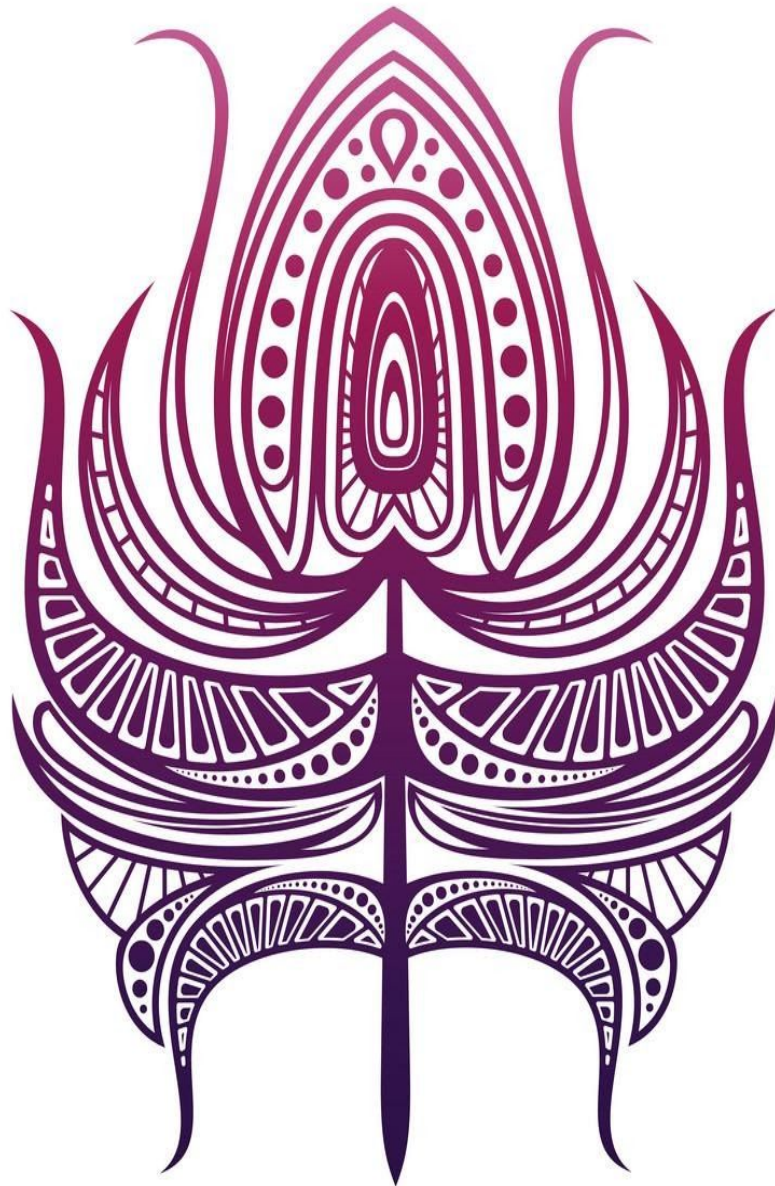


SYNOPSIS of the BHAGAWAT *GITA* & the Four YOGAS



By SOUMYADYUTI DEY CHOWDHURY

Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute (RKMVERI), Morabadi,
Ranchi

Every piece of art, be it a novel, a poem, a short story, a painting or even a film is a visualisation of 'something' he/she saw or listened to with a blend of his/her own thoughts. That piece of art becomes a reality which we see through a mask. A mask which has several filters of thoughts and realizations. That actual 'something', whatever it may be then gets filtered again with our own thoughts when we embrace that piece of art. This is how art passes on generation after generation, people to people with passage of time.

Now in this aspect, if we consider The Upanishads to be piece of art, then The *Bhagavat Gita* being the essence of the *Upanishads* is also great piece of art from which if we the extract the real 'something' from it, that would be a higher life lesson than that

of just reading out it just like a story and reinterpreting it with our own thoughts.

