



## **Uddhava Gita**

### **Chapter Two - The Teacher of the Self**

I have written commentary on each verse and ask that a written report be sent to me which will be a compilation of everyone's insights as you read this chapter of the Gita and the commentaries. I am especially interested in hearing about your resistances to this, your breakthroughs and insights. Ideally, I would like every Acharya student to contribute at least one thing for each report (although you can contribute as many as you like).

- (2.1) Krishna confirms to Uddhava that he intends to leave the world, and it's necessary for him to tell Uddhava because Uddhava was unable to see the astral forms of all the supernatural rulers gathered to speak to Krishna. Indeed, Uddhava may have even thought that Krishna was there alone. Krishna decides to confirm to Uddhava that he is correct because the work he came to do has now been completed.
- (2.2) Krishna confirms that he is leaving because of the requests made by Brahma and not because of the curse cast upon his family.
- (2.3) Krishna confirms that the Yadu family will be destroyed by the curse, and the city will be flooded in seven days. It's important for Uddhava to understand this so that he can realise why Krishna is going and why he needs to pay attention to what Krishna is going to tell him.
- (2.4) Krishna confirms to Uddhava that when he leaves, the world will enter Kali Yuga because of his absence physically. Even though Krishna is all powerful, still his absence in physical form will be reflected by the Kali Yuga itself. (It is helpful to do a little research on what Kali Yuga is and how it is different from other Yugas).
- (2.5) Krishna tells Uddhava that he shouldn't stay there after he leaves because the nature of people is going to change in the coming era. Uddhava will find it hard to be around people who are not as sattvic as he is. Krishna begins to give instruction to Uddhava because he knows he cannot come with him to his own realm, having not yet mastered yoga. Instead of simply telling Uddhava that he cannot come with him, which would make him unable to receive the instruction he's about to give, Krishna instructs Uddhava in what he should do next and avoids the subject completely of whether he can come or not.
- (2.6) Krishna instructs Uddhava how to transcend the worldly realm by advising him to give up all attachments for his family. Even though these are the most common attachments, they are also the hardest ones to overcome for many of us. In truth, we have no family, no sons or daughters, and all relationships are only an appearance. When the time comes to leave the physical body, whatever attachments we have left will determine how and why we leave the body. Uddhava really wants to go to Krishna's abode, and to do so he's going to have to give up his attachments to his family. These attachments are easier to give up without the physical form present because they are more clearly, obviously not true in the astral form. Krishna is in fact advising Uddhava to become an ascetic and to give up any ties at all, and this is very different to the instructions he gave to Arjuna in the

Bhagavad Gita. Uddhava is more versed in the yoga scriptures and therefore ready to give up attachments, and Krishna prescribes a different course of yoga. He tells Uddhava that he should keep his mind fixed on Krishna as he wanders all over the earth and perceives everything to have the same essence as Krishna. In this way, Uddhava can begin to lose his attachments to the world.

It is important to remember that to keep one's mind on Krishna simply means to bring attention back to the Self, Noumenon or Awareness as often as possible and to contemplate what the Self is through introspection and curiosity. This is not an instruction to think of Krishna in his individual appearance as a man etc.

- (2.7) Krishna begins to instruct Uddhava deeper into what it takes to wake up fully to the Self. Krishna tells him to set aside anything that he perceives through his senses or through his mind as being part of the dream of manifestation. While we fully believe that manifestation has actually arisen out of the unmanifest, then we're caught trying to control, manage and hold onto a world of objects that really seem to be there, and we expend a lot of life force energy thinking about those objects. Krishna begins to drive home a point here to Uddhava that he will repeat again and again, that the yogi is always going to seek to free himself from the material manifestation. There is nothing wrong with manifestation or the material world, but it is temporary and illusionary. It cannot exist outside of what is actually real. Therefore, it doesn't make any sense to spend any time thinking about it.

It's important to realise that this isn't Krishna telling Uddhava to leave the world to go to an ashram or a monastery or leave society, but to realise the unreal nature of society, that there is only one being appearing as all these human bodies, and that our family isn't really our family. Ultimately, any idea that we hold onto about our relatives is going to keep us stuck in the cycle of birth and death. This is a deeper sweeping statement from Krishna. It's going to begin to undermine Uddhava's attachments to physical form. Anything that we perceive through the mind or through the senses is a kind of dream that keeps on sustaining itself. This is where Krishna begins to take Uddhava in his instruction.

- (2.8) Krishna continues his explanation of what Uddhava should do. He tells him that the mistaken conception of a manifested universe keeps him trapped because he will believe that some of the objects are valuable to him and some are not so important. When we believe in a manifested universe of objects, we're going to constantly be trying to support the well-being of some of those objects and remove some of those objects. We all try to get rid of some objects, and we all try to keep some of them. If we think about the difference between thoughts and our family members, we'll see that we're trying to get rid of one of those and try to keep the others closer, and this sustains the illusion in itself. When we perceive some of these imagined objects to be more valuable than others, we're going to be spending a lot of our time and energy trying to manipulate, to move the manifestation into the way that we want it to be.

Ultimately, even though there is no fault in trying to get what we want in the material world, nothing that we create or manifest or keep a hold of is anything that we can take with us when our soul leaves the body. Krishna knows this deeply and tries to urge Uddhava to let go of any attachment to anything that cannot be taken with us. We try to get rid of thoughts, and other things we try to attain. And this keeps us feeling divided. Ultimately, Krishna is beginning to introduce this subject to Uddhava so that he can come to see that nothing that ever is achieved in the manifested world can be taken with us except the spiritual growth and wisdom that we learned in this incarnation, in this body-mind vehicle. As we continue this chapter, we will see Krishna become more and more direct. And characteristically of Krishna, he starts off gently and then begins to become even more direct in a compassionate loving way.

- (2.9) Krishna begins to give direct instruction here about controlling the senses and restraining the mental and emotional energy. "You should perceive this world as imagined in the spiritual self," he says. In this verse, Krishna is asking Uddhava to realise that anything he expends mental energy or emotional energy on is ultimately unreal. This is not a denial of the world, but a realisation deepening that the world is made of the Self, as Krishna says, and seeing yourself as "resting in Me, the Supreme Lord." Uddhava is urged to realise that the world is imagined, superimposed upon the infinite Self. As we begin to realise the illusory nature of the world as being actually different from what is real, the Self, we can stop investing so much energy in trying to control and manipulate it. Ultimately, the only purpose for the manifestation at all is to help us realise that we are the unmanifested One.

Krishna asks Uddhava to restrain the mental and emotional energy, realise the imagined world to be unreal and begins to introduce the eight limbs of yoga here to him. Pratyahara is the fifth limb of yoga in which we begin to remove our investment of energy from what we perceive through the senses and therefore disempowering the mind because as we realise there's nothing to think about, it becomes clearer and more sensible to bring attention back to what is real.

