

JNANESHWARI COMMENTARY

BY YOGESHWAR MUNI

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEPRESSION OF ARJUNA

In my view *Jnaneshwari* is the greatest book ever written by anyone, anywhere, anytime; it contains Truth, Liberation. *Jnaneshwari*, dated 1290 A.D., was written by Jnaneshwar, a perfect yogi. I bow at his feet. He spoke it spontaneously, and it was written down: not really a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, but an expansion--a beautiful song with a sermon.

Unfortunately, since neither you nor I know Marathi, we have to read *Jnaneshwari* in its English rendering. The original Marathi was written in meter. We'll lose some of that beauty of the nuances of that language--the language of the people around Bombay in India.

About 150 miles east southeast of Bombay is the village of Alandi. In that village Jnaneshwar was born. His father had been initiated into the Natha cult of yoga after he left his mother without her permission. His father's guru in Benares found out about it and sent him back to Alandi saying, "You take care of her and have children like you're supposed to."

His father did what his guru said. When he got back, his fellow members of the Brahmin caste rejected him even though he had come back because he had abandoned his wife. He and his wife moved to the edge of the village of Alandi, built a small hut and lived there, where four children were born. Nivrutti was the eldest brother, followed by Jnaneshwar, the author of this book, followed by a sister, Muktabai.

Jnaneshwar became a perfect yogi; that is, he achieved the highest states of samadhi and he achieved Divine Body. From his state of samadhi, nirbija samadhi, Jnaneshwar has taken the value that Vyasa has given us in the nectar-laden verses of the *Gita*, squeezed them and rendered the juice for our enjoyment and our enlightenment.

We are going to take our time with this scripture. Really, this is all you need, this one scripture. If I had to be isolated in a prison cell or on a deserted island and I had the choice of one book to take with me, I would take *Jnaneshwari*. You too, take your time with this scripture and let it slowly soak into your consciousness; let it aid you on your path toward union with God.

As is proper, Jnaneshwar begins with salutations to Ganesha. A proper guru would never begin anything of any magnitude without acknowledgement to the son of Shiva, the elephant-headed Ganesha.

1:1 In the opening verse, Jnaneshwar has given the entire wisdom of yoga. I cannot even describe what a genius this yogi is, this divine being. He says, "Om! (the sound of God) Salutations to the Supreme Being, described in the Vedas!"

He has told us that in the Vedas this Supreme Being is acknowledged and described. The original works--and when I say the original works, I mean that the original works of man are contained in the *Vedas*. That's the earliest written anything by mankind.

"Victory to that Self-known One!" Self, in Sanskrit, is Atman; it's the one who knows Atman. Victory to him! Jaya! to the one who knows Atman. Until you know Atman, you don't know anything. Atman is literally translated as "Self." And once you've truly understood the core of "Self," then you've understood God and you've understood yoga. "Pure Nature of the Self!" This is God.

1:2 "The servant of Nivritti." Nivritti was Jnaneshwar's older brother, who initiated him into this yoga. It's the same yoga that Kripalu taught me and the same yoga that I teach you.

1:3 The *Puranas*: there's the *Shiva Puranas*, the *Krishana Puranas*; the whole set of epic stories are Puranas, including the *Mahabharata*, of which the *Bhagavad Gita* is the core or the Atman. You begin to get a flavor of his approach here, and the beauty of his phraseology.

1:6 He is describing God in the form of the *Vedas*, the teachings of Truth.

1:7 You have to get used to his analogies, similes and metaphors. The entire scripture is saturated with them. You have to realize that finally some being has loved you so much, he has gone to the trouble to try to envision these examples. If you try to penetrate their meaning, you will begin to feel that he is speaking the indefinable Truth. Here we have these stories, their meaning given as the jingle from the bells. The principles which are taught in these great epics along with the aptness of the words appear as jewels in those bells. What would the jewel of a bell be? The bell makes a sound, and jewel makes it beautiful.

1:9 Vyasa was the author of the *Bhagavad Gita*. He took all the wisdom of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and crystallized them into the *Mahabharata*. The core crystal of the *Mahabharata* is the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Jnaneshwari* is the expansion on that *Gita*. The wisdom of Vyasa is like a waist-cloth around God, "Its tasselled end gleaming with purity." One should let ones self savor and experience this scripture. There is so much in it. I've read *Jnaneshwari* many times and I'm still carried into ecstasy, not only by its beauty, but by the inner Truth reflected from it. Are you beginning to realize how I feel about this book?

1:10 In India there are six separate philosophical systems. The God, Ganesha, that he is describing, has six arms. He also has various weapons--a battle axe is in one hand.

1:11 He has a mace-like thing for hitting people in another hand. This is logic. He is defining for you what these weapons are so you don't think that it's just some weird Hindu God. This is all symbolic and he's explaining the symbolism.

You always see Ganesha with a round laddu in his hand. It's a sugar ball that he loves to eat. But what he really loves to eat is the Vedantic philosophy. Vedanta means the last of the *Vedas*: these are the *Upanishads*. So, Ganesha loved to eat laddus and always had a platter full of them sitting next to him.

1:12 How could anyone reject the teachings of Buddha because he spoke the Truth? In India, Buddhism was very popular before the birth of Christ. But thereafter it had a rapid decline and now there are hardly any Buddhists in India. There are more Christians than Buddhists in India. The comments that had been made on the teachings of the *Vedas* or the *Upanishads*, which are the words of yogic experience, refuted the teachings of Buddhism. I'm not going to put myself in Jnaneshwar's place and refute the teachings of Buddhism. Buddha knew what he was talking about. But I am a yogi and I practice yoga as taught to me by my guru.

