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SPEAKER:

Hello everyone, thank you so much for joining us for this 4th part of our series. It has been a joy and a pleasure to be able to engage in these conversations with all of you. You will see in front of you there is a location that just popped up we would love to hear where you are joining us from today. And also as a reminder to always feel free to put any questions you have for Jafar in the chat or in the question box so we can have this conversation and dialogue and I think that's one minute essentially's special about this. We have been able to look at these text and think about them not only from the context in which they were written but really thinking about how they are practically applicable today not only as we are students on the path but also teachers. I'm very grateful and thankful once again, welcome to those of you who are now joining, again, my name is Dr. Christa Kuberry and I am joined by this wonderful human, Jafar Alexander, who is a certified therapist and he is a teacher in Virginia as well as a US and abroad.

No need to complicate it, it is quite simple, brief, move, and find your way to silence, everything you need to know is right here. His devoted study to yoga has made him more 1/5 dimensional teacher who is able to-- with expert sequencing, and thoughtful philosophical inquiry all into just a set of practices itself. He makes his class, keeping the yoga and awesome, he is Lululemon's ambassador and also served on the board of the service Council. He has been a wonderful partner and has helped us in the leveling of our standards and the standards of the project and continues to be a touchstone on all things yoga. You can find more information on Jaffar and I will pass it over to him now so thank you again for joining us for being here and for doing this.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Thank you so much it has been an absolute pleasure to share the space with you, Christa and it has been our great hope that we can get out of these sessions is some really tangible things and questions we can ask moving forward. Some perspective we can have towards our practice and even how we share our practice. With today being our last part, let's just jump real quick into a little bit of review. Then from that little bit of review, like we did last week, we are going to look at a few passages that speak to some of the things that we may be working with today as a society and as an individual. That we will do our best to leave lots of time for questions when you have questions go ahead and take the men we will get to as many as we can.

Beginning, I feel it is important to go back to these 3 main parts on this book which is part of a much bigger book and all of the chapters in all of the stories are amazing. This one specifically really talks about these 3 major ideas and this would be the idea of knowledge, what is knowledge, how do we approve it, where does it come from and how do we discern the process of not only building knowledge using knowledge as a way, as a steppingstone towards wisdom and understanding that knowledge is the accumulation of information and wisdom really depends on the understanding of how you apply that knowledge gained to a particular situation or particular thing so the outcome can be harmony with everything. It's also about action. This is the action on the process is also that action that we have to do something this really brings us to one of the main points of this text is our Dharma.

We will touch more on that later but back to this idea that our Dharma, especially when seen is much bigger than just your purpose or the thing that you are here to do or here to be that your Dharma is also a collective thing, it is something you do that is in line with the cosmos society, your community, your family, it is understanding the individual and the collective. When we can address the individual and the collective and let our actions and our understandings work towards the harmony of both pieces, this is one we can live our dharmic life according to the Gita.

The 3rd part is love, how we approach these actions, how we approach the wisdom and the knowledge question mark from this place of love, it is understanding that one way we can look at this is love is kind of the foundation of all of life and all of life plays on the stage of love. We can remember that remember these things come out of that, it gives us a place to walk back towards back to this place of how we not only feel love but how we have expressed left in how we share love.



The 3 main points are really important and as far as the practice of yoga comes into consideration I believe it is important to remember that according to the Gita, yoga is spoken to this path of action, of discipline. And when the practice of yoga is referred to, it really speaks to this idea that one thing that Krishna said in his book is the ability to reshape ourselves to the power of her own will. In order to kind of create a plan and then steps or actions towards cultivating our will and reshaping our self so we can be back on our path so we can keep the chariot we talked about on the road, so we don't beat up the chariot and toss around the passenger in the chariot in all these things is that the disciplined action that comes through the process of yoga. I think it is important to remember it is a process I think it is a good time to just point out, something we are working with our life today as a global society and this idea of peace.

When we look at some emotional standpoint, peace is that neutral place and that is not to mean, peace is a neutral place where pieces all the inclusions that are in balance with each other. It becomes a peaceful place and can be seen as a stated meeting just like yoga can be seen as a state of being-- being peace is also a process it is also the actions that we take and something we work on just like the practice of yoga is a process and a method, remedy, and action, a philosophy that brings us back to that state of union or brings us back to that place of peace. All these pieces in this are speaking towards that. And one thing I also want to remind at the start just because I think it is really important is this idea that our main character in this story he is aware, and it's really interesting, I'm just going to take a small moment for this.

