

# Bhagavad Gītā

7: Conclusion & Final Instructions

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# Learning Objectives

- Understanding of Kṛṣṇa's final instructions to Arjuna
- Understanding of how renunciation can be interpreted
- Familiarity with the interpretations of the 9<sup>th</sup> CE Śankara and 11<sup>th</sup> CE Rāmānuja on the text's final chapter

# Review: Ch. 2

- Sāṃkhya dualism: prakṛti & puruṣa
- 2.47-50: Yoga defined
  - 47: act without attachment to outcomes
  - 48: yoga is evenness of mind
  - 49: buddhi yoga supersedes ordinary action
  - 50: yoga is skill in action
  - 51: Outcome: release from bondage of rebirth
  - This understanding of yoga is karma yoga

# Review: Ch. 3-5

- Jñāna yoga for the followers of sāmkhya
- Karma yoga for the yogis
- 5.2: Kṛṣṇa: both paths lead to ultimate welfare but karma yoga is superior

# Review: Ch. 6: Meditation

- Yoga Synthesis:
  - 1: work without expectation for result = yogī & renouncer
  - 2: Renunciation [of expectation for result] = yoga
  - 2: Pre-requisite for yogī = renouncing desire [for result]
- 18-20: yogī defined
  - 18: yogī abides in the self with controlled mind
  - 19: yogī is one whose mind is controlled
  - 20: mind is quiet/terminates [thought] by practice of yoga
  - 26-8: yogī attains Brahman
- 23-25: yoga defined
  - 23: yoga is the dissolution of the union with duḥkha (suffering)
  - 25: mind becomes fixed on the self and thus is devoid of thought
- 35-6: Means for attaining yoga: practice, dispassion, effort
- 47: the yogī of faith whose mind is absorbed in Kṛṣṇa and is devoted to him is best

# Review: Ch 7-11

- Ch. 7 Knowledge & Wisdom
- Ch. 8 Brahman
- Ch. 9 Sovereign Mystery
- Ch. 10 Power
- Ch. 11 Cosmic Form
- Ch. 12 Devotion

# Ch. 12: Devotion: Overview

- 1: Q: who are the best knowers of yoga?
  - 2: A: the devotees of Kṛṣṇa
  - 3-4: but those who worship the unmanifest [Brahman] also attain Kṛṣṇa
  - 5: reason: the path of the unmanifest is more difficult
  - 6-8: those fixed on Kṛṣṇa attain liberation, so do that
- 9: option 2 = practice [fixing mind on Kṛṣṇa]
- 10: option 3 = perform actions for Kṛṣṇa
- 11: option 4 = act being self controlled, abandoning the fruit of action
- 13-20 qualities of the yogī who is devoted to Kṛṣṇa (bhakta)

# Ch. 18 Overview:

## Conclusion, Liberation, Renunciation

- 1: Arjuna's question about renunciation
- 2-18: action & renunciation
- 19-28: knowledge, action, & agency
- 29-39: intelligence, fortitude, & happiness
- 40-45: social duty
- 46-49: action & perfection (karma yoga)
- 50-54: knowledge & perfection (jñāna yoga)
- 55-62: devotion (bhakti)
- 63-71: choice & ultimate secret
- 72-78: confirmation & exhaltation

# 18.1: Arjuna's Question

- Renunciation: tyāga & sannyāsa
- S:
  - Meaning of the respective words
  - The words as used previously were not explicit in their implications
- R
  - tyāga & sannyāsa are both means for liberation
  - Do they have different meanings or do they signify the same thing?
  - Conclusion: the nature of both is identical

# 18.2 Renunciation

- R

- Sannyāsa: complete relinquishment of desire-prompted acts
- Tyāga: is this desire-prompted acts or the fruits of all acts?
  - It includes renouncing fruits of obligatory and occasional duties
- The two terms are synonyms in Gītā

- S

- The meaning of the two terms is the same: relinquishment
- BUT it is only in the same of sannyāsins that there is no connection with the results of actions

## 18.3 Renunciation cont.

- S/R: Sāṃkhyas: all actions should be given up
- S: this discussion only pertains to those who are qualified for action, i.e. the unenlightened.
- S: this discussion does not pertain to those renunciates who are fixed in the yoga of knowledge (jñāna yoga)
- S: it is possible to give up all action. It was spoken earlier as if it was not to praise renouncing the fruits b/c Arjuna is unenlightened
- S: the enlightened ones are only fixed in knowledge, which is characterized by the renunciation of all action

# Conclusion about Tyāga (Abandoning)

- 18.4
- R
  - Fruits
  - acts themselves
  - Agency: instead one ascribes agency to the Lord
- S:
  - Three kinds refer to the unenlightened in tamas guṇa (those who are qualified for actions). It does not refer to those who are fixed in knowledge

# 18.5-6: Definitive & Highest Thought on Tyāga (Abandoning)

- R: these acts should not be abandoned by those who desire release
- R: these acts erase the karma (purification) which prevent the attainment of wisdom stemming from contemplation
- R: one should perform these acts until death
- R: attachment = possessiveness (agency) towards actions and their fruits
- S: these acts must be performed for a seeker of liberation