1:13 Ganesha's blessing: he has his hand up, palm outwards. This is the doctrine of the Universal Spirit. In other words, God is everywhere in everything; but Buddha did not teach this. Buddha did not ever mention the word "God." When people would ask him about God, he was silent. There's a lot to say about that. Nevertheless, the yogis have decided to teach the teachings of the Universal Spirit, that God is in everyone and everything. Religion has been established on earth, and this is reassuring for those who can use it.

1:14 This is the trunk of Ganesha. This is "pure discrimination," the power to be able to tell right from wrong, good from bad, the Truth from falsehood. If you know the Truth about life, then you have the capacity to discriminate properly. Until one knows the Truth, how can one discriminate? And unless one can discriminate, how can one know the Truth? Ganesha's straight trunk symbolizes this. He has a straight trunk, not a curved one.

1:15 "Impartial discussion." This particular discourse does not happen to be an impartial discussion. I'm telling you an explanation that Jnaneshwar has given. I can't give a commentary on what he has said because he has already said it all. But I can try to make you familiar with what he means, as you may not have a depth of background in the traditions of yoga.

1:16 What are the two systems? There is the system of Bhakti and the system of Yoga.

1:17 "The themes of duality and non-duality" are the two systems which I just mentioned, Yoga and Bhakti, or devotion. The ears meet at his temples where the two systems come together.

1:18 There are over a hundred Upanishads. But the main ones, the most critical, are ten in number. Jnaneshwar does not talk casually when he says, "The ten *Upanishads* contain in full the honey of knowledge." In those ten *Upanishads* is all the Truth. It's all there: there is no more you need to know.

1:19 AUM. This is Ganesha. Any who doubted that there was symbolic meaning in the statues of Hindu Gods had better take a lesson right here because Jnaneshwar has exquisitely described the inner meaning of the statue of Ganesha who is the son of Lord Shiva.

1:20 Sharada is another name for Saraswati, the Goddess of speech, language and talent.

1:22 Nivriddhi was Jnaneshwar's guru.

1:23 Jnanadeva is another name for Jnaneshwar. Anyone who has been properly initiated and has experienced the Truth of this yoga would feel the same way about his guru: that guru has given him the touchstone of desire; anything he wants comes to him, and he sees clearly. In India they have a

pigment that they put on the eyelids. It's a drug which causes one to suddenly see things as they really are.

1:25 If you want your tree to grow, you serve your spiritual teacher, your guru.

1:26 Remember what guru really means, what the guru really is, especially the inner guru. The outer guru takes the form of someone sitting up on a seat talking to you. But it's the inner guru who in the end is the gratifier of all your wishes.

1:28-30 He's speaking about the *Bhagavad Gita*.

1:31-32 Remember that the three worlds mean, yogically speaking, the world of Brahma from the diaphragm down, the world of Vishnu from the diaphragm to the eyebrows and the world of Rudra from the eyebrows up--the three lokas. Although there is the macrocosmic application of the three worlds (hell, earth and heaven), basically you should interpret the *Gita* and *Jnaneshwari* as the microcosm of the body of the yogi or the yogini.

We are basically dealing here with a manual of yoga, not just some story of a battlefield. The same principle applies for the whole world. Everything in the whole world is reflected in the body. That's the principle of macrocosm to microcosm. Not only that, it is in every part of the body that the entire body is reflected. Remember that principle because if you do you will be able to understand this book properly.

1:33-35 Jnaneshwar has given beauty to this expansion of Truth in addition to his feelings about the *Bhagavad Gita*.

1:36-37 Janmejaya was the last of the Pandava line. The Pandu brothers are the great heroes of the *Mahabharata*. You will be hearing much about them in this book. How could it be that a book like the *Bhagavad Gita* could do all these things? Is Jnaneshwar just trying to paint a beautiful picture because he's waxing poetic? Or is it really true? Could the wisdom taught in the *Gita* have the power that he speaks of here? The power that makes anything artistic, gives righteousness its power, and removes sin? How could that be? Yes, it is true. That which is taught in the *Gita* does have power. It is a fact!

1:38 Now both Vyasa and Jnaneshwar have beaten this point to death. They must have thought it important to call this to your attention: The Truth of the Atman, which is taught in the *Gita* must be seen in this light, or you've missed the point. If you see it any other way, you will fail. You must see the beauty, the Truth, the goodness, the divinity of what is taught in the *Gita* as the core--the Atman itself.

1:39 This means the *Mahabharata*, the great epic poem, of which the *Gita* is the core.

1:41-45 Jnaneshwar is really trying to make a point here. You have not understood the *Gita* if you don't have the same type of response that he has. You must get that feeling from what's in the *Gita* or you have not understood it. I don't care how clever a pundit or scholar you are, or how good you are at Sanskrit, unless you appreciate the *Gita*, the Truth in the *Gita* as it has been poured forth by Vyasa's words, in the way Jnaneshwar has explained it, then you have missed it.

1:46-47 I remember when I first read this, I didn't think it was true. I thought that he was trying to build something to get the attention of his audience so that they would pay attention and appreciate the work. But I've found since that yogis don't use such devices. Yes, they want you to appreciate the work, but they wouldn't tell a lie in order to get your appreciation. He has spoken the truth.

1:48 So you have the flower of this perfect poem, the *Mahabharata*. It is the story of ancient India, in which the forces of good and evil are vying with each other. The *Gita* is the pollen of that flower. In the *Gita* there is the discussion between Krishna, who is taking the role of guru, and Arjuna, who is the disciple. Krishna is God, the god of Love. He's the living Truth. He takes the role here, yogically speaking, of guru. Our struggling hero, Arjuna, is you, the disciple of yoga.

1:51 Ghee is clarified butter. When you boil butter, it becomes clear and all the yellowness goes out of it.

1:53-54 'Bhishmaparva' is a section of the *Mahabharata*, and in this particular section is the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Mahabharata* is the longest epic poem in the world. The books take up a whole shelf in the library.

1:55-56 The Sharada is the early Fall.

