

HUMAN BODY AS CHARIOT (Concept from Bhagavad Gita)

Kathopanishad gives a beautiful and valuable concept of human life as it should be lived, by comparing human body to a chariot.

As Bhagavad Gita is the essence of the Upanishads, this concept is symbolically represented on the Kurukshetra battle field, by Arjuna's chariot with Krishna as charioteer. This concept is very helpful to guide one through the journey of life.

The components of the chariot and comparable counterparts of the human body are as follows :

- **Human body is the chariot**
- **Individual self is the owner of the chariot**
- **Intelligence (Buddhi) is the charioteer**
- **Mind is the reins**
- **The five senses are the horses**

World experienced by the senses are the tracks on which the horses tread.

The Individual self associated with the senses and the mind is the enjoyer.

Only when the horses are reined in, the journey itself is possible and the chariot will carry the individual owner to the desired destination. For the successful running of the chariot all the relevant activities should be coordinated. **The five senses should be controlled by intelligence with the help of a disciplined mind.**

In the absolute sense, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul are one.

But, in this world of relative reality, duality becomes manifest. The individual soul forgets this Oneness temporarily and thinks of itself as the doer, separate from the Supreme Self..

Arjuna, well versed in warfare and resolved to fight for Dharma, forgot for a moment the indwelling soul in each person till Lord Krishna pointed out to him the immortal nature of the soul and explained to him that death is comparable to discarding of old garments and wearing new ones. **Death is therefore not a matter for grief. It is part of change, which is universal and inevitable.**

A chariot is used for the performance of a journey. A journey needs a path and a destination to be meaningful. The process of living in this world is the journey. The destination is self-discovery or realization of God. Most of the time we are absorbed more in decorating the chariot, than keeping it in an efficient working condition. The individual self is influenced by the senses, unless it has a disciplined mind to control the senses. It is likely to be led astray. But if it seeks the grace of the Supreme Self, it is able to make its journey through life, goal-oriented and successful. This in short is the way pointed out by spiritual men, on the basis of their own experience. It is open to every one to follow this path.

If we keep before us the chariot concept described above, we will naturally be guided to live a spiritual life, while enjoying the pleasures of this world in moderation. It lifts us up from humdrum existence to a higher plane of awareness and happiness.

In most books on Bhagavad Gita the picture of the chariot of Arjuna with Lord Krishna as charioteer is shown.