

can't go on, I'm so depressed, I can't fight, can't do anything." And, because he has had the foresight and the great inner intuition that he will need something different at some point, he has chosen as his charioteer Krishna, who we know is actually his own Inner Nature. In the dialogue that follows, all Arjuna does in the beginning is complain, just as all we do when we are forced to see something new. We mutter, "I don't get it, it's contradictory, why are they boring me like this." And, if we are lucky enough to be in a class with students of diverse minds and experiences, we watch their personal responses as well as our own, and we see that that's what the personality does, that's what it's supposed to do, until our Heart and Mind step in and soothingly say, "It's all OK. Just rest, listen, and consider another perspective."

So, if we persevere, keep on studying together, being jolted, reexamining, reconsidering, we find that there is a marvelous shift in the Gita, about halfway through, where Krishna very gently and very firmly has gotten the personality to be quiet, to calm down. ("Unto ye who findeth no fault ...") And that's where the real Gita begins.

Yet when we begin studying, still craving structure and comfort, we often focus on Chapter Two. When our parents die, we read "Thou grieveest for those who may not be lamented," and we are assured that everything comes to an end and we feel comforted, as we should. But if we focus only on what the personal nature gets from the Gita, we miss the whole point of the extraordinary transformation that takes place in the last third of the book. Here, as spirit and matter coalesce into the true Self, that unknowable, vast, unspeakable essence that is Reality manifests in the text. And, in our class experience, when we truly learn to listen to different views, understand different temperaments and karmic inheritances, we open up as a whole, not as individuals seeking outside ourselves, but as souls on parallel journeys of heart and mind.

When we look at human beings as seven-fold states of consciousness and matter, we are able to shift our consciousness from our basest to what we might call our highest at any moment. What causes us to do that? The mother who hears the child cry; the soldier who suddenly says I don't want to harm my enemy; the physician who stops the flow of blood. However we do that, whatever brings us to that point opens up parts of ourselves that have been hidden from us.