1: 57 The chakora bird is a famous character in this book. It's mentioned often. It's a bird in India that drinks evening dew which is formed on leaves when the moon is shining. This is the nectar. That's the macrocosmic view. You should try to understand the yogic interpretation of the chakora bird. After he picked the dew from the leaf, his head would go back with the mouth open, and he would look at the moon. This is a kriya that happens in yoga: head back, mouth open.

1:58-61 Jnaneshwar is saying that there's more to these words than what's on the surface. He's telling you that you should ponder over it and be serious about what he says.

1:62 Theoretically you're qualified. You're like Arjuna; you're a seeker of yoga. You want union with God, you're sincere about it, you're determined, and you serve the guru.

1:63 Here's a perfect yogi with a divine body. He's speaking to his students. He talks to them, touches their feet and says to them, "You've responded to me. How can I think otherwise? I am so happy you have already spoken my words in your lives. I know that you are ready to receive me, but please forgive me for my shortcomings."

The very tree under which he taught these words is still growing next to his mahasamadhi--the final resting place of Jnaneshwar. We visited that tomb and that tree when we were in India in November 1975. I was like a madman at that place. I didn't know what was happening to me. I was being guided around like a man possessed.

According to the story, at that place Jnaneshwar, while still alive and appearing 20 years old, voluntarily went into the tomb and said, "Wall it up." They walled it up, and according to the story, he's been there ever since, in his divine form in samadhi. I don't know, but I think it could be so. I know that I've never been the same since I visited there.

From that place I received a boon, for no reason. I don't deserve anything, but I was given the boon of courage. Since that time, I have been courageous. It came instantly, not from me but from God, and now I have courage. I'm not afraid of anything. Not only that, no matter how difficult any situation gets, it doesn't matter and it doesn't affect me. That's what is called Grace. I like to give you a little background now and then, so that you might better appreciate the power of Jnaneshwar, who has given us the marvelous teaching in this book.

1:66 Here is a perfect yogi saying that it's a fault on his part to say, "I'm going to sit up here and speak to you because I say I've understood the *Gita*." Yet he has understood the *Gita* far beyond what you and I have managed in our struggle with it. We've only chewed at the outer edges of his knowledge.

1:67-69 I used to think it was false humility on the part of saints to go around acting humble. I thought, if in their hearts they were humble, why did they have to make such a big show about it? That was my own narrowness. I did not understand the true meaning of humility. Now I begin to appreciate it a little bit and know that Jnaneshwar, in making such a statement, is not being falsely humble, but is speaking the Truth as he sees it.

1:70 Shambhu is another name for Shiva. Bhavani is his wife.

1:71 Here is another name for Shiva. I've been reading the *Gita* since I was a teenager. I've read over 30 translations of the *Gita*. I've pored over it in Sanskrit; I've reflected on it in my meditation. I've consulted my guru about it endlessly. I've restudied it and restudied it and it is forever new. I can't believe I can get any more out of a verse and yet, after further study, the whole thing blossoms anew when I had no idea that a blossom was still contained in there. It flowered over and over for me. One particular line for example would keep doing this. Who am I to say anything about the *Gita* either? Except my own enthusiasm for it.

1:72 "In sleep" should say "in samadhi." It is marvelous that when something is the Truth, it will consistently continue to unfold. You can get anything out of the Truth according to where your consciousness is. The Truth will enlighten you to that degree and in that way. It is faultless. Because once the absolute Truth has been expressed, it has a magic quality. It's the endless producer, the cornucopia, the wish-fulfilling tree. No matter what you want, the Truth will give it to you. This is the nature of the Truth, and this is the nature of the *Gita*.

1:73 How can this be? The original *Vedas* were transcended by the *Gita* because it came out of the pure samadhi state of Vyasa.

1:74-79 Kamadhenu is the wish-fulfilling cow, the cow that gives everything. Because Jnaneshwar has the Grace of his guru, this power has come to him. It is not his power, but from the Grace of his guru.

1:80 He is speaking to his people. It is their wanting, their listening, their attention, their desire for Truth and union with God that draws out of Jnaneshwar, as a puppet on a string, the flow of God. So don't think that listeners are unimportant. They're the other half of God.

1:82-84 He's completed the introduction. He's set the stage and now is ready to launch into the actual text of the *Gita*, giving his expansion. Why does this job come to such a person as myself, with a speech defect? I feel so ashamed that I cannot render it as it should be rendered. Nevertheless, it is my duty, so we shall do it.

1:85 This takes a lot of explaining right in the beginning. Dhritarashtra was a king, of the line of the Kurus, from the great King Kuru. Unfortunately he was born blind. He had a hundred sons, all of whom were bad guys. Moved by his affection for his sons, he asks Samjaya, one of his ministers, who is an assistant to the king, what is happening to his sons. Samjaya, as explained to me by Kripalu, stands for divine sight. He is a seer.

Dhritarashtra is in his palace and asks him, "I wonder what's happening to my sons who are all out on the battlefield. Would you tell me, Samjaya?" Samjaya, with his divine sight, sees what is happening on the battlefield and tells the whole story which is the content of the *Gita*.

What is the blind king in the microcosm? He is the ignorance of the yogi or the yogini, that which you do not know, your ignorance and your blindness. Although you sincerely try, your blindness makes you act like the blind king. He sired a hundred sons, all of whom stand for desires. It could be a thousand for that matter.

How many desires do you have that have to be fulfilled? Hunger, thirst, lust, pride, and so on. The battlefield in the *Gita* is called Dharmashetra. Shetra means field; dharma means the right way. So they are out on Dharmashetra where the battle is going to take place. It's also called Kurushetra--the battlefield of desires. It's really a battle between dharma and adharma--between the right way of living and the desires.

1:86 The Pandavas are the good guys, the good intentions, virtues and heroes. They are opposing the sons of ignorance on the field of righteousness.