- (2.10) In this verse, Krishna is telling Uddhava about the benefits of realising who we really are. He tells him that with a realisation that the essence of himself is the same as the essence of everything, and that there is only one being, then we won't be confused anymore by the apparent diversity of manifestation. Any obstacles we encounter along the way will be unable to affect us. It's the idea of diversity and multiplicity that keeps us confused. It's only an infinite diversity of appearance of forms. Understanding that all essences are the same for all manifestation allows all of the life force that's caught up in thinking about everything to be freed and returned to ourself which we begin to feel as more peace.

Krishna begins to summarise here in this verse, the essence of all yoga, the eight limbs, is to realise there is only one being, and that there is no diversity at all, only the appearance of it. It's important to realise here that Krishna is talking about experiential understanding. So not just thinking about this, but living as this and that is mostly done by self inquiry by seeing again and again our own formless nature and allowing that to override the idea of others and other things and diversity. By seeing that there is no diversity and multiplicity, we give up our attempts to reject some forms and to hold on to other forms. We treat everything equally.

- (2.11) Krishna tells Uddhava here that we don't need to be worried about the outcome of our actions, and that we can move through the manifested world performing actions that are prescribed as good, wholesome and coming from truth, but not because we want to be good, or we want to gain good effects. He also says that we shouldn't perform actions that we're not supposed to do just for fear of the bad results. Krishna is describing detachment and how to move around in the world without getting caught in the multiplicity and diversity. Krishna is pointing here to the fact that the body will act on its own spontaneously, and we can let go of motives for acting. Even the motives of moving towards truth and away from illusion will eventually need to be let go of. Krishna is advising a course of action where we perform activities and move around in the world engaged in relationships, but not from a place of wanting to get anything from the manifestation, from those relationships, from those activities. This is what Christ meant when he said that he was in the world but not of it.

Krishna finishes this verse with a beautiful sentence which asks us to be like a child. If we look at how a child moves through the world, they are just experiencing everything for the joy of it, for the fun of it. Even if a child were to go through a negative experience,

only their thoughts about it would make it negative just as our thoughts may make something positive or negative. If a child is unable to form thoughts about anything as yet, or hasn't formed thoughts about anything as yet, everything will be experienced by them with a certain equanimity. This is what Krishna points to. Really the whole of manifestation is just an illusion that is moving and changing in its appearance like waves on the ocean surface. We can't really derive anything from any activity we do because to say that that was true will be to say that the body is real and separate to the Self. Krishna is advising a very direct path here.

- (2.12) Krishna sums up what he's just said in this verse, and he advises that someone with this level of realisation will be like a friend to all civilization, to all creation. He'll understand that the universe belongs to him, to Krishna or to Uddhava, being the same thing, that the essence of all things is the same. He also advises here that to have this deep level of experiential realisation, we cannot fall back into misidentification as a separate self. Friendliness with all beings is really an outcome or a symptom of the conviction, as Krishna says, the certainty of knowing that all is you, that there is nothing other than you.
- (2.13) In this verse, we see that Krishna's words have inspired something within Uddhava, and Uddhava's devotion is beginning to increase even more. This is an important point because we can have the idea that devotion has a fixed ceiling, and really it is infinite just like the Self. Uddhava bows before Lord Krishna and begins to speak to him, asking him to explain more.
- (2.14) Uddhava begins to praise Krishna in this verse, the first of a few where he praises Krishna. Uddhava specifically refers to Krishna as the treasure and origin of yoga. Pointing to the fact that Krishna is yoga, the eight limbs of yoga personified, indicates that Uddhava already is realising that this is where Krishna is going to take him in this discourse, in this satsang. Krishna is asking Uddhava to begin to listen deeply. This verse indicates that Uddhava is listening deeply and beginning to realise what the path to salvation is, as Uddhava calls it. Uddhava uses this important term: renunciation of the results of actions. This is an important term because it shows that Uddhava is beginning to realise that he is only responsible for his intentions, for fostering intentions, and that devotion to truth is going to allow the proper intentions to arise. Most of us are caught in trying to get the right outcome from actions, trying to make sure we get what we want by our spiritual, verbal and physical actions, and this really isn't possible. We can only ever be responsible for our intentions, and these arise directly from our devotion to truth or our devotion to illusion.

This is a really important verse where Uddhava begins to tell Krishna that he's open and receptive to his instruction. The verse finishes with this phrase: the renunciation of exploitive opportunities and this is an important phrase to understand. Exploitive means to try to get something from what we're doing, in this case. Renouncing exploitive opportunities is really going about our duties and performing our actions in the world; watching the body perform these actions, but no longer trying to get anything from them. We are just doing them or the body is just doing these actions because that's what's happening or because that's what needs to be done right now. This is a huge key to our successful yoga practice or experiential realisation of who we are. We're not someone trying to get something from what we're doing. We are the Infinite Self in which all activities are just happening. words, thoughts, physical activities, and they're not being done for any reason at all. They're just happening. We could say that all actions are really a reflection of an intention which arises spontaneously inside us.

- (2.15) Uddhava continues speaking here to Krishna and shows his understanding in what he says, that those who don't have devotion to Krishna are going to find it difficult to renounce cravings and attachments to outcomes of our actions. We're going to find it difficult to realise that we're not a separate being. And in fact, we probably wouldn't even

want to if we are absorbed in sense enjoyment, living through our senses only and our mind and have no devotion for truth. Then, in fact, we are devoted to illusion instead. Uddhava is asking in a way, what do we do if we have no devotion, as yet? Or perhaps what do we do if we don't have enough devotion yet to Krishna? Again, it helps remember that when we refer to Krishna, we're really referring to the Infinite Self, the Noumenon, the Supreme Being, the one essential essence of all things. Perhaps Uddhava asks this because he's doubting his own devotion just like Arjuna did in the Bhagavad Gita. Perhaps he's just asking out of concern for other people he knows in his family or concern for humanity as a whole. Either way, it's an essential question that affects us all. What do we do when our devotion to truth, to Krishna, is not strong enough? How do we renounce our thoughts and our way of life as a separate being then?

- (2.16) Uddhava continues here and says to Krishna that he is that person, that other person that thinks in terms of separation, in terms of I and my and mine. He says that he's foolish and is attached to his relatives, and that he is asking for instruction. He says in the final sentence of the verse that he wants to faithfully execute what Krishna teaches him, and this shows some doubt perhaps in Uddhava's mind that he can follow Krishna's instructions. Perhaps he shows compassion for the rest of humanity when he says, and he identifies as those beings that are lost in illusion still.

