



On the Battlefield

Talks with Babaji

I understand that Krishna represents higher consciousness and Arjuna is the jiva, or embodied soul. Is Arjuna upset because he sees his attachments and knows he has to let go of the negative qualities in the form of the Kauravas?

The ego of individuality is equally attached to negative qualities as to positive qualities. In negative qualities, the ego feels its presence more. If you think back to your own life, you will remember all the bad actions or the bad things that happened to you more than the good things. Why do they come up? Because we feel attached to our own ego self. Arjuna was upset to see the disastrous result of the war.

Arjuna becomes paralyzed by his emotion. How does he move from that state to one where he can begin to act again?

Arjuna went with a revengeful mind to fight. In the battlefield, Krishna's one word hit Arjuna deeply: "Behold, O Arjuna, the Kurus in the battlefield." Kauravas and Pandavas both were from Kuru clan. What happened to Buddha who never saw a sick person or an old person? When he saw them, his mind was filled with pain. So the pain in life creates a ladder of life in spirituality. It was purposefully used by Krishna to create pain in Arjuna. The chariot was stationed in such a place from which Arjuna could see his most loved ones like Bhishma and Drona. So naturally the pain created a deep emotional state in Arjuna. Arjuna needed to know with whom he is actually fighting not the enemy but his own clan.

If Arjuna were coming to the battlefield with a desire to fight, why would Krishna create this pain in him to incapacitate him and then tell him to fight?

Krishna considered Arjuna as a friend and disciple, so he wanted to turn his mind from revenge to spiritual nature. Symbolically, the jivahood or the individual soul is always fighting for its self-interest and sinking deep down into worldliness. Our pure conscious principle knows it but doesn't want to see it because the other side is immediate self-gratification. So in that state, we either need high dispassion to develop by the grace of God or some outside agency comes and whips us. Krishna did what Arjuna needed.

So we all have to fight the battle of life. Most of us are fighting on the basis of self-interest, and Krishna is now waking him up to fight selflessly?

Arjuna fought many battles and got the name Dananjaya, conqueror of wealth. So wealth did not bring contentment in him. Now he was fighting with his own clan or with his own mind which was filled by negative and positive qualities. His self-interest and his attachment created confusion in his mind.

Does this lead us to conclude that it's not so much what you are doing as the intention behind what you are doing?

All actions create samskaras according to the intention behind it. You walk and an ant gets crushed. You do not know it so you did not kill the ant. Any action performed with a motive behind it becomes your action.

You have said that in order to know the Self, you have to know the ego. By asking to see the opposing army, is Arjuna setting himself up to look at his own negative qualities and his own ego?

Symbolically, in the battlefield the enemies were his own negative nature. We see what we are. But at this point, he developed dispassion so even though he considered them enemies, he is also thinking of its destructive ending.

But Krishna is encouraging him to kill other human beings.

If we see it historically, Arjuna is the prince whose nature-born quality is to fight and whose duty is to protect the kingdom from atrocities. So fighting was the only way. Symbolically, if we don't fight with our negative qualities, then they will overpower us.

Could you elaborate on the idea that avoiding negative thoughts could be harmful?

Avoiding means not paying attention to them and not doing anything to remove them. If a pigeon closes her eyes when the cat attacks, it will not save her life. Only the cat will not be seen. If the negative thoughts are not controlled and removed, then they will create negative actions that harm the person and others.

In the Gita, does Krishna expect Arjuna to kill without anger?

Krishna is telling Arjuna to look inside at his own enemies, fight with them, and remove them from his life. In a battle no one kills a particular person. They just fight and people get killed.

Did Krishna stay silent so that Arjuna would work out his own problem?

Krishna wanted Arjuna to vomit out all of his mental garbage so his mind could be pulled in a right understanding. If Krishna would argue, then it would create more arguments. So Krishna listened to what Arjuna is saying and did not express his opinion. It frustrated Arjuna and he started giving various reasons and exhausted himself. Why couldn't Arjuna just forget his family? So then he wouldn't need to fight. 1) Arjuna came to fight with the belief that he will win and get his kingdom back. 2) As a prince, his duty was to remove the suffering of his subjects who were under Duryodhana's rule. It would not be right to forgive a tyrant king.

Was Arjuna motivated by something more than just fear?

Arjuna saw the consequences of war. It was a war within his own tribe, so he thought about it from all angles and thought it was not right to battle with his own tribe. He did not consider his nature as a warrior which would come out in other ways if he refrains from war now. He did not consider the condition of his subjects who were suffering. He forgot his responsibility for his subjects. He was not afraid of war. His fear as to the outcome of the war.

As an allegory, how do these verses relate to the inner battle within us?

Ego of individuality - jivahood. The embodied self is in prison in the mind-body complex and strives for its freedom. Without a battle, it cannot get free.

So is Arjuna coming up with reasons for the ego to avoid doing battle?

Ego sees its attachment. The ego lives as long as there is attachment. Arjuna was avoiding the battle to see his own teachers, brothers and loved ones will be killed. All those people reinforce his ego by his attachment to them.

When Arjuna says we may destroy the whole civilization and whole culture, does this refer to the destruction of duality?

Destroying the culture, country and people, etc., doesn't destroy duality. Symbolically, the Kauravas represent the negative aspect of mind. Arjuna was in duality and attached to duality. That is why he did not want to fight. Krishna is forcing him to fight for his own liberation. Liberation means non-dual state.

Is it the duality that Arjuna is fighting? I don't understand the nature of the battle.

Duality exists as long as one is guided by one's egocentric mind. Arjuna as an historical prince was fighting for his rightful claim of the kingdom. Symbolically, Arjuna the jiva, the ego of individuality, was fighting for his liberation which is also his rightful claim, fighting with his own negative aspect of mind. All battles take place in duality.

How can we know there is not an Arjuna on the other side of the battle who has the right to fight for his own liberation and his rightful claim to the kingdom?

On the other side there were Bhishma, Drona, etc., the great teachers. Some were enlightened and some were on the way to enlightenment. The question is why such great teachers took the side of the Kauravas. The positive and negative minds are in every person. When we do something wrong, deep inside the mind knows and resists it. But when the negative mind is stronger, then the positive mind goes along with it. Historically every citizen of that country was supposed to fight for the sake of the king. That was the rule. Even though learned teachers were of Kauravas side but they had no self-interest. They were fighting as a duty.

When he throws down his bow, that seems good to me. Are you saying that he should fight, that it's better to fight?

If we don't fight with our negative thoughts, actions, and feelings, then the mind will get possessed by them. Even historically it wouldn't be right if Arjuna would refrain from the war. He was commander-in-chief and war was about to start.