1:87 This is typical of you. You've been trying to do the right thing in just the right way and follow dharma, but you've been a long time on the battlefield having it out with desires. "Oh, but I want to do this, I want to do that. I have to have this. I can't stand that." How well I know. The blind king has asked the question and Samjaya replies.

1:88 The whole answer is given in that one sloka. This is the beauty of the yogi. He never plays with you. He just says, "Here's the problem and here's the answer." Then because you don't understand, he takes the rest of the book trying to explain it to you. But the answer is given right here. The army of the virtues, the good guys, the Pandavas, is trying to do the right thing, to rise up like the spread of the jaws of death at the time of the universal dissolution. The macrocosmic interpretation of this is the universe dissolving back into God.

In yoga there is an experience when for you, the yogi, the universe dissolves away. At that point, the jaws of death are waiting to consume desires. This is exactly what happens in yoga. The whole thing is said, right there in the first statement. Because of your virtues, of your efforts to do the right thing, that moment happens in yoga. And when it does, it's death to the desires.

1:89 "The gathering of a dense mass of clouds" is what it's like. The kalakuta poison, the impurities of the world, is the poison which fills everyone and everything. Who can control it? It's out of control. It might do anything. This is disturbing. This poison is out of control, and at the same time the virtues are holding open the mouth of death to dissolve those desires.

1:90 You'll be desperate at that moment.

1:91 The various positions are the hatha yoga postures that occur automatically in sahaja yoga meditation: the army being in different positions.

1:92 Enter the anti-hero, Duryodhana. Duryodhana is the eldest son of the blind king. The eldest son, Duryodhana, is ego, the first offspring of ignorance. I'm giving you the inner yogic secrets and with these you can untangle all the mysteries of the *Gita* and all yogic literature. You have to do it with a sincere and pure heart, or you'll never get it. Duryodhana looks at the army of the Pandavas over there and says, "Humph! That's nothing but a big herd of elephants."

1:91 Drona was a Brahman priest who became a warrior. In other words, he was from the highest caste, purity, but he became a warrior. He dropped a caste. The warrior caste is below the Brahman priesthood. He became a great teacher of weaponry and fighting. Drona stands for the intellect. The intellect is on the side of the ego. Captured by the ego, the intellect is used to get the ego's way, with clever skills, fighting with all the weapons of consciousness and thought. The ego approaches intellect and says, "See this huge army of the Pandavas." All the virtues are starting to close in on the ego, so he says, "Oh intellect, do you see this?"

1:94 The army against Duryodhana is very skillfully laid out by the son of Drupada. We'll go into who the son of Drupada is later, but he was the field marshal of the Pandavas, the virtues, the right way of living.

1:95 The intellect also taught the virtues. But he ends up in the final battle on the side of the ego, trying to fulfil desires. This is why you cannot get out of the tangle of desires with the use of intellect because he's on the same side as the ego. Even though intellect has also taught the heroes, the virtues and skills, when the chips are down and the battle is to be fought, intellect will try to sneak the ego to its end. I don't know if you've had that experience. I certainly have.

The stage has been set. You begin to see and appreciate, I hope, some of the depth of what we've undertaken here, and through experience: the reading of *Jnaneshwari*, a song-sermon in the *Bhagavad Gita* by Vyasa. Vyasa was a perfect yogi; Jnaneshwar was a perfect yogi. We have here the living Truth. My intention is not to explain this, but to introduce you to it, to get your heart and mind into it, so that you will experience for yourself the joy of the Truth that you deserve as sincere yogis and yoginis.

We've introduced ourselves to the blind king, ignorance, who is the father of all the desires and all the mistakes, errors and foolishness we get ourselves into. We've also met Samjaya, the divine sight. The divine sight is relating what is taking place on the battlefield, Dharmashetra. Shetra means field, the field where the battle of the dharma takes place. It's dharma versus adharma. Dharma is the way based on Truth and adharma is the way based on ignorance. The sides are drawn up. Here on this battlefield Samjaya says:

1:96-97 If you had read the preceding many volumes of stories that led up to the *Bhagavad Gita*, you would know who Bhima and Arjuna are. They're two of the good guys. Bhima is noted for his strength and power, and for his temper and his impatience with injustice. He doesn't get mad about himself, but when there's some injustice being done, he wreaks havoc, especially if there's an injustice to a woman.

Arjuna is the hero, the yogi. In the end he should achieve yoga, union. If you are female and want to think of Arjuna as the yogini, that would be equally accurate. Arjuna is one of the five Pandava brothers, the sons of Pandu. He and Bhima are half brothers, and although Pandu was the father on record of all the five Pandu brothers, in fact he was not the father of any of them. Their mother, Kuntidevi, was quite a woman. She had sons by three different gods.

The father of Arjuna, our hero, was Indra. Although he is not the eldest of the brothers, and therefore not the boss, he is the most skilled in weaponry and is the best archer. He has already won many battles practically single-handed on behalf of righteousness. He's known throughout Bharata (which is the correct name for India) as a hero.

Jnaneshwar lists a great many names and I am not going to go at length over each name. You should know that each and every name here stands for a particular aspect of the make-up of an individual: a state, a body part, a mental attribute, a virtue, a weakness. Every one of these names means something and stands for some aspect of a yogi's life.

1:98 You should know Drupada. He's important because he's the father of Draupadi. Draupadi, like her mother-in-law, who was the mother of the five heroes, the Pandu brothers, was quite a woman. Draupadi married them all, which was quite a scandal, even in ancient India where things were fairly liberal compared with modern India. Even in ancient India, it was only by special dispensation from the Brahman priests and by persuasion on the part of Krishna, the great One, was she allowed to marry all five of these brothers. The problems that resulted from those marriages were great. Drupada, her father, was a great chariot fighter.