It's important to remember that Uddhava is sitting with Lord Krishna and even while sitting with Lord Krishna and taking direct instruction from him, Uddhava is still experiencing some doubt inside himself. Mostly, we would look at that, and if we were in that situation, we would say that we should not be experiencing doubt when sitting with Lord Krishna. But maybe Uddhava is experiencing doubt because he's sitting with Krishna. Maybe Krishna's powerful presence and transmission is allowing doubt to come to the surface that has not been recognised before. Whatever the reason for Uddhava's words, they show increasing devotion and openness and willingness to learn from Krishna.

- (2.17) Uddhava here talks about in this verse that Krishna is the only teacher who is solely advising students to invest their time and devotion in the unmanifest, the totality of the Self, to move beyond the illusion. He refers to procreator Brahma as being body-borne and mystified by Krishna's bewildering potency. Brahma is the Creator and this is to still to be involved and invested in illusion to some degree. With a willingness to create in manifestation, we can get lost in that manifestation.

It's important to recognise that manifestation isn't bad, or something we should get rid of, but simply to detach ourselves from spiritually. Without the bodies that we're using right now to study the Scripture we would be unable to study! Brahma is not only a deity, but an energy within us all that wants to create more forms every time we think we create more apparent forms. Without these created forms, that look like bodies, we wouldn't be able to deepen our introspection. Later, when we become more familiar with our astral forms or astral selves, the soul, we will be able to continue our evolution whilst we are currently without a physical body. But the importance of this verse is to point to the fact that Krishna supersedes even these supernatural rulers, such as Brahma and Shiva. Krishna's advice is always going to be the most direct, the most profound.

In this verse, Uddhava is speaking to Krishna still and explaining to him how he sees him. He is pointing to the fact that Krishna is transcendent of all need for any material body at all and is beyond form completely, and yet he is appearing as a man, as an individual Self and soul and physical body, also. Uddhava points to the fact that only the Self can recognise the Self when he says that Krishna is Self revealing and is the Reality of the spiritual Self. He says that Krishna is that which sustains everything else. Uddhava also says that all the other gods and goddesses, even including Brahma, are body-borne

souls, which really means bodily supported. This phrase is important to understand. Bodily supported or body-borne means that we still feel we need something from the physical manifestation. We're still looking for some things to change in the physical manifestation to affect how we feel. We feel that our joy and peace depend upon the physical manifestation. In an even more literal sense, we can still feel that we need food, sleep, money and other things from the physical realm. In Uddhava's speech, we are coming to see that if we still feel we need something from manifestation, or the mundane things as Uddhava calls it, then we are still believing in duality, and that there is such a thing as a manifestation. The body doesn't need anything, in actuality, because it is made of consciousness, of beingness. Eventually, the body can use prana or life force as its main substance.

Uddhava's speech here tells us that even the gods and goddesses like Brahma are mystified and cannot understand Krishna's bewildering potency. Krishna's potency is mystifying to everyone who is not able to see the Reality of all beings as the same spiritual essence. To be able to see this and live fully as this bewildering potency, as Uddhava calls it, we must be willing to let go of all the things we think we want and need from manifestation. In the end of our physical existence, nothing that we achieved on the physical realm will be able to come with us as we leave the physical body. Only the understanding that the physical Reality is merely a reflection of the astral planes and a continuation of ever lower frequency realms, and that we are the source of all of these, can come with us.

- (2.18) Uddhava tells us that he recognises he is still afflicted by sins and depressed, and it's important to understand the root of the word sin as being ignorance of the truth. Uddhava recognises that he still feels he needs things from the physical realm, such as relationships with his family members, and therefore knows the only thing he can do and should do is to take shelter in Krishna, who is the infinite unmanifested essence of everything, and who is beyond all needs, wants and desires. In this verse, we see reference to Vaikuntha, and this is the realm of Vishnu. Krishna is the two-armed form and Vishnu is traditionally shown as the four-armed form. Uddhava is again showing that he recognises what it would take to fully embody this truth and live like this. He is showing Krishna that he knows he needs to transcend all physical attachments to family and other needs, and he's asking for Krishna's help in doing so.
- (2.19) Krishna tells you Uddhava that by our own endeavours we can deliver ourselves from evil tendencies, or sin or ignorance. Krishna is beginning to tell Uddhava he needs to exert his own efforts towards freeing himself, and that devotion to Krishna on its own is not enough. Devotion to Krishna is the most important thing to have in order to free ourselves from material existence. Yet, Krishna tells us it must also be followed by our own spiritual practice on a consistent basis, and this will deliver us from any limitations, suffering and miseries.
- (2.20) In this verse, Krishna begins to tell Uddhava how to free himself. He says it is the Self alone which teaches us about the Self, and he begins to point to direct inquiry into the nature of our being. Krishna says the human being learns of its well being through direct perception and by drawing conclusions. Direct perception of what we already are begins to show us that we are already free from all of our imagined sufferings and needs and wants. By drawing conclusions based on what we experience to be true, rather than what we think is true, we can free ourselves. We must constantly inquire and experience what we really are, or at least as often as possible, to pull ourselves out of the illusion that we are a physical being living on one plane only. For whatever we think or feel we need, or are attached to at the moment of death will determine which realm we can go to and whether we have to reincarnate involuntarily again.

What does it mean to “draw conclusions”? What is Krishna asking us to do? He is asking

us to think about the challenges that we seem to have and to see if they really apply to who we actually are. We can use self inquiry to recognise our own formless nature many times and yet not allow this to change our thought structure. If I see that I am formless and infinite, and then I allow the thought to go unchecked in the very next moment, that I need to wake up to Reality, then my inquiry will have been for nothing. If we do not allow this understanding to come from deeper within to penetrate our thought structure and our life, we are throwing away the valuable seeing we have in our self-inquiry. Perhaps this one verse alone would be enough for the astute aspirants of truth. By applying it consistently, we could easily free ourselves.

