

Brief summary for Tuesday 20th July (2.72 session)

We must thank all our teachers for their contribution to what has been written below. These are things we have learned and heard from other gracious souls whose teachings are expressed in our own words/understanding.

If you missed part 23, [check out the notes here](#).

You can find [all the previous notes here](#).

This week we saw Krishna give His concluding remark on the second chapter, further describing the goal of spiritual life. One fixed in such divine consciousness attains Brahman and all suffering ceases, even if one is situated in this consciousness at the time of death. Krishna has described the understanding of the self (Sankhya) and the practical way to firm wisdom through detached action (yoga). The result of this is the attainment of Brahman. In such a state, one will never again be deluded, having realised the self fully which is constituted of bliss.

One can attain such a state in a second or after many lifetimes. Srila Prabhupada writes in his purport:

“One can attain Krishna consciousness or divine life at once, within a second—or one may not attain such a state of life even after millions of births. It is only a matter of understanding and accepting the fact. Khatvanga Maharaja attained this state of life just a few minutes before his death, by surrendering unto Krishna.”

The pastime of Khatavanga Maharaja is given in the second canto of the Bhagavatam. He was given a boon to know when he would die and was told it would be in 24 minutes. Then with 12 minutes to go (after being transported back to Bharata) he sat in meditation and fixed his

consciousness on Krishna and achieved perfection. We of course don't know when death will come for us, so it's wise to cultivate this consciousness in all activities.

If one practices this even at the time of death, what to speak of in earlier years of youth, one attains Brahma Nirvana. Being situated in this state even for a moment not only liberates one but one attains enduring transcendental consciousness. It is wise to situate ourselves in this state in early life of course. Once such a state of consciousness is attained, there can be no recurrence of ignorance.

We explored the term Brahma Nirvana that Krishna uses to describe the enlightened condition. Often Nirvana is associated with Buddhism but it is also found in some Upanisads. Nirvana literally means to extinguish or blow out. It blows out or negates the suffering of the world, which is rooted in false identification with temporary things and our attachment to them. We find in the Gita that this extinguishing of suffering is also there as part of the goal of the text, in that it is found within Krishna's conception of enlightenment. There is more to it than this of course though which we will discover as we proceed through the Gita.

Important to note that Krishna uses the term Brahman with Nirvana. It is not a complete void when removing material identity, but there is a positive aspect to one's identity too when all those covers that cause suffering are removed.

We know Brahman is the energy of which all creation is constituted. It is the foundation of the worlds, both material and spiritual. A famous Sanskrit aphorism from the Upanisads states aham brahmasmi: "I am brahman" which points out that we living beings are also constituted of brahman energy. The Gita does distinguish between the finite brahman souls who can be covered by illusion (maya), forgetting their eternal nature, and the unlimited Supreme Brahman or Krishna who never forgets. We will see later Krishna make the point that He is the basis of brahman (14.27). Brahman is an aspect of Krsna but it is not the complete expression of

divinity. Bhagavan Krsna Himself is this complete expression. Krsna hasn't fully revealed this point yet in the Gita but He has hinted at it such as in 2.59, 2.61 and 2.64.

We also summarised the second chapter of the Gita. Many topics had been discussed, from the Vedas, the modes of nature, karma yoga, karma kanda, jnana, sankhya, Buddhi-yoga, vedanta, the atma, detachment, samadhi, and bhakti yoga (indirectly). Karma yoga and Jnana yoga were emphasised in this chapter and bhakti was indirectly discussed.

We have seen in the second chapter that Arjuna was under the delusion of identifying with his body, not knowing the real nature of the self, and Krishna wanted to remove this delusion. Krishna pointed out that retreating from battle would not help Arjuna, but engaging in His duty in proper consciousness was the means for attaining the nature of the self. So Krishna taught the understanding of the self (Sankhya) and the path to realise the self, yoga, work without attachment. The culmination of this would be Sthitaprajnata, the attainment of steady wisdom.

We read a summary of the second chapter from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura:

“This chapter is the summary of Bhagavad-gita. Verses 1–10 introduce the nature of the person who is asking questions. Verses 12–30 give a description of spirit (atma) and non-spirit (anatma). Verses 31–38 explain piety and sin within the Vedic system of prescribed duties, known as varnashrama-dharma. Verse 39 till the end of the chapter describe selfless action wherein the fruits are offered to the Supreme Lord, or niskama-karma-yoga, by which knowledge of the self is attained. This is the goal of the aforementioned jnana and karma. There is also a description of the behaviour of a person who is situated in this yoga.”

Although bhakti has only indirectly been discussed in this chapter, we will see as the Gita progresses that Bhakti is the topmost path (and Krishna

has certainly hinted at this). Self-realisation (or cognisance of the soul) is an extremely exalted state, yet it is actually secondary to devotion to God, which happens to be the means as well as the goal to be attained. Through devotion, unhappiness disappears as one becomes free from attachment and increases their spiritual intelligence. Krishna will expand on His personal involvement in all these things and how bhakti is the highest expression of yoga and corresponds with the full sense of enlightenment, especially in chapter 6.

Service to God is satisfying on a deep level and fills the spiritual aspirant with inner peace. We discussed how we all have had this experience in the midst of an engaging kirtan or discussion on topics of Krishna. Naturally lasting peace is found in the presence of Krishna, and Krishna is actually present everywhere. Our vision and experience of this is obscured by the flow of our desires and attachment to them. As we refine these, we will perceive the divine presence everywhere more and more. The essence of Krishna's advice is to abandon selfish desires and this is the journey Krishna will take us on in the rest of the Gita, this journey from selfishness to selflessness.

We concluded our study of the second chapter with a beautiful quote from the ancient commentator Sridhar Swami (whose commentary on the Srimad Bhagavatam Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu often spoke highly of):

"The Supreme Lord Krishna who raised His surrendered devotee Arjuna, who had fallen into the mire of despondency, by instructing him in the yoga of wisdom, is my sole refuge."

In the next chapter we will see Krishna elaborate on action in proper knowledge that leads to real wisdom. This discussion will be sparked by some doubts Arjuna is having on what Krishna has already explained. We will explore these doubts next time in verses 3.1 -3.2 and set the stage for the third chapter so we can study the rest of the chapter in proper context. Jaya Arjuna! Jaya Sri Krishna!