Traditionally, you kind of have now... They were really the wisdom in the did not go out and fight for the justice and all that kind of stuff, the step down, these are the people that were kind of were monks in a way, these are people that fought for life, they file for existence, fall for peace, they file for justice. It is interesting that our main character in here release speaks to this idea of it so if you think about it for just a moment, I love these little pieces if you pause and just question what is a warrior? What is a warrior in your mind's eye? You look at some of the attributes of what makes somebody a warrior, I'm not talking about a barbarian, but a warrior, here. If you look at the core essential aspect of what a warrior is, just like we practice warrior one and 2 in these kinds of things, if you look at the heart of a warrior, the first thing that makes somebody aware his love. Do you love something so much you are devoted to something that is greater to you you love something so much that you're willing put your life on the line to protect to honour it at the heart of a warrior is not just courage, courage comes from that love, it is not just bravery comes from that love we step into this idea Arjuna at this heart is this warrior monk that is wise and willing to step into that service of being the warrior for that is thing that is greater in the love to devotion to something else that is bigger than just themselves we start to understand how the story can start to relate to us. A couple questions, this is something you can use towards a methodology of how you bring the Gita to life.

A couple questions ask yourself is what attributes of a warrior? How do they manifest in your practice? Look at this idea from the warrior we start to look at this idea we are doing something and what's really interesting is that those of us who have chosen to share this practice chosen to be teachers are essentially wires of this thing. We are out there taking actions to promote this piece, this love, this understanding. If you asked him questions about that to try and understand that warrior spirit and try and understand your Dharma a few questions I want to offer you, one is what do you stand for? You can write these down now and come back time and time again and it will help you to gain some clarity or working with your knowledge or wisdom.

What do you stand for? And then who do you stand with? What are examples out there in the world that you see that you feel compelled to stand with that feels in line with? What is important to you? When you wash it all away, what is truly important to you? What is at the heart of your actions? What really matters to you? These are just a few questions you can ask yourself to start to work with discerning different types of actions from action that is in line with your dharmic path that is in line with who you are here to be in actions that are not in line with that even in the yoga Sutra this idea is fleshed out we look at Sutra 112 116 and it looks at this idea when we work with this idea this unready steadiness inside of us. This is a the idea it provides us a measuring stick and provides us a direction in which to walk. So when we are in the world making decisions and having interactions, we can pause and say is this in line, is this thing supporting the thing that is at the heart of me? Or is it not a question mark can give you some clarity on how to move forward? Is the way that I teach this in line with the message I am trying to get across or not? From that, began to a few these passages and one passage I want to speak to real quickly that I am a big fan of and let me add this. The entire above a Gita is amazing, it can be helpful to read the whole Gita. Once you read the whole thing and you have done some work with that, I really find the first 3 chapters, you can understand the first 3 or 4 or the first 6 chapters I keep adding more. The first 6 chapters if you can understand those you are getting to the heart of it.

In the 2nd chapter there is an idea, there is no knowledge of the self to the unsteady. I'm going to start the part again, there is no knowledge of the self to the unsteady. It means you don't know who you are when your mind is all over the place, when your chariot is all over the place it is really hard to have clarity on who you are. And to the unsteady, no meditation as possible. That state of believing of clarity the state of absorption, the state of being connected to things is not possible. And to the un-meditative, there can be no peace. There is this idea we are constantly being pulled in all these different directions. If we go back to the symbol we talked about in week 2 of the chariot and the horses and



the reigns and the chariot in the passenger in the road and all these kinds of things, your horses are just running wild all over the battlefield. If we can bring those horses in our senses if we can get things back on the path and get clarity on why we are taking that path, that is the right path for you that is what we can understand peace. The last part of this one, let's change this to the non-patriarchal and the one that has no peace how can there be happiness? Is very interesting that in most text on yoga happiness is never the goal, happiness is more of a by part. Happiness is the result of you being in line with who you are meant to be. Happiness is the result of your actions being for the service of you and others.

It is that idea that let's pause real quick and say, and our practice when we are on our mats, we work with our body. We work with our body to bring our body into a sort of kind of alignment. Once we are in that alignment we have to give life to that sheet. Otherwise it is just a pose. To make it into bringing life to it, we have but her breath and her energy, how we energetically inhabit the space?

From there our minds gets very focused. It is a single point of focus the storm. This is that discipline the Gita speaks to and from that focus, it is on an object or an idea that you are trying to cultivate and try to build a relationship with. From there, we settle into a place where all of a sudden we can be aware for 10 minutes. All of a sudden we can be in that place will be expand our experience and from the understanding and peaceful place that is where the happiness in the practice arises. And so this 266, I believe speaks to this idea.