- (2.21) Krishna continues his instruction here by listing the qualities of someone who is able to free themselves. He says that only someone well versed in the Sankhya philosophies (which are just Advaita teachings) and the eight limbs of yoga can see Krishna in his full manifestation as all realms and all the universe in the physical realm and can see all of his potencies and powers. This phrase, “a balanced mind”, is very important here. This points to someone who has disciplined themselves into inquiry by constantly challenging the mind and its assumptions and constantly being willing to be proved wrong. If we can come to see that our assumptions are not true, then we will gradually have access to more and more spiritual power, and our seeing will happen more easily and much faster..
- (2.22) Krishna describes the human form as being preferred by him out of all other creatures. This is because the human body represents a soul at its most evolved level. The physical body is a reflection of the evolution of the soul, and in its appearance as a human body, the soul can learn much faster and quicker. It's important to realise that Krishna isn't saying that human form is the best but only the most useful in terms of spiritual advancement. Krishna points to the opportunity that we have whilst we are here in human form that should not be taken for granted.
- (2.23) Krishna begins to tell us about how our spiritual evolution unfolds. He says that by studying various characteristics and with subtle sense perceptions and useful analytical thought, people who are disciplined in yoga practice will come to search directly for the Lord and to realise that the Lord, or Krishna or the Infinite Self cannot be found in the world of form. Only our subtle sense perception can come to see that the Infinite cannot be found in any form at all or only in every single form. Only someone who is disciplined in yoga practice would even want to fall in love with something that is beyond ordinary sense perception. Most of us are so completely fascinated by physical manifestation in the physical realm and our bodies that it doesn't occur to us that there may be anything else to search for. This verse also points to the perception of subtle realms or astral realms above and below this physical realm in energy which will become even more obvious as our awakening deepens and the prana moves up the spinal column through the chakra system.
- (2.24) Krishna begins to tell us a story of an ancient king who encountered an ascetic, or a wandering aspirant of truth, who had already reached a deep, deep level of Self Realisation. This acetic was a true sannyasi, or renunciate. Here we find another term that we can more clearly define because most of us perhaps believe that renunciation is of a physical or a worldly existence. Renunciation is not necessarily leaving the world, although in Krishna's age and time, it appeared that way and we had wandering ascetics, but is rather renunciation of all of our thoughts about Reality which hide the perception of Reality. Krishna tells this story to Uddhava over the many coming verses.
- (2.25) Here begins the story of Yadu and his conversation with the wandering ascetic or brahmin. A brahmin is simply a priest or someone qualified to perform the rituals in the Vedas.
- (2.26) In this verse, we see this phrase of “exemption from cultural activities”, and it refers to a particular stage in life where one is exempt from having to perform social duties and has

been able to leave family and all of the work commitments, etc. behind to pursue their awakening of spirituality. This was very common practice in Krishna's time and should not be mistaken for the only way to be a sannyasi or renunciate. In our modern society today, we renounce the thoughts just as the wandering ascetics did, but we can do this while we're at work or raising our family. Later in the Gita, Krishna talks about how a householder should apply what he's saying here. The term "householder" is simply a name for someone who cannot be a wandering ascetic due to family commitments or work commitments. Of course, in our society, that would be most of us.

(2.27) In this verse, Krishna describes what most human beings spend their time doing. They effort towards achieving virtue, wealth, enjoyment and even Self Realisation in order to achieve a longer life, fame or prosperity. It's important to realise that Krishna tells us this to point out some other reasons why we may have begun our search for our Real Self. In this realisation of why we may begin our awakening journey, we can begin to transcend the material realm even now. If we begin our search to help us fix our problems in the physical world and to stop suffering, that is all well and good, but yet must be transcended eventually because all suffering and all the problems in the material realm are only manifestations of the illusion. Eventually, only the sheer love of truth remains, and that is why we pursue awakening and the deepening of that is the embodiment of it.

(2.28) Here Krishna is telling us the story, and Yadu is talking to the ascetic brahmin and contrasting how the ascetic behaves compared to usual human beings. He says that although the ascetic is learned and resourceful and capable, he appears to be lazy. He does not endeavour for anything and acts as if he had no desires at all and was just wandering around randomly. It's important to recognise the message that is being given here and the difference in the way that an awakened being would walk through the world compared to a normal person. If we were learned and knew many scriptures and had a sweet disposition and people liked us, as is quite common with awakening as it deepens, most people would want to use that to their own benefit to gain opportunities in the physical realm. Here we are hearing that this must not be used to gain physical advantage because it will leave us even more attached to the physical realm. We can be friendly with people because we recognise they are our own Self rather than realising it will get them to help us to do something.

What are your motivations for your awakening? Yadu even says that the ascetic appears mad or like a haunted human being. This is describing how different his behaviour is, and that he seems to have no goal or purpose in life compared to the ordinary human being.

(2.29) King Yadu continues to speak here about the ascetic to him. He's noticing the difference between the way an awakened being goes about the world and experiences things as compared to how an ordinary person would. He says that people are scorched by the fire of lust and greed, but the ascetic is not harassed by the fire just as a raging river will carry us away, but the awakened being is more like the elephant standing in the river. King Yadu is noticing and reminding us that the ascetic is completely removed from material existence, from the manifestation. Even though he still seems to have a body that moves around in the world, he's completely unaffected, having no attachments, no wants or needs for anything in the material realm, knowing that it is temporary and illusionary. He does not get attached to any of it.

(2.30) King Yadu asks the brahmin, the ascetic, how we find spiritual happiness because he recognises in this verse that happiness must only come from a spiritual awakening. The Brahmin says that happiness is in the spiritual self alone and will never come from manifestation itself. Even if we achieve what we want to in the physical manifestation, it will not last. All forms disappear, and all forms are subject to change. The benefit that we get from achieving what we want in the physical realm is only the feeling inside, anyway. Here the brahmin is asking us to swap that around. Can we go for the happiness that



comes from inside? Can we strive towards that? Then we will find ourselves able to wander around in our life unattached and happy, just like the ascetic brahmin does. The attractive objects that are mentioned in this verse are simply the objects we perceive through our senses.

- (2.31) This verse may seem to be simply the end of King Yadu speaking and the beginning of the ascetic brahmin beginning to speak, but actually it contains something much more vital. We see that King Yadu spoke to the ascetic brahmin, honoured him and is devoted to brahmins. Because of this devotion, the brahmin had to return the love and devotion in the forms of wisdom and instruction. This verse points to a key theme in the whole Gita which is repeated many times, the power of devotion. Devotion on its own is not enough to reach Self Realisation, but devotion to the truth will lead us to the wisdom, teaching and the necessary work or practice to reach Self Realisation. If we look throughout the entire Gita, any conversation between Uddhava and Krishna or any of the characters, is always addressed from a place of loving honour and devotion. There is a huge clue here whether it is Krishna or anyone else speaking. It's important to recognise that our speech comes from our devotion, and our capacity to see everyone and everything as Krishna allows us to offer that same reverence to whomever we're speaking to. From that energy and that attitude, all of life will move to help us in our endeavours.
- (2.32) This verse begins the speech or the answer of the ascetic brahmin to King Yadu. He says that he has many teachers that he relies upon, and from these teachers he's gained understanding of where happiness comes from. He can roam about the world free of attachment and free of misery and suffering.
- (2.33) The brahmin begins to tell us about his teachers, and he mentions the earth, sky, water, fire, even the pigeon, the sea, the sun, the elephant and more. If we really look at this verse, we can gain a massive spiritual benefit. The ascetic brahmin was already very awakened, and yet he's listing a python, a honeybee and the sea as his teachers. What can this teach us about life and how to learn best from it? The message from this verse is humility and the recognition that the brahmin has realised he is not better than the honeybee, or the elephant, the pigeon, the sea, the moth or the earth and that all, including human forms, are expressions of Krishna.