So I am going to extract the essence of *Gita* in my own way, as said earlier adding my own mask. So here it is:



CHAPTERWISE SYNOPSIS OF THE GITA

Chapter 1

Arjunaviṣāda-yoga

Apart from the description of the armies arrayed for battle, the Chapter 1 focuses on the problem of *samsāra*, which can be said to be the problem of attachment (*kṛpā* or *rāga*), grief (*śoka* or *viṣāda*) and delusion (*moha*). Thus, in short, wrong thinking is the biggest problem in our life.

Chapter 2

Sāṅkhya-yoga

In this Chapter, *Arjuna* becomes a śiṣya by surrendering to Lord *Kṛiṣṇa*. He put forward several point of views to show *Arjuna* the right path to once again took the charge of the war. All these points suggest that how right knowledge is the ultimate solution to all our problems.

Chapter 3

Karma-yoga

In this chapter, we (*Arjuna* with respect to the Gita) are told about *karma-yoga*, which utmost necessary to maintain the harmony of the universe upon which we are dependent. Above all selflessly doing ones destined job is the the way to progress and prosperity.

Chapter 4

Jñānakarmasannyāsa-yoga

The Lord points out that He initiated the lineage of *Vivasvān* (Lord Sun), *Manu*, *Ikṣvāku*, and others in the beginning of the creation (through the Vedas) is being revived through *Arjuna* in the form of the *Gītā* because it had declined by that time, signifying that every act can be a act of prayer if we do it with utmost passion, sincerity and respect.

Chapter 5

Sannyāsa-yoga

The most selfish word in the universe is 'me' if it's replaced by a greater 'we' then we can renounce the Ego of Individuality and rejoice in the Bliss of the Infinity.

Chapter 6

Dhyāna-yoga

This chapter focuses on the inner self and claims that if we can connect to the Higher Consciousness daily we will gain much higher stability in life with a bliss of inner peace just like a *Sannyasi*.



Chapter 7

Jñānavijñāna-yoga

We should live the moments of learning and embrace what we learn. That's the best way to learn anything. This is the main focus of the chapter.

Chapter 8

Akṣaraparabrahma-yoga

The prime lesson of this chapter is that the most important thing is to have faith in oneself never give up on oneself.

Chapter 9

Rājavidyā-rājaguhya-yoga

If we do something good, we are blessed and that blessing is the most valuable gift we can have. So we should value our blessings.

Chapter 10

Vibhūti-yoga

If we can see the God within ourselves its very simple to see the Divinity all around us in every particle of the universe.

Chapter 11

Viśvarūpadarśana-yoga

This chapter is about courage and seeks to have enough surrender to see the truth as it is, no matter how hard it is.

Chapter 12

Bhakti-yoga

It is about absorbing our mind and heart in the Supreme Lord.



Chapter 13

Kṣetrakṣetrajñavibhāga-yoga

It's somewhat similar to the previous chapter and it also suggests to detach from Maya and attach to the Divine.

Chapter 14



A job or any routine that we do out of pressure is never going to give peace. So we should live a lifestyle that matches your vision. This the chapter in one line.

Chapter 15

Puruṣottama-yoga

The worldly things are temporary, the soul is the ultimate truth that lives forever and that is the blessing of the Divine. So we should always give priority to Divinity, not worldly attachments.

Chapter 16

Daivāsurasampadvibhāga-yoga

Being Good is a reward in itself is the main thought of this chapter.

Chapter 17

Śraddhātrayavibhāga-yoga

Here we understand that choosing the Right over the Pleasant is a sign of Power.