Before I add another went on, Kristin would you like to add anything onto that?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Just as you were talking, one came into my mind. It is in the 12 discourse. The 15th one. It says the one in which presence the world does not tremble and who does not tremble in the presence of the world, who is free from pleasure in temptations, fear and anxiety is dear to me. And it is that space of making that a priority, I think. Where we learn to sit with ourselves. That is part of the practice of yoga, obviously. Those who teach and practice is really being in these postures. If we just want to put at that level or the warrior level and being uncomfortable with that and recognizing how you show up for yourself and doing the discipline of recognizing and maybe not reacting to your thoughts and switching your thoughts are being called with what is so that when you get off the mat and have to be a quote unquote warrior in your life or whatever that looks like, your children, community or yourself first, that you have that discipline and practice to go into that space. That ties into what Jafar was saying about the Dharma and everything else. And speaks to some practical applications and to some of those questions that Jafar just raised at the beginning.

I also just thought of when I was in teacher training had to do a manifesto. It was part of our training. We had to basically answer those questions. I still have it in my office sitting behind me. I read it all the time. It is a good reminder to ask yourself those questions and keep orienting yourself to that quote unquote Northstar or two that core of who you are. And also to keep asking those questions. Things do change. Not your deep values, but maybe that pathway it's a little bit more clear. So you understand yourself. That is a lot. That is what I wanted to add.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

I love it. I love it, I love it. Let's take this real quick to one of the things most of us practice or share or teach. The asana practice. It is something a lot of us kind of come into the practice with and use it as a tool. So in the cultivation of these things, let's look at what Krista was saying real quick. The idea that troubling and sitting in that uncomfortable place until we start to discern ways in which to become, -- become comfortable in the uncomfortable. Become on inflicted by the waiting. The fluctuations and stuff. Just back to the yoga Sutra. If you look back to the yoga Sutra, there are three main Sutra on asana. You have 2:36, which many of us know, but to: 47 is where I want to get with record. Even to 2:48. 2:47 creates this idea that now the work and that asana is to get to the place where the shaking and troubling start to subside. The yoga Sutra gets -- remember, the yoga Sutra is referring right back to some of the stuff that she was just speaking to, that the work isn't just the achievement or performing of the shape, the work is to be uncomfortable and figure out the tools you have to settle in and cultivate a relationship with the uncomfortable place so that when you are in life and things are uncomfortable, which we have had a lot of lately at this time, how then do not just react to everything? How do you settle in? How do you take your breath? How do you come back to your piece? What are the tools you use to come back to your peace so you can stay on your path? Your actions, it is not in an action thing. That your actions are in service of you and the greater. We are back to writing that chariot back on the road. Just back to the battlefield real quick. I think it is important to reiterate. Remembering that where this story is set on this battlefield, it can be helpful to look at this as the battlefield within yourself. There are things you have inside of you. There are things you have familiarity with. If you see the battlefield on the inside, it is your doubts, fears, insecurities. Your irrational loves and hates. Her habitual patterns of thought that pull you away from these. Went to identify those things inside of ourselves and kind of personalize what does that look like inside of myself, what are my doubts, fears, insecurities, rational loves and hates, what are my habitual patterns of thought that take me away, how then are you going to work to vanquish them? How then are you going to work towards eradicating



them?

So as we move into another one of these that I am a big fan of, so in the third chapter, the 20th and the 21st verse, I think these are perfect for this day and age. The 20th one in the third chapter, only through action did many like King cannot go. The king has been a lot of stories. A lot of beautiful stories. Only through actions did many like King (unknown term) obtain perfection. I am going to read that part again. Only through action did many like the king obtain perfection. Even from the viewpoint of societal welfare should you perform action. In that 3:21, whatever that ideal person does, so do other people imitate. Whatever standard they said, other people follow. Think about the platform that we have is yoga teachers. What you do the front of that room, the way in which you handle yourself on social media and these kind of things, people are going to take notice of. So what are the actions you want to put out there? What are the things you want to promote? In realizing that it is never just about you. Even back to this idea here in a 3:20 and 3:21 that societal welfare, what is happening in your society, a lot of times is dependent on the actions in what the people in society are taking. It becomes a good question and the question that you can post to people at the beginning of class as well. You want to add to that?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Yeah, I think that 100% in the version I have in front of me, which is Laurie Patton's version, it says in terms of societal maintenance, Observing even the simple maintenance of the world you should act. This speaks to that of dharmic moment of in recognition from this perspective, this worldview that this book was written, that you are Dharma or how you behaved from an individual in this space of a collective spiderweb, net, or whatever metaphor you want to use there, that what you did and how you pulled that thread affected everything else.