When we have humility, we can learn from anything at all, whether that's from our enemies that hate us, from our beloved spiritual teachers, from Krishna Himself, from a honeybee, or from the wind. Even from illusion, we can learn. Humility allows us to be open to see every single way that life is trying to teach us. If, like the learned brahmin, the wandering ascetic, we're still open to learn from all of life and nature and humanity, what can we learn from this? How can we change our attitude? Are we expecting the teacher to show up in a human form only? What if the very next thing that happens to us is the teacher guiding us? Can we learn from illness, from disease, from lack as much as we learn from abundance? Can we learn from animals and insentient objects like rocks as much as we learn from the human form of the teacher? Perhaps the only qualification for being awakened is the ability to learn and this humility and openness.

- (2.34) Here the Brahmin continues to list the categories of his teachers and the way that they appear. The character Pingala will be explained further in the coming verses.
- (2.35) This completes the list of the brahmin's twenty-four teachers. He tells us that from watching all of these beings and forms, he learned about the spiritual Self and he learned about happiness.
- (2.36) In this verse, the brahmin begins to tell King Yadu of what he learned from each and every one of his twenty-four teachers.

(2.37) The brahmin begins to tell us what he learned from earth, and he points towards someone who is awakened and more stable in their understanding should not allow anything to halt their progress in the spiritual pathway. Even those who are stuck in illusion, or completely lost or set against us or hate us cannot stop and should not stop someone who is on the path to awakening. In fact, these things should be used to further our awakening. If we were to meet someone who hated us, can we gently step away from them in self love and also look at where we may be rejecting our own self deep inside? This is what the brahmin learned from studying the earth, the inability to be moved, the absoluteness, the certainty. Like a herd of stampeding elephants, nothing can stop the awakening once it's begun.

(2.38) In this verse, we hear about two more teachers of the brahmin, and those are the mountain and the tree. The teaching from the mountain and the tree is that our existence should be dedicated to serving others in selfless service or karma yoga as it has also been called. This is a teaching again about humility, and it is important to recognise the difference between humility and self negation. Humility is the natural reflection of recognising there is no separate self and that all beings are our very own Self. Self negation, or self rejection or even working to serve others in order to increase our own sense of self worth are all going to increase our sense of being a separate being.

The humility that is spoken of and suggested in this verse from the mountain and from the tree is a profound teaching, that we can live and work as if there is only the Self, only the One Being, and that all service and all help and all action is dedicated towards that One Self. In dedicating our lives to the service of others, we transcend the material existence and have no more attachments because we are living as if we do not exist as a separate being. Therefore there is nothing for us to achieve. Even the goal of Self Realisation no longer stands for us because we are what we are trying to achieve. This is true humility.

(2.39) In this verse, we hear this term "philosophical yogi" and that really just relates to a student who is practising and trying to master the eight limbs of yoga, along with the scriptures and self study (called swadhyaya). This verse urges us to be more concerned with what is going on inside our energetic system and less inclined towards enjoying and pleasing our senses. If we begin to dissipate our energy by spending time doing things that really do not matter in the long run, and towards our spiritual awakening, then we're going to find it hard to allow the prana to rise to the crown chakra.

This verse is beginning to indicate and hint at Krishna's advice to practise Pranayama and Pratyahara. As we practise both of these disciplines, our life force energy will be increasing and becoming more potent by the day. Our knowledge will be more and more that of the sages. Knowledge of the One Self will become self evident.

(2.40) This verse uses the wind as the teacher. The wind moves around in between many objects and never gets attached to any of them. This verse asks us to be like the wind that is never attached and has no aversions or attachments to any object. The yogi should move around in the world experiencing objects and daily life, participating in the material existence, but not getting caught up in the successes and the failures that we perceive.

The yogi should not be attached at all to the positive aspects either. When we look at our prana, our life force growing and moving towards the crown chakra, we may begin to experience many positive aspects and less negative aspects, and the tendency and temptation will be to identify with these abilities and powers that come. Krishna, in the form of the brahmin, is advising us to take great care against this. What we're really seeing is advice to practice detachment, which means not to do anything or any activity for any particular reason, or to do it only for the reason of serving all beings or serving

Krishna, serving the One Self. When this is our motive for doing anything, or just simply doing it for the joy of it, then no attachment or aversion is possible, and we are freeing ourselves from the material manifestation.

- (2.41) This verse continues the description of the teaching from the wind. This verse says that even though we enter earthly forms, human forms, we seem to take on their characteristics. We seem to walk and talk and work and sleep and practise our spiritual practice. But the wise yogi is not going to identify with those. The wise yogi is going to realise the body, the form is doing all of those things, and that we are doing nothing. We have no quality at all. We are like the wind, not affected by anything at all. When we live and work this way, we can help someone who is very much in a lower place of consciousness than we are, and yet not feel attached to them or any negative effect of helping them. We will also find ourselves immune to any lower frequencies whether from inside ourselves or from outside in the world.
- (2.42) This is the teaching from the sky, and it really asks us to be as detached as the sky is to anything that is happening inside it. The sky simply allows the clouds to move along just as the yogi should allow any objects and any experience to simply glide through inside themselves. Experience simply happens inside the Self, and the yogi can not pick up any negative karma when the experience is simply allowed to move through our being. Emotions, thoughts, experiences, sensations will all simply appear and disappear inside us. The formlessness is the one Self and is like the sky, universal and omnipresent. As we remember this, live from this and experience this again and again, we'll find that everything simply passes through us, and we're not accumulating any more karmic energy as we live and practise like this. Doing our best to be the open sky of Awareness as often as possible, we'll find that we are more and more detached from manifestation and yet fully able to function inside it. We will also find that our sense of a separate self is dissolving without even trying to make it happen.
- (2.43) This verse asks us to recognise that anything that happens in the manifestation can no longer affect us and never has affected us. Anything that happens in the sky does not affect the sky, and anything created by time or affecting the manifestation must be seen to be completely beyond being able to affect us at all. Krishna's advice here is to recognise ourselves as the unchanging One, more like the sky than any particular object.
- (2.44) In this verse, we are advised that the yogi should be like pure water. Water by its very nature takes the shape of whatever vessel it is contained in. The yogi purifies or heals (this is also known as transmission) simply by being seen, touched or praised. This is an important verse to understand, because it may not at first be clear how praising someone can benefit ourselves. But when we praise the yogi, or the awakened being in general, the benefit comes back to us if prayers or touch of that awakened being happens in a purely devotional way. Then the benefits of that interaction will come back to the student, to the yogi in training. Devotion to the awakened being or to the yogi is in effect an open channel for transmission to pass between the two physical bodies and the two astral souls, and serves to enrich the yogi in training.