1:99 The story just before the *Bhagavad Gita* goes on for 100 pages, describing everybody that came to the fight. It was THE fight of the ages, so everyone came. All powers either lined up on one side or the other. This is important to know, when you finally decide to do yoga seriously; when you've had enough of being controlled by material desires and you say, "This is it. I've tried to reason with them, make deals with them, and they betray me and my good attributes every time."

You've been patient. You've even gone away and left them alone, but they ferreted you out because they were afraid you might come back later. When you finally decide, "This is it, desires. We are going to fight it out. It's either you or me; this world is too small to contain both of us." the battle is joined. The desires will say, "You're going to have to fight, and I'll bring all my troops."

1:101 Subhadra was another wife of Arjuna. Things were fairly different in those days. It was quite common to have several wives. Not several husbands, but several wives. Abhimanu was the son of Subhadra and Arjuna. Duryodhana was pointing out to Drona all the warriors on the other side. "Look at all those people over there, all those powerful warriors."

We've already discussed who Duryodhana is, the anti-hero, the ego, the eldest of the Kauravas. The Kauravas are the sons of Dhritarashtra, the blind king--ignorance. The eldest son is ego. The first-born of ignorance is ego. He was in charge of the desires. He's looking over the enemy, the virtues, and he's a little worried about them.

Drona was a very important character. He taught the warriors of both sides. He was a Brahman priest who turned warrior and went down a caste. He turned warrior and became a teacher. He was actually intellect, intelligence, the capacity to think through things. So he trained both sides. He trained virtue, how to do things properly, and he trained the desires and weaknesses, how to get their way.

He was very magnanimous about the whole business because intellect is of such high quality. At the end, when the final battle was joined, Drona ends up on the side of ego. When the final spiritual battle was met between desire and virtue, intellect joins the desires to try and let ego have its way.

If you don't think this is true, start this fight. Try to see if you can manage by intellectual means to see from the point of view of doing the right thing. Try to figure out your way through. It doesn't work. Intellect deserts the virtues and finds itself sneakily thinking out some way for the ego and the desires to have their way. So here we have Drona being addressed by Duryodhana, the ego:

1:102 The sons of Draupadi, remember, and the five Pandu brothers.

1:103 He got a little frightened looking over at all the strength on the other side. Ego had to bolster himself by saying, "Now look who we've got on our side." It's important to know who's on each side. As a yogi or a yogini, you should know who your friends in this battle are and who are not. We've already clarified one person. Intellect is not your friend. That's a big lesson that takes many lifetimes to learn.

1:104 Duryodhana is talking to Drona, the intellect. So he says, "You are the chief warrior on my side."

1:105 This is a shocker. One of the first stories told in the *Mahabharata* is about Bhishma. Bhishma is probably responsible for this whole business. I'll tell you the story briefly. Bhishma had a father, Santanu, who was quite a lover. The father became involved with the River Ganga. The River Ganga is actually the ida nadi. There are three main nadis: the central nadi, the sushumna; on the right side of the sushumna is the pingala; and on the left side is the ida. The ida is female and flows downward--the goddess Ganga.

1:106 One day Bhishma's father was out wandering around and saw a beautiful goddess. It was Ganga, and he fell in love with her. He said, "I'll do anything, just let me have you as my wife." She said, "On one condition. If we have any children, I'll have a right to kill them." He said, "That is terrible."

But he loved her so much and she was so beautiful that he couldn't resist, so he said, "All right, anything. I'll make a promise. I'll take a vow: the children are yours to do with them what you want." They were married. She had one child and she drowned it in the river, then another, and another. Until finally by the eighth one, he couldn't stand it any more. He snatched the child from

her and said, "You have no right to do this terrible thing." She said, "If that's the way you want it, you keep the child," and she left. Ganga went back to heaven and their marriage was dissolved. This child grew up. He was beautiful and his father was proud of him.

The father was wandering in the forest again and saw a beautiful woman, Satyavati. She smelled so beautiful he couldn't resist her. He had to marry her. She said, "You'll have to ask my father." He asked her father. And the father said, "You already have a son and he will become king when you die. I don't like this, but I'll consent to the marriage on the condition that any child of my daughter becomes king before Bhishma. And because the rightful heir is Bhishma, he must not be allowed to have any children."

The king said no. Bhishma saw his father hanging his head and said, Dad, what's the matter?" Nothing. I'm just lonely, that's all." So Bhishma said, "Why don't you marry that beautiful lady you told me about?" Bhishma went off to see the father of the woman and heard the story. Instantly, because he loved his father so much, he took the absolute vow that he would never have a woman. He was the first celibate. Bhishma means "the terrible vow."

In these stories and in the *Bhagavad Gita*, he stands for that vow. He is the grandsire of this problem. It is that vow which brings you to yoga. Because of the vow of Brahmacharya, you can meet and fight this battle. But if you never take this vow, you can't fight it out with desires because the desire of sexuality will always lead you astray. Therefore, the vow of Brahmacharya is number one. Bhishma was the great grandfather of the Mahabharata action, including the *Bhagavad Gita* battle. He was responsible for the whole thing. Yet he was on the side of the ego. That is one aspect you're going to have to think about.

When this final showdown came, even though Bhishma doesn't think very much of the ego, his nephew (the virtues, the five Pandava brothers, are also his nephews, but so are the 100 sons of the blind king), he ends up on the side of the ego. These are heavy lessons.

Now Karna was half-brother to the Pandus. The same mother, Kuntidevi, came up against the Sun God and had another child and this was Karna. Even though Karna had some virtue, he was on the side of the ego. Karna is pride. Pride is a good trait, pride in good work and that sort of thing. But in the end pride is on the side of ego.

