



GITA- The Wisdom Base to Live Life Joyfully and Wisely

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Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita is a lifetime study, and it is extremely beneficial to read at least one chapter a day. Its meanings are virtually infinite, so that new things will be continually found within its seven hundred verses. Equally important is the Gita's ability to continually take us in the right direction spiritually. Further, it conveys to us the necessary perspective for success in spiritual life. It not only presents the clearest philosophical principles, but also provides us with the practical means for cultivation of higher consciousness.

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Introduction

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*raja-vidya raja-guhyam pavitram idam uttamam
pratyak savagamam dharmyam susukham kartum
avyayam (BG 9.2)*

This knowledge is the king of all wisdom, the king of all that is confidential. It is the purest and the topmost and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization it is the perfection of all religion and everlastingly joyful to perform. Bhagavad-Gita, chapter 9, verse 2.

The Bhagavad Gita is part of the Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic poem. In the Gita, Arjuna, a great warrior, is faced with a difficult decision: whether or not to fight in a battle between his kinsmen. He is torn between his duty to fight alongside his brothers for a just cause and his reluctance to fight against include his other relatives and mentors. Krishna takes the place of Arjuna's charioteer and offers Arjuna advice on how to deal with the situation. There are four paths which lead directly to establishing a relationship with God. According to the authority of Bhagavad-Gita these paths have been designated as the yoga of perfect actions, the yoga of

perfect devotion and the yoga of perfect knowledge. These four paths have been fully explained in the Bhagavad-Gita with great care and attention, which comprises chapters 18 in the Bhishma-Parva section of Mahabharata. Each chapter is called yoga.

Yoga is the science of the individual consciousness attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness. So each chapter is a highly specialized yoga revealing the path of attaining realization of the Ultimate Truth. The first six chapters have been classified as the Karma Yoga section as they mainly deal with the science of the individual consciousness attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness through actions. The goal of yoga is to unite oneself with God; the practice of yoga is the path, we take to accomplish this. Spiritual aspirants can be broadly classified into four psychological types:

On Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga is a process of learning to discriminate between what is real and what is not, what is eternal and what is not eternal. Through a steady advancement in realization of the real and the unreal, eternal and temporal, one develops into a Jnana Yogi. This is essentially a path to reach God through knowledge and discrimination, and has been described as being the "shortest, and steepest" path to reach God: the most difficult one.

"When he perceives the various states of being as resting in the One, and from that alone spreading out, then he attains brahman they who know, through the eye of knowledge, the distinction between the field and the knower of the field, as well as the liberation of beings from material nature, go to the Supreme." (B.G. Chapter 13, Verse 31 / Verse 35).

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On Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga, in general, is stilling of the mind and body through meditative techniques, geared at realizing one's true nature. This practice was later described by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. "Establishing a firm seat for himself in a clean place... having directed his mind to a single object, with his thought and the activity of the senses controlled, he should practice yoga for the purpose of self-realization. Holding the body, head and neck erect, motionless and steady, gazing at the tip of his own nose and not looking in any direction, with quieted mind, banishing fear, established in the brahmacharin vow of celibacy, controlling the mind, with thoughts fixed on me, he should sit, concentrated, devoted to me. Thus, continually disciplining himself, the yogin whose mind is subdued goes to nirvana, to supreme peace, to union with me." (B.G., Chapter 6, Verses 11-15)

On Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga is simply service in love and devotion to God (Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita). The teaching of Bhakti thus bears some resemblance to finding salvation in Christ through love. "I consider the yogi-devotee - who lovingly contemplates on Me with supreme faith, and whose mind is ever absorbed in Me - to be the best of all the yogis." (B.G., Chapter 6, Verse 47) "After attaining me, the great souls do not incur rebirth in this miserable transitory world, because they have attained the highest perfection." (B.G., Chapter 8, Verse 15) "... those who, renouncing all actions in me, and regarding Me as the Supreme, worship Me... For those whose thoughts have entered into Me, I am soon the deliverer from the ocean of death and transmigration, Arjuna. Keep your mind on me alone, your intellect on me. Thus you shall dwell in me hereafter." (B.G., Chapter 12, Verses 6-8) "And he who serves me with the yoga of unswerving devotion, transcending these qualities [binary opposites, like good and evil, pain and pleasure] is ready for liberation in Brahman." (B.G. Chapter 14, Verse 26) "Fix your mind on me, be devoted to Me, offer service to Me, bow down to Me, and you shall certainly reach Me. I promise you because you are My very dear friend." (B.G., Chapter 18, Verse 65) "Setting aside all meritorious deeds (Dharma), just surrender completely to my will (with firm faith and loving contemplation). I shall liberate you from all sins. Do not grieve." (B.G., Chapter 18, Verse 66)

We should state from the beginning that these categories are not airtight compartments. Indeed, it would be psychologically disastrous for anyone to be completely emotional, completely intellectual, completely active or completely meditative. Each yoga blends into the predominantly emotional, the predominantly intellectual, the physically active, the meditative. There are four primary yogas designated to "fit" each psychological type which are Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga respectively. While each path differs, their fundamental goal is the same: to realize Brahman (the Divine Essence) as being

the only truth, that the body is temporal, and that the soul (Atman) is infinite. Yoga's aim (nirvana, moksha) is to escape from the cycle of reincarnation through realization of oneness with the ultimate reality. Here are some quotations from Lord Krishna that make up history's first real yoga text and give comprehensive definitions of the four principle yogas:

On The Goal of Yoga

"When the mind comes to rest, restrained by the practice of yoga, and when beholding the Self, by the self, he is content in the Self." (B.G., Chapter 6, and Verse 20) | "He who finds his happiness within, his delight within, and his light within, this yogi attains the bliss of Brahman, becoming Brahman."

On Karma Yoga

Karma Yoga is essentially acting, or doing one's duties in life as per his/her dharma or duty, without desire or expectation of reward - a sort of constant sacrifice of action to the Supreme. It is action done without any thought of gain. In a more modern interpretation, it can be viewed as duty bound deeds done without letting the type of result affecting your action. It is said that the results can be of three types, a. as aimed for, b. opposite of what is aimed for and c. a mixture of these. If one can perform his duties (as prescribed in the Vedas) without any anticipation of the result of his actions, he is bound to succeed. It includes, but is not limited to dedication of one's chosen profession and its perfection to God. It is also visible in community and social service, since they are inherently done without thought of personal gain.

Example: If one is playing tennis, his duty is to play as well as he can. If he is a Karma Yogi, the loss of a few points will not hamper his enthusiasm and energy for the rest of the game, but if he is not then he will start getting tense, nervous, self-conscious, etc. and is then bound to make mistakes and lose anyway. This is a simple example of Karma Yoga for a layman. "With the body, with the mind, with the intellect, even merely with the senses, the yogins perform action toward self-purification, having abandoned attachment. He who is disciplined in yoga, having abandoned the fruit of action, attains steady peace..." (B.G. Chapter 5, Verses 11-12)

On Nishkam Karma Yoga

Lord Krishna advocates Nishkam Karma Yoga as the Yoga of selfless action, as the ideal path to realize the truth. Allocated work done without expectations, motives, or thinking about its outcomes tends to purify one's mind and gradually makes an individual fit to see the value of reason and the benefits of renouncing the work itself. In order to achieve true liberation it is important to control all mental desires and tendencies to enjoy and sense pleasures the next; each yoga balances and strengthens the others. The Gita harmonises wonderfully the philosophy of action, devotion, knowledge and Psychic Control. All the four must be

harmoniously blended if you wish to attain perfection.

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