The yogi is compared to water because of its capacity to purify and to dilute any impurities until they are eventually gone completely from the student or yogi in training. Being in the presence of the yogi is going to wash clean of any lower frequencies the student has progressively more and more each time, or even all at once, if the student is open enough to receive, although such cases are rare. Usually contact with a yogi purifies by gradual reduction of tamasic and rajasic energies.

- (2.45) The meaning of this verse might be a little challenging to understand. Krishna describes here that the yogi, when well-practised in the eight limbs of yoga, will appear radiant and glowing with spiritual power. "His stomach as the only container for foodstuff" means that

he's not trying to eat anything else. He only takes food for nourishment, and he's not trying to eat experiences to get things from them. So again, this is a reference to being detached and practising pratyahara. We're not using and digesting our experiences to gain something; we're simply experiencing them. The yogi is compared to fire, which burns through everything and absorbs nothing. The yogi does not get contaminated by any need, from any experience. The yogi is not looking for love or respect, safety or anything from the material world at all. It makes no difference to the yogi if he is praised or blamed, if he experiences abundance or poverty, he remains the same at all times.

The reference to eating everything as destined simply means that the yogi will go through whatever experience he's destined to go through to meet the people and to go to the places that are needed for his growth. Every experience is used for the growth of the yogi. Learning to walk through the world without eating anything from it. We can consider this in simple terms as in activities that we are doing. Are we going out with our friends because it's joyful? Having a meal because we're hungry, and it's enjoyable to eat with our friends? Or are we trying to gain approval from those friends while we're having the meal? Are we doing our spiritual practice and study because it is what is true? Or are we trying to gain power and authority and position from them? So here we're being asked to be careful what we eat in spiritual terms, and the only container for foodstuffs should be the physical stomach. Nothing else needs to be digested.

- (2.46) Here we see guidance as to how the yogi should function in the world. Sometimes he'll be disguised and would not even be noticeable as being accomplished spiritually. Sometimes we nourish others by being very ordinary and allowing people to be themselves, to feel comfortable around us and to let down their guards and barriers. At other times we serve others by being revealed as spiritually accomplished. This allows other beings to honour or praise us if they want to and receive the benefit from that.

The yogi also utilises everything offered, as it says in this verse. So to receive a gift and to use it wisely, to use it for the benefit of all beings, to receive anything offered and to use it wisely for the benefit of all, whether that means keeping it or passing it on to someone else who can use it means that we are respecting all beings and serving the One Self whilst also not fortifying our sense of being a separate person. The yogi knows intuitively who to be and what to do in any particular situation because the energetics of any situation become more and more apparent. It will be obvious what response is needed from the yogi as he deepens his own awakening.

- (2.47) Here we hear about how the Almighty God or Infinite Self, whilst pervading all of manifestation with its immense power, is not limited to any form at all. It can take any form and appears as every form. This is what the brahmin learned from fire. If we look at fire, it doesn't have a shape of its own, and yet it can take every shape depending on what is burning, and the fire may even take on a different colour or shape. The Infinite Self can take any shape at all that is useful in any particular moment, and it will take every shape.
- (2.48) This is the teaching that the brahmin learned from the moon. Just as the moon waxes and wanes and has its phases, so does the human body. The message here is that these phases, birth, life and death, do not apply to the soul or to the Infinite Self. Just as the moon sometimes is completely visible, like the body during life, or completely is invisible at other times, so too the body seems to appear and disappear in contrast to that which is eternal.
- (2.49) Here we go deeper into the teaching of the fire, that the birth and death of the body affect only the body. Bodies come and go constantly, just as the flames flicker and change in a fire, and yet the fire is not touched. The soul is always untouched. The astral form is always untouched by anything that happens in the physical manifestation. Again, another

lesson here in detachment is given to us. We can be like the fire which is always burning and yet is not really concerned with the shape and intensity of the individual flames which are constantly changing.

- (2.50) This verse tells us the teaching that the Sun gave the brahmin. The sun holds water in its rays just as the yogi holds onto experiences, objects and relationships in the physical world for a while. The yogi, though, is different to an average person because the yogi will let go at the appropriate time. So when a body dies, or a relationship ends, or an object is taken away from us, the yogi will not grieve or try to hold on or lament its loss at all. The yogi has an innate recognition that it is time for that object or relationship to go. The dissolution of that relationship or of the physical body at death is seen as the next inevitable phase of it and is not resisted at all. The yogi allows themselves to receive and also to let go at the appropriate time. There is no preference to hold on to something which causes suffering in the normal person. The yogi cannot hold on or even let go since things simply flow through them. There can be no attachment for the yogi.
- (2.51) This verse continues the teaching of the sun. Just as the sun can manifest itself in any form at all, it can shine on anything and everything equally. So too, the Infinite Self can appear in any form at all. Those who are unawakened or ignorant of the truth may really believe the body to be the Self. They may look at the body and think it is the soul, and it is the Self. Those who are awakened can no longer identify the Self as any object in particular. The term "dull-witted" is used here to describe those who are unable to see as yet that the truth is formless and omnipresent. These people are likely to talk to our body as if it is ourselves. Upon death of the body, they grieve the loss of that person as if they have left, or as if the soul somehow has been destroyed with the body. Again, we are given a lesson here on the benefits of our yogic practice as it deepens, that we will no longer be able to identify with any form at all, and therefore no grief, loss or suffering is possible.
- (2.52) The next few verses describe how the pigeon gets himself into trouble by having a family and offspring. Of course, we're not really being advised here to never have a relationship or a family but to learn from the pigeon's experience, which we will see as we go through the next few verses. The pigeon suffered intensely and eventually lost his life because of his attachment to his family. Attachment to the beings that we think are separate to us is most likely to occur in those in our class biological family. That attachment will diminish our life force energy and our capacity to have clear seeing when needed most. This is always accompanied by suffering.
- (2.53) Verse 53 describes the situation of the pigeon where he lives with his wife in a tree in a nest that he built.
- (2.54) Verse 54 describes the association of the two pigeons and how close they became, and living together, they became like householders. Of course, this teaching is offering us guidance on how we can conduct all of our relationships whether romantic, sexual, friendship, or familial. The two pigeons became so close and needed each other because of their attachments, and they were bound to each other. If anything were to happen to either of them, the other one would not be able to function properly afterwards or even during an emergency. This teaching is really how to live as an awakened being in a relationship with someone else. Ultimately, there is no relationship because there is only one being, and so no attachment is really possible. However, we may begin to imagine that we need that other person for love or respect or safety. The story of the pigeon guides us how to live a life without attachment in any relationship.
- (2.55) This verse describes the happy times that they were together, even though they were bound together. They weren't suffering as yet. They were enjoying their lives together. This verse really describes how we can be completely unaware of the negative aspects

of being attached to someone in our relationship. Attachment only means to need or want something from that person. While we seem to be getting what we want from that person, we will be unaware that there even is an attachment until that person or being stops giving us what we were receiving, either through the relationship ending or through death of one of the beings. In this verse, we're being urged not to take for granted what we seem to receive from others and to allow that to come from inside our own selves.