1:106 Kripa means grace; acharya means master. The master of grace was on the side of desire and ego. I'm not going to explain this one. You're going to work on this one yourself. Only through your sadhana will you be able to understand. Although Kripa keeps on constantly advising the blind king, "Look, your sons are getting out of hand, you must do this instead of that," the blind king would say, "Oh yes, that's good." When his sons came around he'd give in. Ignorance would give in to desire every time in spite of the counsel of Drona and Kripacharya and others.

1:107 Vikarana is bravery. He's on the side of ego.

1:108 You've got the idea now. You search out what attributes and aspects these people have. The *Gita* is telling you who's on whose side. If you can ever understand the Sanskrit and if you are honest about your own experience in meditation, you will understand.

1:109-115 Bhishma is the commander-in-chief of all the armies of all the Kauravas.

1:116-119 This is one of the traits of ego, bragging. Bragging and bravado is on the side of ego.

1:120-123 Intellect was going to watch over all of it and keep track. Intellect will protect Bhishma.

1:124 After the *Gita*, the battle starts. In the *Gita* the two sides are lined up. After that the battle starts and they fight for fourteen days. It's a tremendous battle. You ought to read the *Mahabharata*. It's very important background for properly understanding the full meaning of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It's the story of the mastery of the Brahmagranti, the knot of creativity. In other words, mastering the creative desire.

1:125-128 He yelled out like a lion and blew his conch in harmony with the yell. These two sounds in combination seemed to deafen all the three worlds as if the skies were crashing down.

1:29-136 If you ever really decide to seriously do yoga, this is what happens when you finally say, "All right, this is it." Until that time you're thinking about it. You're still trying it out, still trying to compromise with the desires, still trying to see if something can't be worked out around them. There must be some other way. The moment you say, "This is it," and you mean it totally, this is the effect you get.

1:137 Remember the gods are the senses, the devas. The abode of the gods is the head. The Pandavas are the good guys on the other side.

1:138-140 We've got some things going for the good guys, fortunately. Let me tell you what some of these are. Garuda was the divine bird that carried Vishnu around wherever he wanted to go. Vishnu is God. The bird that could fly is the etheric body. Yoked to the chariot are four horses. These are the faculties, excluding touch.

"Resplendent as a winged Meru." Meru is a mountain, the tallest mountain in the universe. Remember, we said that the body is the microcosm of the universe, so the tallest mountain is the spinal cord. Now, the winged Meru would be the spinal cord of the etheric body or actually the sushumna nadi because the sushumna is in the etheric body and happens to overlay the spinal cord.

I am telling you things that you could not find out anywhere in the world. I don't want to make a big deal out of it, but sometimes you don't appreciate information, so I have to tell you to. Why you're here and why you're so blessed, I don't know. But just because we don't know doesn't change the value of this knowledge. It is valuable beyond your greatest imagination.

We have the chariot, the light that comes from the sushumna nadi. Krishna was the charioteer of the body of the yogi; the chariot is the body. And the charioteer, instead of being the intellect, through the act of surrender, becomes God.

Victory was certain. The outcome was absolute and cannot be otherwise. Arjuna still has to go through what he has to go through, which is the whole rest of the story of the *Mahabharata* and the *Gita*. The act of surrender was the act that makes God the charioteer of the lead chariot of the Pandavas. The lead chariot of the Pandavas was the yogi's body.

But if you don't surrender, then intellect becomes the charioteer, which is normal. With normal humans, intellect is holding the reins of the chariot. The reins are the will. What holds the will? Indirectly the intellect. But when you surrender, as in sahaja yoga, you've given the reins over to God, guru--the same thing.

1:141 Every chariot has a flag. On this chariot the flag was of the monkey god, Hanuman. This was the standard. Hanuman stands for the divine body. The divine body is the perfect monkey. It can fly through the air, grow large or small, and it is the constant servant of Rama, another form of God.

Shankara is Shiva. See how it all fits together? You can see here that Jnaneshwar saw God as one. Any perfect yogi does. He wasn't in a sect: there's only one God and it must be Krishna, or Shiva, or Jesus, or Allah. He's combined them all together here. He's got Garuda, Hanuman, Shiva, Krishna, all blended together in just a few lines. The charioteer was Krishna; Arjuna was the yogi, the passenger, not the body. That's who you are. But you must have given the control of the chariot over to Krishna, Truth, God, Shakti, God. They are all the same thing. Now you are prepared.

1:142 God loves you so much that if you are willing to take on this battle with material desires, he will become your servant and be your charioteer. Of course, you have to surrender the chariot, the reins, the wheels, all of it to God. Then he gladly comes and serves you as the lowly charioteer. The outer meaning is very nice; the Lord has come to be the charioteer. But the yogic meaning, as I have just explained it to you, has real beauty to it beyond any outer view of the Lord driving an actual chariot.

1:143 The charioteer always sat in front, below the warrior who would steer the charioteer with one foot or the other by turning the charioteers head with his feet. You can see what God had become to sit below and be touched by the feet of an ordinary person.

Panca means five. So what is this conch? The Lord himself has the conch or "five." You have to think about what this means.

1:44-45 The instant Lord Krishna blew his conch, the Kurus went, "Ooohhh!" And all the martial sounds in the Kuru army faded away.

1:146 You remember earlier in this scripture course we were studying the *Shiva Samhita*, and it defined Devadatta as a particular form of prana. I'll tell you and save you the trouble of looking it up although I should make you go and study the entire *Shiva Samhita* in order to find it.

Devadatta controls basically two things: hiccupping and vomiting. Conch of vomiting? You're going to have to give this considerable thought to understand that correctly. Even when I give you the inner meaning you won't understand it unless you compare it to your own experiences in meditation.

1:147 The two terrible sounds combined into one. This is critical. If this does not happen in yoga, then you will not succeed; you will fail. Both of them must occur. Therefore you're going to have to think, "What are these sounds?"