Part of what was really important is this cosmic dharma that you were being a part of. And that what you did and if you did not do your dharma you created chaos, not just for yourself and not just for your thoughts and how your reactions play out in the world and affect other people negatively and otherwise, but also that this effect happens at the cosmic level and therefore responsibility to the collective is much greater than your own personal ego. And that being part of the Dharma too. It is not I think it is cute to have this profession and so I am going to do it. If it is not your Dharma, it is not going to work. Sometimes you have to do the work of the uncovering to get to that.

The path is towards joy. Something or happiness that comes in from the inside. It is not that the path is all rainbows and butterflies. It is often doing a lot of uncovering and sitting on a battlefield, if you will. Having to conquer his best friends. Which are maybe your own habitual patterns, if you want to take it metaphorically.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Perfect. I am not even going to add on to it. Well said. Let's go to one more. One more that I want to offer. It is the fourth chapter. It is the 17th one. I am a big fan of this one. It speaks to the idea that the meaning of action should be known, forbidden action should be known, and also inaction should be known. For inexplicable is the course for the nature of action. What I think is really important here is this forbidden action. Forbidden action is spoken to as karma. This thing works against these actions that helps to clear the path to self understanding. One of the ways you can look at it is it is action that is not for the health of one's (unknown term) Dharma. It speaks to this individual or this self. When we think of this, we think of, OK, what are you going to do that is going to create a clear path for everyone to get an understanding of who is inside of you? Who is driving his vehicle inside of you? In chapters 4 through six, it speaks to this idea that when we speak to karma it is so much about the mind insofar as it is the thing that perceives the action. Where the thought is pure. It is not just the action alone. This is where we get into this action, inaction, forbidden action or action against ones karma. Where is this action originating from? What is fueling this action? Is the thought to be in service or is the thought simply about what you need and what you are going to get?

It is really important to look at this root of what we call the original seed that grows this desire. So to that idea in 4:17 when we look at this and we look at where this is coming from, it is the thing that proceeds will tell us what kind of action it is that you take in the world. Even the in action. Why think that this is really important, especially in the way that we share the practice, is sometimes we have to look at why are you going to teach today? What are you going to share? What is it you are trying to offer? How can you offer a seed to the practitioners that are with you on what is your purpose for being on your Matt today and what is it you are cultivating. What is it you are cultivating here? By cultivating that, then you then gain clarity into who you are. When you gain clarity into fewer you gain clarity into what your dharmic path is. What you are here to do that is in service of you and the greater. To have these conversations and really understand why does he need to fight. Why does he need to act? And to understand in what direction is he going to take that action that is clear for him and clear for the greater good. Do you want to add to this?

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

No, I think that was beautiful he said. In thinking about the application piece of this and just going through some of the questions here while you were speaking, there is one that I think is particularly applicable from what you have said in my experience. Maybe just answering this question and then going back to the conversation, if that works. Kaitlin is



asking, she is a high school social studies teacher. She wants no thoughts about incorporating some of these ideas into the classroom. I really enjoyed this series and feel like my students can also enjoy this. It is -- is it appropriate for me to include these ideas? Especially the questions you asked and Jafar went over the connection to society. So just from my own perspective, for I took on this role I was teaching at the university of Denver and Colorado. One of my courses with spiritual and emotional wellness that I would do for freshman. Part of what we would do with this is really post these types of questions for them. I think that self reflection piece for us as individuals and what that means is really important. It is easy to put in context. I think if we think about these ideas as applicable and practical to the broader perspective and we don't try to necessarily get into the minutia of worrying about all the God stuff and religion stuff, there are still these concepts or metanarratives or big stories and ideas that speak to us all.

Part of what our development is as yogis and human beings and working towards the collective is figuring out with those questions or answers for ourselves are. I think it is really useful. I think it is a really useful tool in any sort of classroom, whether it is posed while someone is sitting in an asana and having them think about that instead of thinking about what is going on in their sore muscles, for instance. Get into that cerebral place for a moment. Or if it is with your students, I think it is very appropriate to ask them to reflect and ask critical questions about themselves.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Beautifully said, I think first and foremost it is important to remember that the Bhagavad-Gita especially in the context was a philosophical text before it was ever a religious text. I think sometimes we forget that. With that understanding, you use this like any other philosophical task you would introduce to any classroom setting. I think the concepts that are in here are universal and work across time.