Chapter 18

Mokṣasannyāsa-yoga

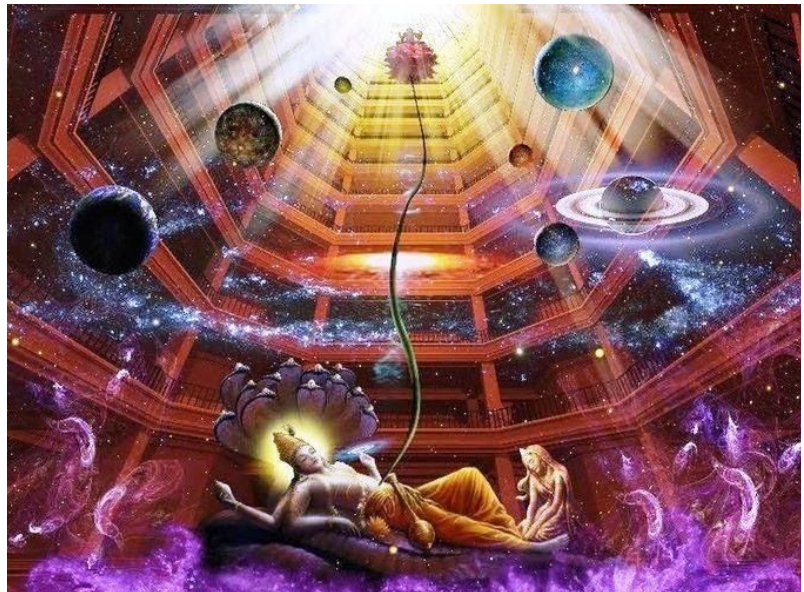
In the last chapter, Lord *Krishna* completely changes the mind of *Arjuna* with his Devine thoughts and visions. Finally, he starts the chariot and let *Arjuna* do his *karma*, to let him move to Union with the God.

THE WHOLE GITA IN A NUTSHELL

From the simplest point of view, the *Bhagawat Gita* seems like a story of the embodied soul, personified by *Arjuna*, who faced a crisis of his life in the middle of the battlefield and stood confused, fearful and worried. He also stands for an ideal devotee. Lord *Krishna*, as his charioteer in the battlefield personifies the voice of God and the Supreme Self. Out of extreme love and compassion, he taught *Arjuna* the divine wisdom to remain calm amidst the

turbulence of life and perform his duties as a service to God. He taught him to overcome desires, selfishness, duality, attachments, egoism, karma, delusion and ignorance and achieve liberation by practising right action, right knowledge, right contemplation, right perception or discernment and right devotion.

But if we go deeper and truly understand, it seems like the *Bhagawad Gita* teaches us how to live in this world, do our duties and yet remain like the lotus leaves in the water of life. The world in which we live is said to be a world of illusion. You cannot depend upon it forever, because it is transient and subject to change. Out of ignorance and egoism, states the Bhagavadgita, we bind ourselves to it through our desires and desire-ridden actions and suffer from ignorance and delusion, not knowing our true nature and true purpose. Having become caught in the snare of desires and delusion, we remain chained to the cycle of births and deaths and to the forces of nature.



It also teaches us how to escape from this predicament, not by escaping from the burdens of the worldly life, nor by the avoidance of our duties and responsibilities, but remaining amidst the humdrum of life and facing it squarely with fearlessness, detachment and stability of mind, accepting God as the Doer and the Saviour and performing our actions as part of the sacrifice of life.

Thus, the *Bhagawad Gita* is about human suffering and its resolution through spiritual effort. It brings spirituality to worldly life and suggests how to face the challenges and compulsions of human life with faith and devotion, without becoming lost in egoistic pursuits and selfish actions. The discourse is about the predicament of humans in the battle of life, with God as its controller.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FOUR YOGAS

For our generation in recent years the word "*yoga*" has been heard more in gyms than in religious discourse, "*yoga*" in its original sense has little to do with exercise. "*Yoga*" comes from the Sanskrit verb "yuj," to yoke or unite. 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: the predominantly emotional, the predominantly intellectual, the physically active, and the meditative. There are four primary yogas designated to "fit" each psychological type.