1:148 Bhima would grow furious automatically at that point. Paundra? It's enough to make you want to learn Sanskrit. Now you understand because here are given the keys to successful yogic practice. I've given you more keys than you ever deserved by what Grace I don't know. Nevertheless there are some you're going to have to work out for yourself. And there is one. Work it out.

1:149 Yudhishtira was the eldest brother of the good guys, the Pandavas, the first born. He was known also as Dharmajaya, victory to right living. Dharma means to live according to the Truth. You'll see all through the stories involving Yudhishtira that he could never lie. He always played everything straight out front, and the desires took him every time.

He tries to settle this conflict by a dice game. He didn't want to have a war, so he said, "Let's have a dice game." He doesn't want war because it's not righteousness to fight and kill. He says, "We'll settle it by a game of chance." The ego says, "All right," and he sent for his minister, deception, to throw the dice.

Yudhishtira, being straightforward, truthful and honest, played by the rules and he lost everything. When you decide you're going to be a renunciate, you lay everything on the line and say, "God, I don't have anything. If you want me to have things, you let me have them. If you don't, you take them away." So Yudhishtira, living by the righteous law, by dharma, on the basis of Truth, laid it all out. But the desires snatched it all away. And he ended up with nothing living in the forest. This is true.

He also sounded his conch, Anantavijaya. Ananta is the eternal snake, the snake upon which the world rests. It's called eternal because it goes in a circle and never ends. You can achieve victory through the eternal power of the snake, Ananta. Jaya means victory. The universal snake, Ananta, on its microcosmic level in the yogi's body, is kundalini.

1:150 Nakula was another one of the Pandu brothers. I'm only going to give you some of this background. You look up in the *Mahabharata* about Nakula. Kunti embraced another God and the son of that embrace was Nakula. He blew his conch, Sughosa. And Sahadeva, another of the Pandu brothers, blew his conch, Manipushpaka. I'll give you a hint. Pushpa means flower. You can look up the rest in the Sanskrit dictionary. Both sides have rattled their weapons, sounded their conches, and things are getting ready.

1:151 Draupadi had children with all five brothers. The children were all in the battle. This is important to know because in the end all those children are killed, every one of them. In fact, most of them get killed later on in a sneak attack in the middle of the night after most of the fight is over.

1:152 Shikhandi later on becomes very important. And without Shikhandi, I wouldn't be here today. That's a big hint.

1:153-154 Shesha is another name for Ananta, the giant snake upon which the world rests. Remember the world. The earth is the yogi. It is from the diaphragm down, the world of Brahma. The world, on the macrocosmic level, is earth. That world rests on Shesha, or Sheshanaga, the giant snake. Terrified by the vibrations of these sounds, Shesha was confused and tried to throw off the burden of the earth.

Also Kurma was confused. How are you ever going to find your way through the desires without a roadmap? This book is the roadmap, and you'd better know how to read the signs and know what each one means and who each one is. So bother yourself to find out who Kurma is.

1:155 Meru's the mountain, the tallest mountain in the body, the sushumna nadi. What's Mandara? Jnaneshwar hasn't talked about that. Does your body ever rock back and forth? It'll only happen like that if you take on the prospect of yoga. But if you don't, your body won't rock. You'll sit back with intellect in control saying, "I don't know about this business here. I think this is a plot to have me give up my desires." No way! Intellect and ego are brothers, hand in hand, making sure that none of this takes place.

1:156-158 Some of you come to me with your lamentations and say, "I wish I'd never heard of this yoga."

1:159 If the conches hadn't been blown, the desires would have won. Ego would have been king and the universe over because the only outcome would have been death, physical body death, the end of the cycle, the end of the universe, destruction. What is the universe on a microcosmic level? This body, this thing that you're involved in. The body, mind, feelings and karma, that's your universe.

1:161 It sounds like the battle's over. Would that it were. But in effect, the Kauravas were destroyed.

1:162 The Lord and virtues are coming. Demons, desires, falsehood and ignorance are all terrified of the Truth because they know that in the light of the Truth, they cannot get their way. When you speak the Absolute Truth, is it possible for your desires to get away with anything? Not one thing. So you know that, if your desires are still getting away with a few things, that there's some Truth that is still not coming out.

1:164-167 His side fired their arrows and they cheered! This is the yogi. All the virtues are speaking the Truth, doing their breathing exercises, asanas, saying their mantras. That gives you a little hint about the conches.

1:168-171 One last look. He'd have been better off not to have bothered. But yogis and yoginis, being what they are, in their ignorance and uneducated state, still want to look it over rather than just go straight ahead with the fight. So he says, "Take me out, I want a last look over the whole scene."

1:172-174 Now we've set the scene for what's going to happen to our hero. It sounds like the war is over, but the fight is just about to begin. It's going to be a difficult battle; otherwise, yoga would be nothing and all of us would have finished the job long ago. But that is not the case. You not only need to have had enough of this world, but you need to have God as charioteer. You need to have your battle manual, the *Bhagavad Gita* a la *Jnaneshwari*.

We've gotten to the point in the grand battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas, the desires and the virtues, where Arjuna, our hero, our yogi, speaks to his charioteer, who happens to be God

himself, Krishna. He asks to be taken out between the two armies that were aligned on Dharmashetra, the field of righteousness, on which this battle was going to take place.

Historically speaking, it's a little northwest of modern-day Delhi. At that time it was Hastinapura. The armies were all aligned. All the good guys were on one side and all the bad guys on the other. Yogically speaking, you'll remember that the battle is on this field. And the yogi was somewhere in this morass with the desires filling the body and still trying to do the right thing.

For years the good guys have tried to co-operate, do things peacefully, discuss, and at every turn have been betrayed and tricked by the desires. So they've decided to fight, have a showdown and settle this thing by war at Krishna's instructions. He said, "Kill the desires." Arjuna, the hero and main warrior of the good guys says, "All right, we'll fight," and so did his eldest brother, Yudhishtira. So they're going to fight. But first Arjuna says to Krishna, "Take me out between the two armies."