There are many concepts in this text that when looked at we can flesh out the ideas and pull out the really important parts and speak to those in any kind of talk context. Maybe you set aside the script. You can still discuss the ideas and you can still discuss these things with really, I think, especially children, in class by children aiming younger people. That are still in their schooling. These are conversations that many of us did not have at that time and now all of a sudden we are having to go back and undo and untangle a lot of the things that we have learned and this is kind of a societal thing right now especially here in the United States because we are having to go back and untangle all the things we did not learn. Why not introduce these ideas at a time when the brain is really learning things, at a time in our life when we are starting to develop the sense of I.

If we do that at that time it will make the longer road called to life, it will make it a lot smoother for people because they are not going to have to bring in a bunch of stuff then clean all of it out and try to relearn something. I would say, absolutely bring it in and just bring the ideas in and have conversations around the ideas and I have found young people to be some of the most brilliant people ever because they are not yet conditioned by what things have to be or what they are told they are. The mind of a young person is brilliant because it is not locked in yet. Please have these discussions with people in your class and wherever.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

And don't even be afraid in some ways to bring up that there are, I don't want to call them problems but that there are conversations around these ideas to that might be uncomfortable but also need to unpack and I think that that is part of this whole shaping or framing is understanding a context. Also maybe just a short description to your students about the context and also the necessity of understanding how language works and understanding the need to re-examine all of it for our times but not necessarily does that mean it doesn't matter or that these attacks that have survived and then translated thousands of times are not relevant for us as human beings and from a philosophical perspective today. I think thank you for asking that, thank you, Jafar. We have mod who is asking, can you speak the role of the role in yoga's action?

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Let me walk you back a 2nd real quick. Back to the importance especially with young people, you talk but a time in life where there is a battlefield or a battle going on inside of people. It is when we are young and we are trying figure who we are. This will tie-in as well. An especially right now when we are really learning or what some people are finally starting to learn is we need to diversify the way we look at things. We need to even diversify the way the stories that we use, the text that we use to look at trying to understand life and her role in life. Bringing this in is a really important thing. And looking at things. One question, I was talking to a friend about is if you look around your life and let's say you look around and your friends are very homogenous and they all kind of look the same, do the same things it might be time to diversify and get a friend that does not do all the same things as you read a book you don't always read or watch a movie you don't always read and this is where we start to get perspective. And from perspective, from looking at a thing called you, for many different lenses, as were we really start to grasp the enormity and the expansiveness of our Optima. To really understand this individual Optima you are carrying around with you, this essence and soul the Spirit, whatever word works for you, to understand you have to look at it from a lot of different lenses. To do that, we have to look at this idea of my actions are giving me input into here. When I pause,



after my actions and look at why did I take that action, what is it that I did, is that in-service or do I need to refine that, not completely thrown away, but might I need to refine that action? All of that comes from an understanding, the more you understand what is in here, the easier it is, let me take it easier, the more optimal your life becomes the more efficient your life becomes in your thoughts, in your actions. I think it is important to remember that your energy follows your attention. It follows your focus. Were your attention and were your focus goes your energy goes. And where your energy goes feed to that thing. Even if you look at it from a neurological perspective for a moment, if you have a lot of negative thoughts and your energy always goes towards those negative thoughts, and you start to produce the cortisol and all these kinds of things, it will literally start to eat away at your hippocampus. It will start eat away parts of your brain that we need to be optimal. By doing that, it is setting up more roadblocks to see who's actually in here and what happens is we become a collection of habitual thought patterns. That we keep falling into and keep falling into. As we fall into these thought patterns and these habitual patterns of movement, even, we are missing the Optima and not being able to see clearly who you actually are, all we see is the patterns or the happens.

the ability to keep looking back to pause and take some time, to take some time to gain the clarity and see who was inside here and how is that being inside if you're trying to express itself out there that is when we can really start to create a lot of that piece and we end up in that joy and that happiness in these things. I hope that helps a little bit with both of those questions.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Thank you, Jaffar, I think in terms of the action it is that awareness and recognition for us the discernment to recognize that our actions are often dictated just by external stimuli and so, from all of the metaphors that you have, the mere, the lake, yoga, or we talk about removing some of that stuff that is dirtying or making the waters not calm, that we have so we can find that space and the recognition we all have access to that at any moment within us.