The Path of Love: *Bhakti Yoga*

Bhakti yoga is the path of devotion, the method of attaining God through love and the loving recollection of God. Most religions emphasize this spiritual path because it is the most natural. As with other *yogas*, the goal of the *bhakta*, the devotee of God, is to attain God-realization--oneness with the Divine. The *bhakta* attains this through the force of love which is the most powerful and irresistible of emotions.

There are five stages of love:

- 1) Man wants help and has a little fear.
- 2) When God is seen as Father.
- 3) When God is seen as Mother.
- 4) Love for Love's sake.
- 5) Love in Divine Union.

Above all, pure Love has no motive, it has nothing to gain. After prayer & praise comes meditation, then comes reflection on the name and on the Ishta of the individual.



The Path of Knowledge: *Jnana Yoga*

Jnana yoga is the yoga of knowledge not knowledge in the intellectual sense but the knowledge of *Brahman*, *Atman* and the realization of their unity. Where the devotee of God follows the promptings of the heart, the *jnani* uses the powers of the mind to discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory. *Jnanis*, followers of nondualistic or *advaita Vedanta*, can also be called monists for they affirm the sole reality of *Brahman*. Of course, all followers of Vedanta are monists: all *Vedantins* affirm the sole reality of Brahman.

The distinction here is in spiritual practice: while all *Vedantins* are philosophically monistic, in practice those who are devotees of God prefer to think of God as distinct from themselves in order to enjoy the sweetness of a relationship. *Jnanis*, by contrast, know that all duality is ignorance. There is no need to look outside ourselves for divinity: we ourselves already are divine. Meditation is the means of unification of the subject and object.

The Path of Work: *Karma Yoga*

Karma yoga is the *yoga* of action or work; specifically, it is the path of dedicated work i.e renouncing the results of our actions as a spiritual offering rather than hoarding the results for ourselves. *Karma* is both action and the result of action. What we experience today is the result of our karma both good and bad created by our previous actions. This chain of cause and effect that we ourselves have created can be snapped by *karma yoga*.

By disengaging the ego from the work process, by offering the results up to a higher power whether a personal God or to the Self within we stop the whole snowballing process. As long as we require someone or something to make us happy we are slaves.

Whether we realize it or not, all of us perform actions all the time since even sitting and thinking is action. Since action is inevitable, an integral part of being alive, we need to reorient it into a path to God-realization. A man should not be judged by the nature of his duties, but by the manner in which he does them.

The Path of Meditation: *Raja Yoga*

Raja yoga, is the royal path of meditation. As a king maintains control over his kingdom, so we can maintain control over our own "kingdom" the vast territory of the mind. In *raja yoga* we use our mental powers to realize the *Atman* through the process of psychological control.

The first stage of this *yoga* is ***Yama***. To master *Yama* five things are necessary:



- 1) Non-injuring any being by thought, word and deed.
- 2) Speaking the truth in thought, word and deed.
- 3) Non-convetousness in thought, word and deed.
- 4) Perfect chastity in thought, word and deed.
- 5) Perfect sinlessness in thought, word and deed.

The other stages are:

- **Pratyahara** or the restraint of the organs of sense from all outward things and focusing on mental impressions.
- **Dharana** or steadfast concentration.
- **Dhyana** or meditation.
- **Samadhi** or abstract meditation, which the last stage of meditation and perfect absorption of thought into the Supreme Spirit, when one realizes, “Me and my Father are one.”

Now when the question arises that **how are they complementary to each other**, it's very clear that even though these four paths or *yogas* appear different, there is really only one Yoga, one Union. We may be drawn to one Path more than the others but they complement each other. As the saying goes, “All roads lead to Rome,” so all Paths lead to Enlightenment.

The four different *yogas* or paths are like four different strands woven together to form the same rope, each one strengthened by the others. Choose whichever aspects of each path, they will resonate with us the same unity, the same Divinity.

