

The Bhagavad Gītā (“Blessed Song”)

Part of book 6 of the Mahābhārata. Arjuna doubts going to war. The Gītā is Kṛṣṇa’s teaching to Arjuna on the path to liberation & right action. Expresses view of Vedānta.

From chapter 2 – Knowledge (Jñāna Yoga)

ātman — (individual) self/soul,

Ātman — (divine) Self/Soul, not different from *Brahman* (God)

karma — action, cause; *phala* — fruit, result

kauśala — skillful, auspicious, appropriate [action]

svadharma — one’s personal duty/role/truth; caste duty

niṣkāma karma — desireless action

2.13 Just as, in this body, the Self passes through childhood, youth, and old age, so after death it passes to another body.

2.15 Only the man who is unmoved by any sensations, the wise man indifferent to pleasure, to pain, is fit for becoming deathless.

2.17 The presence that pervades the universe is imperishable, unchanging, beyond both is and is not: how could it ever vanish? These bodies come to an end; but that vast embodied Self is ageless, fathomless, eternal. Therefore you must fight, Arjuna.

2.31 Know what your duty is and do it without hesitation. For a warrior, there is nothing better than a battle that duty enjoins.

2.47 You have a right to your actions, but never to your actions’ fruits. Act for the action’s sake. And do not be attached to inaction. Self-possessed, resolute, act without any thought of results, open to success or failure. This equanimity is yoga.

2.50 The wise man lets go of all results, whether good or bad, and is focused on the action alone. Yoga is skill in actions.

From chapter 3 – Action (Karma Yoga)

pratyāhāra — Sense-restraint

3 *guṇa* — qualities, aspects of nature (*prakṛti*)

sattva — luminosity, purity

rajas — mobility, activity

tamas — mass, inertia, delusion

3.7 The superior man is he whose mind can control his senses; with no attachment to results, he engages in the yoga of action.

3.27 Actions are really performed by the working of the three *gunas*; but a man deluded by the I-sense imagines, “I am the doer.”

3.34 Craving and aversion arise when the senses encounter sense-objects. Do not fall prey to these two brigands blocking your path.

3.43 Knowing the Self, sustaining the self by the Self, Arjuna, kill the difficult-to-conquer enemy called desire.

From chapter 5 – Renunciation (*saṁnyāsa*)

5.3 The true renunciate neither desires things nor avoids them; indifferent to pleasure and pain, he is easily freed from all bondage.

5.8 The man who has seen the truth thinks, “I am not the doer” at all times—when he sees, hears, touches, when he smells, eats, walks, sleeps, breathes, when he defecates, talks, or takes hold, when he opens his eyes or shuts them: at all times he thinks, “This is merely sense-objects acting on the senses.”

5.27 Closing his eyes, his vision focused between the eyebrows, making the in-breath and the out-breath equal as they pass through his nostrils, he controls his senses and his mind, intent upon liberation; when desire, fear, and anger have left him, that man is forever free.

From chapter 6 – Meditation (Rāja Yoga)

6.13 With torso and head held straight, with posture steady and unmoving, gazing at the tip of his nose, not letting his eyes look elsewhere, he should sit there calm, fearless, firm in his vow to be chaste, his whole mind controlled, directed, focused, absorbed in me.

6.26 However often the restless mind may break loose and wander, he should rein it in and constantly bring it back to the Self.

6.31 He who is rooted in oneness realizes that I am in every being; wherever he goes, he remains in me. When he sees all beings as equal in suffering or in joy because they are like himself, that man has grown perfect in yoga.

From chapter 12 – Devotion (Bhakti Yoga)

12.2 Those who love and revere me with unwavering faith, always centering their minds on me—they are the most perfect in yoga.

12.9 If you find that you are unable to center your thoughts on me, strengthen your mind by the steady practice of concentration. If this is beyond your powers, dedicate yourself to me; performing all actions for my sake, you will surely achieve success. If even this is beyond you, rely on my basic teaching: act always without attachment, surrendering your action’s fruits.

From chapter 13 – The Field & the Knower (saṁkhya)

puruṣa – person, “the knower”; *prakṛti* – nature, “the field”
saṁkhya – “enumeration”, one of the 6 Hindu *darśana* (views)

13.1 This body is called the field, Arjuna; the one who watches whatever happens within it—wise men call him the Knower. I am the Knower of the field in every body, Arjuna; genuine knowledge means knowing both the field and its Knower.

13.20 Nature is the cause of any activity in the body; the Self is the cause of any feelings of pleasure or pain.

13.23 He who thus knows the Self as separate from Nature and the gunas will never be born again, whatever path he may follow.

From chapter 14 – The 3 Guṇa

14.5 The three gunas, born of Nature—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—bind to the mortal body the deathless embodied Self.

14.9 *Sattva* causes attachment to joy, *rajas* to action, and *tamas*, obscuring knowledge, attaches beings to dullness.

14.21 [Arjuna] How can I recognize the man who has gone beyond the three gunas? What has he done to go beyond them? How does he act? [Kṛṣṇa] Whatever quality arises—light, activity, delusion—he neither dislikes its presence nor desires it when it is not there.

From chapter 18 – Renunciation & Liberation

18.51 With a purified understanding, fully mastering himself, relinquishing all sense-objects, released from aversion and craving, solitary, eating lightly, controlling speech, mind, and body, absorbed in deep meditation at all times, calm, impartial, free from the “I” and “mine,” from aggression, arrogance, greed, desire, and anger, he is fit for the state of absolute freedom.

18.66 Relinquishing all your duties, take refuge in me alone. Do not fear: I will free you from the evils of birth and death.

The Kṛṣṇa “maha-mantra”:

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA | KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA HARE RĀMA | RĀMA RĀMA HARE HARE