And then from this perspective and what Krishna is often teaching our Jenna is that not only-- Arjuna not only do you have this within you you have a duty because of this and your connection to it but you are also divine and so there is that whole space of the recognizing that you have this divine, even neutral space for joy that is part of you and part of all things. And so your duty to not only access it but use that access or that joy .4 the collective good. And so, I think that it ties into some of the other questions people are asking and I will put a 2 part. This is Catherine and Lisa. Catherine is saying I struggle with must-- much of Krishna's language and how do I understand this without getting hung up on the language? And that ties into leases which as a teacher how can I get a student can to consider meditation that thinks this particular philosophy or idea goes against Christian beliefs?

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Good questions, and I hear you. The first time I read the Bhagavad Gita, I got really hung up on the language being somebody who I spent years trying to figure out where my understanding was, I grew up with the family and the church, and adapting a place of spiritual incentive really aligning with one particular whatever. I believe there is something bigger than me, something bigger than all of us that is made up of all of us, all of life.

When reading the Bhagavad Gita or any of the text, I think the thing, this is where learning is really important as well. To get to the essence of something because anytime it gets translated that cultural context is going to get put on it. Sometimes when we read these words like the Lord and God in these kinds of things in certain translations, what they are speaking to is what does that represent? That Lord and that God, this divine thing, it represents this thing we are all a part of. Is there something in your language that speaks to that thing that encompasses everything? Is there something out there that we all kind of came from or are all going back to or all in service of, is there something bigger, even if it is just energy which is something I am a big fan of. It's something you destroy it is something that shifts and vibrates at different frequencies. Part of it is working with that idea of how can I take the idea of this work and find a word that I feel fits with all the attributes that are attributed to that so I don't get hung up on the work-- word? Sometimes getting hung up on the word will take us away and we will get hung up.

It's a language thing of thinking of what word is that for you? Every time you read the word God, if that is the trigger for you or the reminder, every time you read that supplanted with energy, supplanted with the collective, supplanted with River word is going to speak to you. And with this, can you read the 2nd part, the 2nd thing you read

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

In terms of thinking it goes beyond against credibly.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

I had a huge conversation with my mom and this, my mom is very into the church and you want to do a meditation at the church and I was like are you sure question mark so we sat down and had a whole conversation around this how could she bring this idea meditation into that place? And one thing we talked a lot about is simply can we get to a place where we are quiet enough where our minds are quite enough so we can listen to the silence? And within that



silence, can you take away what is being said that is not being said within words? For instance, in the Christian belief, this that space where your mind is quite enough so you can hear God. And this meditation path, the same idea, can you allow your fluctuations to settle enough to be calm enough for a moment to set them aside for just a moment so you can listen to the collective? You can listen to that autumn on and listen to these concepts we talked about it's really hard to hear those things if the mind is busy, if the body is busy. What are some things I do to sit comfortably to breathe at a place where the mind can settle? So I then listen to those basins of silence question mark and sometimes once again it goes back to language, sometimes you take of the word meditate and say let's sit and listen for a moment. But let's not listen to the habits in her mind, let's listen to the silence in between. And the more you do that, you're on your road towards meditation. Then it is in a nice way of approaching it and takes away the labels that separates things.

I hope that is helpful.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Yeah, that a super helpful and my mind go so many places. But in terms of meditation and we think of from the Christian perspective, or any perspective, if we look at spiritual tuitions on a whole, all of them have this concept of utilizing to get quiet, there's a whole tradition in Judaism, there are these concepts of finding that space. And so, I think it does speak a lot to not only recognizing language for context. I think it is really important that we don't forget about what the context is that we recognize it and honour were these things come from. I think it is also really important, for Dharma or personal perspective to do that self reflection like this self-study of these texts and to recognize what that means for you. Thinking about this, I don't know why I am full of stories today, they are good. As a graduate student I ended up in a dual PhD program and it was at the school of theology which was a seminary program and it is a really liberal one in the US. I was pretty staunch nonreligious and to be in the process with the students that were wrestling with understanding some of these texts like the Bible or something like that that not fitting into their worldview about who fit into the picture or ideas about violence, etc. Being able to really do the work of looking at these texts and making them make sense for you in teaching from that place I think is a really valid effort and part of yoga practice from weather the Bhagavad-Gita, etc. I think it is important we recognize and also put into our context but also to not forget that these were written by certain people for certain reasons that had certain power. And what does that mean?

I think that is a really great thing, thank you both for raising that and thank you Jaffar for your thoughts on that. Do you want to add anything or should we move on to another question?