1:174-175 Remember Bhishma? He's the one who took the terrible vow. He's Brahmacharya. He would be absolutely celibate, no matter what. Remember Drona is the intellect who is on the side of desires trying to help them to get their way.

1:176-177 He spoke to his charioteer. The Lord had agreed to be his charioteer, a non-combatant, but the guide of his chariot which is the body. He saw his relatives and friends on both sides. His relatives were also on the bad side because of the desires of an individual. People have attachments to them.

1:178 Krishna was a truly perfected being. He knew better than to speak of the future, having used a power to see it.

1:180 Yogis and yoginis get faint-hearted when faced with having to destroy the desires.

1:186 This bow had been given to him by Shiva. His hand couldn't hold it anymore, he was so unnerved.

1:198-206 This is the moment of the awakening of the kundalini, when many of the sadhakas and sadhikas quit their meditation and simply say, "It is not right for me to go on." When the kundalini awakens, the desires either have to be killed or you have to quit meditation.

1:207-210 Intellect is trying to talk him out of the situation.

1:211-213 "Even in a dream."

1:214 A yogi, in effect, destroys the family by destroying desires and by becoming celibate. He has renounced the family and there are no children from him so he's destroying the family. I used to go through terror about this. First of all, I have seven children of my own, and I'd think, "How can this be right to destroy the family? For something to be true it must be true for everyone, not just for a few."

Then I finally realized that if you truly renounce the world in this life or the next, it can't be many, if you truly renounce and practice yoga, you will achieve the final stage of the divine body which is

immortal. So a yogi or yogini ends the line of reproduction and the need for reproduction. Nevertheless, here was Arjuna saying, "How can we destroy our families?"

1:217-219 In other words he's saying we should try to satisfy the desires and provide for them--color televisions, new cars, new rugs on the floor, things like that. We should look out for them. This is the ordinary view of life which the average person takes and to some degree, the person following the middle path.

1:220 When a yogi or yogini decides to fight the desires, the desires get the message. They say, "All right, you want to fight?" The desires get stronger than ever and the intellect says, "Oh my! Do I really want to give them up?" And on and on. The desires take up their weapons. They're going to fight too.

1:221 How many times have I heard this from my own students? I don't argue with them, I say, "That's fine, you earn your living, you take care of the things you need to take care of, but stay away from kundalini. If you're going to take on kundalini, then be ready to kill the desires and give it all up. Either let material desires rule your life and go ahead and successfully achieve them or give them up and fight."

1:222 He's talking to Krishna. He has forgotten himself, he's carried away. He's justifying intensely. "Do you not know who they are? Over there is Bhishma (Brahmacharya, celibacy). There's Drona (the power of the intellect), who has been our greatest benefactor."

1:223 He's really agonizing. This is the typical neurotic rationalization. No one is to be blamed for it. As was said earlier, this confusion overtakes every single person. It is cosmic maya. Everyone is a victim of it. So we're not making fun of any particular person, but of the situation all of us experience.

1:225-227 It seems like he's going against God's commandments. God says, "Thou shalt not do such an evil thing," and yet Krishna told him to go ahead and do it. No wonder he's confused.

1:228 People feel that they will lose God if they set about to kill desires because it seems like such a bad thing. These desires are your desires, or you think they are yours.

1:229-232 Remember the chakora bird is a bird that is peculiar to India. It runs around at night especially when the moon is out. It opens its beak, throws its head back and looks at the moon. In sahaja yoga, people get into that pose, whether they're lying on their back or sitting up. The head goes back, the mouth opens and the hands go up. This is the chakora bird.

Arjuna has tried to do the right thing all his life, and he's afraid he's going to do the wrong thing. He's been trying to do the right thing. And Krishna is saying he should do the wrong thing. He said, "I'm going to lose all my righteousness, and therefore I'm going to lose your love, God."

1:233-238 This is an interesting turn of phrase, and you should listen to it carefully. "How can we do this and at the same time kill our kinsmen?"

1:239-240 That's true. You mess with kundalini and you can get burned.

1:241-248 So he says, "If I go around killing people, especially in a war like this against my own relatives, the whole moral fiber of society will be torn to shreds. And even the women will lose their proper conduct and commit adultery."

1:249 So he's really trying to explain how he feels to Krishna. He's giving all the reasons why he should not fight this battle.

1:251 In India the custom was that if you kept up the sacrificial fire on the altar and said your daily prayers, your ancestors would go to heaven.

1:255 Brahma is the creative force.

1:256 The author is giving every argument any disciple has ever given for not destroying desires. Here's another justification.

1:257-262 He remembered all the lessons that his guru had taught him earlier. Kingship is just a momentary thing anyway, so why should we fight for such things?

1:263 Krishna's just listening to all this, not saying a thing to him. Arjuna's wondering why he's not getting to him with his argument.

1:264 He's gone to pieces completely. This was my state when, on my second trip to India, I went to Kripalu with tears running down my cheeks saying, "I can't make it. I can't do it."

1:272 So Krishna's ready to reply. How can he answer such a thorough argument?

1:273 Now if you've understood this properly, Arjuna is a yogi. He has practiced the right way of life; he has respected everyone and everything. He's practiced tapas, he's gone without, and he's learned properly. The time has arrived for battle between the desires that are contained in the body, the mind and the feelings, and his determination to achieve the divine state.

Yet, when faced with this battle, he has fallen apart. He just can't do it. Even though Krishna has told him the right thing to do--to take his bow and arrow and shoot to kill the desires--he has fallen to pieces and says, "No, I cannot do this sinful act."

"Krishna is ready to answer Arjuna," Samjaya said to the blind king, ignorance.

END OF CHAPTER ONE

THE DEPRESSION OF ARJUNA