- (2.56) This verse talks about how the female pigeon was able to influence the male pigeon to make him behave in ways that were perhaps not so best for his spiritual growth. The male pigeon was enamoured and besotted with the female pigeon and so did everything he could to make sure she was happy. Whilst this is not an unhealthy thing in itself, it can be the positive aspects of an attachment, and any attachment is in duality. We must eventually experience the negative aspects of that attachment. This verse is also a warning to anyone involved in a relationship, whether it is romantic or not, not to allow the relationship to be the main focus of our lives and in so doing, forget our spiritual progress and discipline.

We can be in a relationship and have that relationship be devoted to the good of all beings and use that relationship, and any friction that arises in it, to serve our own spiritual growth and help serve all other beings at the same time. It's also a good guide to what a healthy relationship can and should be. Anything that is asked of us in a relationship that does not feel right should be examined. A relationship can help us grow much faster than we can on our own, and it can also teach us about love.

- (2.57) This verse describes the first pregnancy and when the first eggs arrived for the pigeon lovers. Here again is another warning that even when the material manifestation seems to be going well and we seem to be happy, we should not get attached to it. If there is any place in our lives where we're very likely to be attached, it is to our own children and to our romantic partner. Our biological family and our lovers will be the ones that we have the most friction with because there will be the most attachments subtly inside us.

There is also a warning in all of these verses that no matter what life we experience, whether we are married or single, whether we have children or not, whatever happiness and success we experience in the manifest realm should not be allowed to distract us from our spiritual growth, and in fact, can be used to help us in our spiritual growth. Krishna is never advocating denying the world or denying ourselves a relationship, if that is what we want, but merely asking us to use that relationship or success to serve all beings and our own satsang.

- (2.58) This verse describes the birth or hatching of the baby birds and refers to the way that manifestation will always change. Time moves on and manifestation will always change.

- (2.59) This verse tells us about the way that the pigeons cared for their babies and were devoted to them. Again, let's remember, this is not really about pigeons but what we can learn from the pigeons. The pigeons completely lost themselves and their own spiritual progress by devoting themselves so completely to their family. Of course, a yogi can have a family and be a good parent to their children, but we should never completely lose ourselves in any of the roles that the body plays. The body will play many roles over its lifetime: husband, wife, daughter, sister, brother, employee, friend, boss, enemy and on and on it goes. Our task is to perform these roles without getting lost in them. Again, this is a warning against identifying with the body and the roles that it plays.

- (2.60) This verse describes the growth of the baby birds and their efforts to fly. The pigeons' parents receive so much happiness from watching their children grow and begin to function on their own. Whilst this is natural and normal to enjoy such things, again we must be wary of needing our happiness to come from outside sources. Considering how

one of the parents would feel if something happened to those babies, we can see the negative side of the attachment of needing to get something from our children. Whether we realise it or not, usually as parents we're trying to get something from our children. A sense of well-being from having raised them properly and seeing them succeed in life is very, very common, and a sense of failure or unworthiness from seeing them struggle in life is also just as common. We mustn't allow ourselves to be elated or deflated by what is going on. Of course, we care for and love our children, but we mustn't need anything from them in this way.

- (2.61) This verse begins to speak to us about the three different types of energy, or gunas. Krishna speaks about the “bewildering energy of Vishnu” affecting the parent birds and how they rear their offspring and shows how the three gunas function differently. The first guna is tamas which is resistance, bewilderment, inertia and darkness. The second guna is rajas which is movement, momentum, anger, passion and generally a sense of being a separate “doer” performing actions unconsciously to fortify that sense of being a someone. The third guna is sattva, and this is harmony and balance and peace and leads to the capacity for discernment and insight. The parent birds are described here as being stuck in rajas and in tomas because they cannot see that their actions are fortifying their sense of being a separate self, identifying as parents, which is really only a role for the body, and believing that they have offspring, which is really only a role for a body. They are bewildered and unable to see that their happiness, drawn from this role, will never last.

Krishna speaks here of the self-fulfilling nature of illusion. While we are sure that the way we are deriving our happiness is the best way, we are lost in tamas. Insight dawns eventually for us all that maybe there is a better way to gain permanent happiness through recognition of who we really are. This insight is easily gained by cultivating sattvic energy from consistent spiritual practice.

- (2.62) The story continues. Because the parent birds were bewildered by tamas and rajas, they both left the nest unguarded as they went to search for food for the baby birds. With their intellectual powers clouded by their attachment to the baby birds, they could not see that leaving the nest unguarded was not a good idea. They could not have had the thought that maybe only one of them should have gone looking for food, and one remain guarding the nest.

Krishna tells this story to help us understand how illusion affects the mind, and how ignorance sustains itself. Illusion seems to self-fortify and maintain itself because the necessary life force needed for clear discernment is invested in the things we are attached to. Worse than even being attached to something or someone is the fact we may not even be able to see our attachments because the clarity from discernment is no longer available to us. We may not even think to ask if we may be stuck in illusion and will be convinced we are experiencing Reality.

- (2.63) The story continues, and the baby birds are caught by a bird catcher when he saw the nest left unguarded. Whilst this is a story, all stories can teach us something if we are able to see. Here's where we exercise our own sattvic powers from our consistent practice and our intellect becoming clearer and clearer. With our intellect clearing of illusion, we can see that the bird catcher could represent any number of physical manifestations of danger for us. It can also represent illusion itself. We're all caught by illusion at some point until we are free enough, and we have enough sattva to allow us to retain our understanding of truth in every experience, whether good or bad or terrible.

- (2.64) The male and female pigeons, the parent birds, return to the nest after trying to procure food for their babies.

(2.65) This verse describes the inevitable conclusion of the attachment now bringing pain instead of joy as the mother bird found her nest destroyed and that her babies had been caught. What or who are you attached to?

(2.66) This verse goes deeper into the nature of illusion. Krishna calls the mother bird “simple minded” here, and that's not an insult, but rather it points to the nature of illusion clouding the mind and its discernment capacities. After she found that her babies had been caught, the safest thing for her to do would have been to fly away immediately, knowing that the bird catcher must be in the area, but she lost her discernment capabilities. Her mind became very simplified and unable to think in a clearer way which resulted in her own capture. This shows us the nature of illusion and how, once we are caught in illusion, we're often unable to make the right choices that will take us out of illusion.