## 18.7 Sannyāsa (Renunciation)

- S: referring to the seeker of liberation who unenlightened and thus fit for rites and action
- S: purification of the unenlightened is what is desired and that requires action
- R: without action (like eating), even the basic maintenance of the body is impossible
- R: these acts produce knowledge rather than bind the self

# 18.8-9: Tyāga (Abandoning) in Rajas & Sattva

- R: Actions are the indirect means of release yet they produce depression
- S: fruit of renunciation = liberation (which follows from renunciation of all actions as a consequence of illumination)
- R: Rajasic abandoning: out of such fear, one decides the jñāna yoga alone should be performed for perfection
- R: Sattvic abandoning
  - Action prescribed based on one's social position and stage of life should be practiced for their own sake (as duty and as worship of Kṛṣṇa)
  - Attachment = possessiveness (agency)
- S: Sattvic abandoning: meant as a eulogy for the common thread of renunciation. This is a form of purification

# 18.10: Tyāgi (the abandoner)

- R: Filled with sattva = endowed with knowledge of reality and that is the reason for doubts being severed
- S: Filled with sattva = means of knowledge that discriminates between the self and nonself
- S: wise = intuitive experience, characterized as knowledge of the self
- S: karma yoga purifies such that one becomes steadfast in knowledge, which is actionless
- S: the unenlightened (qualified for action) thinks the body is the self and the self is the agent and thus cannot renounce all action
- S: no attachment to duties thinking they are the cause of purification and hence liberation
- R: renounces all results except Brahman
- R: abandonment = agency & attachments to fruits (NOT total renunciation of all actions)

## 18.11: Tyāgi (the abandoner) cont.

- R: the possession of a body necessitates action (i.e. eating, drinking, sacrifice)
- R: three kinds of abandoning (18.4): fruits, agency, attachment to works
- S: one who has a body refers to the unenlightened who self identifies with that body out of ignorance
- S: the one who does not self identify with the body is of a different category and is the only one qualified for total renunciation of all action

# 18.12 Fruit of action after death

- R: desirable= heaven. Mixed = human birth
- S: desirable= gods. Mixed = human birth
- R: renounced = agency & fruits
- S: the non-abandoning = the unenlightened, those who act
- R: sannyasa = tyāga = performing action without a sense of agency
- R: method of realizing self as non-agent is by attributing all agency to God. God performs all actions through the individual selves
- S: sannyasin = those steadfast in knowledge alone
- S: only those who have realized the truth can renounce action entirely

# Causes of Action

- 18.13-5 Sāṃkhya's causes of action
- 18.16-7
  - R: agency of individual self is dependent on that of the supreme self
  - S: the unenlightened thinks of oneself as the agent of action in connecting the self (who is a pure witness) with these five causes of action
  - S: slaying is on a conventional platform, ultimately: no one is slayed
  - R: not bound by the fruits of actions [karma]
- 18.18: impulse & basis for action
- 18.19: knowledge, action, agent: according to the three guṇas
  - Continues through v.28
  - S: guṇas only pertain to conventional reality

# 18.20-22: Knowledge in the three guṇas

- 18.20: Sattvic
  - R: ātman is qualitatively uniform through numerically distinct and it is unaffected by the fruits of action
  - S: the single reality is the self. Reality, like space, is undivided
- 18.21: Rajasic
  - R: thinking that bodily attributes affect the ātman
- 18.22: Tamasic
  - S: thinking there is nothing beyond this one form in body or deity

# 18.23-25: action in the three guṇas

- 18.23 Sattvic
  - R: action that is appropriate to one's social position and stage of life
  - R: without attachment: devoid of attachment to agency, etc.
- 18.24: Rajasic
  - R: obtain desires: the results of action
  - R: egoism: misconception that oneself is the agent
- 18.25: Tamasic
  - R: delusion: ignoring the agency of the supreme person

# 18.26-28: agent in the three guṇas

- 18.26: Sattvic
  - R: free from attachment to fruits, devoid of the feeling of being the agent
  - S: not given to asserting the ego, led only by the authority of the scriptures
- 18.27: Rajasic
  - R: aspires for fame, greedy= does not spend the wealth required for the act,  
S: greedy for others property and does not part with one's own wealth
  - R/S: elated by success and depressed by failure
- 18.28: Tamasic

# 18.29-32: intelligence in the three guṇas

- 18.29 intelligence & fortitude
  - R: intelligence = knowledge in the form of discriminatory discernment
  - R: Fortitude: resolution to hold on with perseverance to what has been undertaken even against all obstacles
  - S: intellect, possessor of intelligence
  - S: path of action leading to bondage and path of inaction leading to liberation
- 18.30-1: rajasic intelligence is opposite of sattvic intelligence
- 18.32: tamasic intelligence reverses everything
  - R: righteousness and unrighteousness, existent & non-existent, higher and lower truth

