It loses interest in the old pleasures much as a teenager loses interest in childish things. This chapter also reminds us that we can enhance our movement to the Self by applying conscious self control over those activities that pull our consciousness attention back into the old conditioned ways of living.

At this stage the light of knowledge is shining brighter. We can 'see' more clearly how we keep ourselves bound in the old conditioned ways of living. We can enhance this by keeping up our spiritual practices (sadhana) as listed in verses 187 – 19, by associating with the enlightened beings as in verse 196 and serving them with humility and self inquiry and by controlling what we allow our mind to dwell on; intelligent discrimination is more than ever needed at this stage.

In this chapter one is on the verge of reaching the state of the Self. This is when one reaches their "own orbit" which is described in the next chapter. This is the state of Self realization, the first attainment of Gita. Once reaches this stage further progress occurs automatically and we are unlikely to fall from the "truth of the Self".

Questions for Contemplation

1. What is the relationship between this chapter and the previous one?
2. What is unique about the renunciation described in this chapter?
 - a. What is being renounced?
3. What role has renunciation played in your life past and present?
4. What is your experience when you renounce something
 - a. What impact does renunciation have on consciousness?
5. Arjuna's question at the beginning of this chapter and Krishna's answer reveals there two paths that take one to the same goal, knowledge and action, or in other terms, awareness and experience.
 - a. What verse(s) points out how knowledge and action can work together?
 - b. Describe what happens as one progresses on the path of knowledge and on the path of action enhance the other
 - c. Which path do you feel is stronger in you?

Gita Live

6. One sign of progress at this stage of the journey is the development of the 'witness'. Which verses describe this condition?
7. What is the technique described in this chapter to attain liberation?
8. What do you feel it would be like to be 'liberated'?
9. What did you get out of contemplating on this chapter?