The nature of illusion is that it seems real at the time, and the mother bird totally believed that she had lost her babies. This thought would not have been possible if she had realised that she is not really a mother and that they are not really her children. Perhaps she might have been able to save herself and her babies from there. These capabilities are not possible when our mind is rendered simple and unable to think in clearer ways.

As this story continues, we might be thinking that birds can never actually really recognise who they are, and that this story could never really be true. But how do we know? Perhaps Krishna is asking us to dig deeper into some of our most treasured illusions that human beings are human beings, and that they have discernment capacities not possible in other species. But how do we know the discernment capacities of any soul? How can we assume what the birds can and cannot do and the level of their astral form? Again, Krishna strikes at the heart of our attachment to the physical realm and shows us that we might be judging the capabilities of the birds based on their physical form only. Whilst their physical brains may be limited, their undying soul never is. Each one of these verses in this Gita has many layers of meaning and teaching. Let us never assume that we have seen them all.

(2.67) Again, we dive deeper here into the nature of illusion as the male pigeon now sees all his babies and his wife caught. He is believing that there is nothing else for him to live for and becomes afflicted himself and unable to make clear decisions. Krishna shows us here in this story how the nature of illusion compounds upon itself. So first, we may have a thought that we are a separate being, and then compounding illusion tells us that we are the doer of actions. As the illusion thickens and deepens, we begin to feel that we are doing the wrong actions that are not leading us towards what we want.

Even deeper into the illusion, we make great efforts to make right actions based on all these ideas compounding. We are totally lost in rajas and tamas, unable to see at all that the original idea is that we are a separate self, and that if we simply question that long enough, we would be free. The amazing powers of self inquiry are lost to us in those moments, and we wouldn't even think to question whether we have the right idea about ourselves. We'll be lost for a long time trying to make sure we do the right actions.

Even further still into the illusion, we will start to think that we must not be good enough if we cannot seem to find the right actions, and our sense of unworthiness will increase. Eventually, we may even question whether we deserve to exist at all, and on and on it goes, all from this one original thought. This story is a very valuable explanation of how the nature of illusion is so very pervasive and how to come out of it.

(2.68) This is a speech from the father bird, the male pigeon, where he is beginning to realise that he has pinned his whole hopes on being a father and a husband. He has so identified with these two roles, and all of his desires have been pinned on being able to achieve these roles successfully. His happiness depends upon being able to be a good father and a good husband, and now that opportunity is gone because his wife and his



babies have been captured. Again, we see the nature of illusion explained here. The father bird is so far into the illusion of identification with the roles of father and husband, that he cannot see any other way that happiness could enter his life. He believes that his family is ruined and cannot think any other way at that particular moment.

(2.69) The speech from the father bird continues as he laments his wife having left him and going to heaven.

(2.70) In this verse, we can see the nature of illusion explained again. The father bird really believes that he is miserable because his wife and babies have left their bodies. He even questions why he would want to live without them. In this state, he cannot see that the real misery is caused by his believing them to be separate to himself. Our cause for suffering is always coming from the separation that we feel and never from the physical circumstances.

As hard as it may be to understand, the truth is that the baby birds and the female bird never died because nothing can die. The father bird need not grieve because nobody has been lost or has gone. They still continue in their subtle forms, just as he does and could be in communion with them if he was aware of it. We can see how pervasive the illusion is. If an awakened being would say, "there is no need to grieve, no reason for grief here," we can see how persistent our illusion is, and our conviction in the belief that something or someone has died. The father bird is lost in misery, but not for the reasons he thinks. Unfortunately, he's unable to see that at this point because the illusion seems like reality when we are lost in it.

(2.71) This verse describes how the father bird came into danger himself by losing his clarity of mind when he saw the baby birds and his wife stuck in the net, about to be killed. Because of his attachment, born of separation thinking, he lost his discernment capability and was unable to have the thought that he could fly away and save himself. He also fell into the net.

(2.72) The cruel hunter described in this verse, who takes all the birds home with him, is really a metaphor for the illusion and the insanity that comes over the mind and the all-consuming nature of illusion when totally believed in.

(2.73) Krishna begins to bring the story's relevance back to Uddhava by saying how a human male, caught in the same attachments, will suffer. He is asking Uddhava to let go of his attachment to his family members so that he may awaken even faster. Uddhava now understands better why he needs to let go of his family attachments. Let's be clear to understand that letting go of family attachments means only that we must let go of thinking of them as separate to ourselves. We can play the roles of father, wife, daughter, husband, sister and mother without identifying as those. We can let our bodies play out those roles whilst knowing that nothing is ever separate to us.

Perhaps the greatest service we can offer our children, our parents and our siblings is by not seeing them as being separate or outside of us. In doing so, we retain and cultivate more sattva, more clarity of mind, more capacity to discern what is the highest action in any particular moment. We will not lose our spiritual insight in the moments that we need it most. This is perhaps the highest teaching he could have given Uddhava because this is what he was struggling with at this particular moment. It also will help Uddhava to let go of his attachment to Krishna, knowing that Krishna is about to leave his physical body, and Uddhava cannot see his subtle form as yet. It will feel to Uddhava like Krishna is leaving for good.

(2.74) Krishna summarises again here the plight of anyone caught in separation thinking. This verse describes attachment to family affairs, but really it could describe attachment to anything at all in manifestation. The person who is attached to happiness coming from

their job or from their career or even from their spiritual practice is just as lost as the person who is attached to being a father or a mother. And again, those things will be perceived as being separate or outside of us.

"I'm doing the spiritual practice so that I find happiness" is a thought that is just as untrue as the idea that our siblings and our children are separate to us. Nothing can give us happiness in the material world and spiritual practice is only allowing the happiness that is already within us to flow outwards. It can only be an expression of the happiness and joy that we allow to pervade our being from the recognition of who we are.

As we finish this chapter, we can see that Krishna gives a very direct instruction here to Uddhava in the form of letting him know that his attachment to his family members is the result of believing in separation. Once the belief in separation pervades our consciousness, we are lost in illusion and have fallen from a high place. Krishna's advice, as always, is direct and to the point. Out of his compassion for Uddhava, he gives him the fastest way out of suffering. To let go of all attachments to family members is easy when we see that they are not separate to us. It will seem extraordinarily hard or impossible to let go of attachments to them when we think they are separate to us. We will feel like we're going to lose something if we believe that they are separate to us. The key to easily transcending this is to see that those family members, or whatever we are pinning our happiness on, are just appearances inside of us that can never give us anything in the way that we think. We can enjoy them, of course. You can enjoy your human existence even more without attachment to anything.