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Another question sounds good.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Okay. Lots of thoughts, I am scrolling through her. Thank you all so much. Aubrey says I am in a believer in evolution and our senses are here to keep us safe, in this case, is in trying to rain and control our senses going against our nature as animals and how can we find this piece when it is against thousands of layers of evolutionary design question mark

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Good question. Think of it like this. We have evolved to be multidimensional. Yes, our senses are there to create a sense of safety. I love the way it was presented in a talk I was listening to. We kind of have our ancient nervous system. A big part of this is to figure out can I be safe? Can I have shelter in fear? These basic things. There is a part of her mind that is linked to our senses that is constantly scanning the horizon to figure out how can I get food, where's my shoulder, how can I be safe? Absolutely.

There is another part of the mind, and there are more evolutionary pieces as far as humans today that also then have the ability to think, to imagine, to do these other functions that are not solely based on survival. So the number one thing, let's look at this as a process of meditation anyway, or a process of self reflection. Let's take the word meditation. A process of self inflection. First things first, am I safe? Have I put myself in an environment where I no longer have to scan for danger. Wherever that may be, am I in an environment where no longer have to scan for danger? Once I am in the environment, then can I put my body in such a way that it is not going to feel restless or they need to move or to do or acquire food, shelter are those kind of things? Have I eaten appropriately? Even if I go back to the Bhagavad-Gita is this beautiful one on the idea of food. In the sixth chapter, is the 17th verse. Those that are temperate and eating and recreation, balanced and work and regulated in sleep can mitigate all Searles -- sorrows were practicing yoga. There is this idea even in the Bhagavad-Gita to address these things so that when you do feel safe and have the things that your body needs a survival standpoint, then you are allowed and have the capacity for the opportunity to practice yoga. You have the capacity to practice your breath, reflection, meditation. These types of things. That way it honors the multidimensional aspects of who we are as human survey instead of



being stuck who we were thousand years ago or 10 years ago. First, yes, take care of those things. Then go ahead and figure out who you are.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Thank you. From an evolutionary perspective we think about the brain and the response fight or flight limbic.

Part of the brain. That is just the one that exact -- reacts to the senses. Stress can be good. But buildup of it in times like these is not idea. What a yoga practice or a meditative practice, even just 10 minutes of meditating, there was a study done by Harvard that it changes the matter in your brain and allows you to utilize the part of your free parental cortex that is the part of you that actually makes logical and conscious decisions. There is an evolution that is tied to this in and of itself that is not necessarily the idea that you remove the senses, because they are always going to be there, but you have that choice of how you respond to all of the chaos around you. And that you can do that or explain that even from an evolutionary or neurophysiological perspective. Which I think is cool. So if you want to look at it from that angle and not the spiritual or suit -- philosophical, there is that as well.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Can add one thing to this? This is back to language. If we are looking back at a jungle for a moment and withdraw the senses and this is where we get this idea from, think of it more as a repurchasing of the senses. Not turning the senses. Not saying go away. It is saying instead of the senses being concerned with what is going on out here, can I look inside of here and notice is the state of my body in here? This is where we get a lot of this time, can I repurpose and get to a state capital at stake in the question. -- Let's get to another question.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Sorry, I am just typing your wise words. OK. We have a lot of people who have thumbed up with this. People want to say that they have noticed that you have chosen your words carefully and not use should and man and appreciate a lot of what you are saying and how your messaging it is how you are trying to convey. I think that speaks directly to the language thing. I want to take a sentence to thank you, Jafar, and know that the membership in those here today are appreciating the carefulness and toughness that you bring. So thank you.

Going back to 2:66 from Geraldine, how can I promote being Study and explain how not to be unsteady? And then she says thank you for the series.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

Let me first just say that being a human, it is a constant practice. I'm not always great at it. I have patterns and things as well. This is where my yoga practice comes in. There are times I will use a word and I am like that is not optimal. I have to walk it back and try to change that moving forward. This even comes to this idea of steadiness. How can we create a sense of steadiness? This is where we get back into the yoga Sutra. Even here in the Bhagavad-Gita, let me try to give a practical way to look at this.

