

Distress and dejection are of two kinds. One kind pertains to earthly desires. There are those who languish because they have not amassed in abundance. That kind of lamentation wears away personality. Valour is thereby set at naught. In a victim to despondency a cloud of ignorance collects more and more. But the dejection that comes over Arjuna on the battle-field does not fall under this category. In fact he dispenses with worldly desires. Even suzerainty over the three worlds has no attraction for him. He is not able to see what exactly his duty is—to wage the war or to go into the wilderness. It is this conflict that perturbs him. The plan and purpose of life become more mysterious. Life becomes an unbearable burden. So he yields to a breakdown. This attitude bespeaks detachment from worldly concerns. A sort of spiritual anguish has overtaken him. The Messengers of Light advocate this kind of distress as a prelude to spiritual enlightenment. Here it prepares Arjuna for yoga. Blessed are the distressed in heart; they shall be comforted in enlightenment. This is the law of life. Hence this distress of Arjuna is also called a system of yoga.

All the eighteen yogas contained in the eighteen chapters may be reduced to four—the Karma Yoga, the Raja Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga and the Jnana Yoga. Tradition holds that spiritual life begins with Karma Yoga and goes on evolving into the other three respectively. That the sequence of the chapters in the Gita bears testimony to this is their contention.