In your practice, so when you decide to practice, or however long that is going to happen for, you create a blog about, the single idea that you are going to help to cultivate. What happens is you have a bunch of tools. You say, OK, I felt really chaotic lately. Overwhelmed chaotic. So steadiness, simplicity is in my practice today. Everything I do is towards steadiness and simplicity. Now you start to look at what tools do we have to really cultivate this idea? I have my asana practice. In every asana I take maybe I slow down a little bit and in there I notice does my body feel simple? Does my body feel stable? Does my body feel study? Let me feel it in the physical body. Then I look at how do I approach this from a way of breath? So your tool of breath can I approach my breath in this practice in a way that is not about creating a lotto fire or taking it down? Can I create just a simple what we call equal fluctuations, a steady breath that is unbroken and smooth and fine and slow? And then we start to look at the process of the tool of focusing the mind. Can I stay on this idea of moving simply from one place to the next in my practice? Can I stay on this idea of really keeping the mind focused on the simplicity and steadiness? Then I look at my drishti. Where are my eyes? If my eyes are all over the place, when the eyes water -- wonder the mind wonders. Every time your eyes wander you are taking and so much information. How can my drishti, how can my gaze stay steady? How can I pick one spot? What I would like to do a lot of times as I will put a block up in front of my Mac. Wherever I go in my practice, my eyes stay on that block. You can pick whatever it is you want to pick. Whatever tool I'm using is towards the city of creating steadiness. Now, when I get that in my feeling and move into my state of meditation. I say that if my breath does this I can feel more steady. If I place my breath and this stays for? Space I feel more steady. That will start to move in the overall feeling of feeling more steady and have more access to parity toward peace. Going back to 2:66, that steadiness from the discipline and practice, the actions you are taking in the yoga practice lead you to a place where you always have a remembrance. Remember, yoga is a practice of remembering that which we have forgotten. Which is that you are already awesome.

So if I am steady in my outward appearance, if I am steady in all of this, it is very easy to look inside and see that I



am good. But when all of this is out of array then I can't look in there because all the locks and keys are off. So you start to use these tools. You start to direct your energy in the way. All the sudden you will find it is easier to access every time you come back to it. And now, all of a sudden you are driving a car doing whatever it is you know I can breathe like this get back to my steadiness. I can place my body like this. I can use my eyes like this. They become tools that you use to write your day-to-day life as well. That allows us that access towards clarity, that access towards peace. That access towards the feeling of joy and happiness.

One last thing. I just think that this is really an important thing. I am going to present this idea. You do with it what you want. There is this idea in the practice of yoga about joy. Joy is always there. We just bury it. We bury it under the things we have to do, our obligations under this kind of stuff. We bury joy. But it is always there. It is the thing that arises for no reason other than it wanted to come out and say hello. Happiness is more on the scale of dependency. Typically, happiness requires a catalyst. Something happens that reminds us of our happiness. Happiness is a little bit more dependent on a catalyst. Joy simply is always there. Are you willing enough to access it? It never goes anywhere. It is simply hardwired into you.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Thank you. I agree. It makes me think of the Book of Joy by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu which is just a great reminder that just through their actions and these models of conduct. I know we only have three minutes, but Jafar and I have just spoken about a suture before we got on here. Thinking about all this and thinking about steadiness and making yourself grounded in that sacred space for yourself and your hard times, the third discourse in 13:33, as a single sun lights of this whole room, so to the one who walls in the sacred ground lights up the sacred ground. Dwelling in yourself with some common needs will really share that with everyone else as well. It is a responsibility for yourself to do self-care but it is also something that emanates out. Thank you. I wanted to see if Jafar wants to share any final thoughts. We will be doing another series. We are taking next week off. The week after we will be back at 10 AM.

JAFAR ALEXANDER:

. I am glad that you got that one in there. The 13th chapter. It is so important remember that what you do for you is going to emanate outwards. And when we look at where we are right now in this day and age with the pandemic, with a lot of the things happening with the systems of oppression and stuff that people are finally as a world starting to look at more closely comes back to this idea that if you do the work with you, which is what the whole Bhagavad-Gita is saying. You have got to do the work. You have got to figure this out. Otherwise this battle is going to continue and everybody is going to die.

So if we can do the work with ourselves, if we can keep showing up for ourselves and keep refining our understanding of who we are and keep peeking into who we actually are and how does that then as we looking, how then does it shine out? How then does it shine out? I love the idea I heard a while ago. I just think it is great. That the sun is one of those great examples of karma. The sun gives always and never asks for anything in return. So how can you be in a space to give because you know you are not lacking and left that giving not be in the desire to receive, but like that giving be the way in which you simply are, which supports all of us. All of us. Plant life, animals, all of it. So that's on inside of you, this is where we get scars from. Can you remember that it is in here. Real quick. Thank you all for coming and joining us. We hope that you got something out of this and that you are able to implement this and have some tools to work with this. At the very least, create a greater understanding for yourself. Remember, all of those things are to remember that there is this thing up above that is an example. I live on the earth. I exist halfway. I step into my strength so I can rise above. All in the humbleness. So that I can step back into this journey and begin again honoring the earth where I live, the sun which is above, and remember that it is all here as well. External and internal together. I love you all. Thank you.

DR CHRISTA KUBERRY:

Thank you.