# 18.33-35: fortitude in the three guṇas

- 18.33: Sattvic
  - R: yoga = worship of the Lord, which forms the means for release. One sustains in worship until one's object is accomplished
  - S: yoga: concentration associated with meditative absorption in Brahman
- 18.34: Rajasic: dharma, kāma, artha (life pursuits)
- 18.35: Tamasic
  - S: considering these things greatly important, like a drunkard thinking of wine

# 18.36-39: happiness in the three guṇas

- 18.36: Happiness from practice
  - R: practice extending over a long time that gradually leads to joy and the release from the suffering of saṃsāra
  - S: abhyāsa = habit, frequent repetition
- 18.37: Sattvic
  - R: beginning = beginning of yoga
  - S: beginning = beginning of knowledge, detachment, meditation, and absorption
  - R: joy = born of a serene mind focused on the self and experiencing the self
  - S: joy = knowledge of the self
- 18.38: Rajasic
  - R: beginning = beginning of experience
  - R: contact of the senses then looks like poison when further satiation to enjoy is prevented due to over indulgence
  - S: at the end of full enjoyment of the sense objects, there is loss of vigor, strength, beauty, wisdom, wealth, and diligence
- 18.39: Tamasic
  - R/S: pleasure from sleep, sloth, and heedlessness in what ought to be done

# 18.40: guṇas affect all living beings

- R

- Tyāga = sannyāsa = relinquishment of results and sense of agency when performing actions
  - process = ascribing agency to the supreme person
- Sattva is to be cultivated

- S

- The entire transmigratory state and its roots (action, agents, and results) consists of the guṇas and is projected by ignorance
- It must be shown how the guṇas can be eradicated

# 18.41-5: guṇas & social class

- 18.41: S
  - nature = tendencies of living beings earned in past lives, which have become manifest in present life
  - Brāhmaṇa: sattva
  - Kṣatriya: sattva plus rajas
  - Vaiśya: rajas plus tamas
  - Śūdra: tamas plus rajas
- 18.41: R
  - Inherent dispositions of members of social classes due to past karma
  - Sattva = brāhmaṇa
  - Rajas: kṣatriya
  - Tamas: Vaiśya
- 18.45: R/S: duty refers to those social functions mentioned previously

# 18.46-49: action & perfection (karma yoga)

- 18.47
  - R: karma yoga is easy to perform in conjunction with one's nature.
  - R: karma yoga is better than jñāna yoga, even for a person capable of controlling the senses because of the liability for slipping from the latter
  - S: one who does not possess knowledge of the self must perform work
- 18.48
  - R: the one may be fit for jñāna yoga, one should perform karma yoga only
  - R: contrary to jñāna yoga, karma yoga is easy and does not involve negligence
  - S: this is karma yoga for the unenlightened person, incapable of renouncing action
- 18.49
  - S: one is freed from duties having realized that the self is Brahman. This success is different than that of karma yoga since it leads to immediate liberation
  - S: there are stages of success, which were listed previously
  - R: one attains devotion to meditation (the consummation of even jñāna yoga), which is the complete cessation of sensor activity

# 18.50-54: knowledge & perfection (jñāna yoga)

- 18.50
  - R: perfection in meditation generated by karma yoga performed everyday until death
  - R: brahman= knowledge = self
  - S: having become purified by worshiping God while doing one's duties, one becomes fit for steadfastness in knowledge
  - S: knowledge and the self are self-revealing; effort is not needed, only the removal of the notion of the non-self
- 18.51-3
  - R: yoga of meditation: controlling the mind by steadiness = making the mind fit for meditation by turning away from sense object. Dispassion = aversion to all objects except the one object of meditation
  - S: meditation is the highest duty: focused on the self
- 18.54
  - R: attains supreme bhakti to me = an experience that makes Kṛṣṇa dear beyond description

# 18.55-62: devotion (bhakti)

- 18.55

- R: who I am = essence, nature, attributes, glory
- R: devotion is the cause of attaining Kṛṣṇa
- S: devotion is knowledge. Steadfastness in knowledge alone by relinquishing all duties
- S: knowledge, which culminates in liberation, is the fruit of bhakti yoga

- 18.56

- R: Taking refuge = assigning agency

- 18.57

- R: buddhi yoga = mental attitude to the seeker of liberation with respect to agency of works and fruits
- S: buddhi yoga = having the intellect concentrated on Kṛṣṇa

# 18.58-60: devotion (bhakti) cont.

- 18.58

- R/S: by Kṛṣṇa's grace, you will cross the difficulties of samsāra.
- R: But you will perish if you do not heed Kṛṣṇa's words, thinking instead that you know what is to be done and what is not to be done

- 18.59

- R: This resolve born of a sense of independent will will not endure as nature is stronger than a resolve made from ignorance
- S: nature = that of a kṣatriya

- 18.60

- R/S: heroism is the duty of a kṣatriya that is born from his nature.
- R: You will not be able to resist the taunts of your enemies and will engage them in battle

# 18.61-62: devotion (bhakti) cont.

- 18.61

- R: Kṛṣṇa lives in the region of all individual beings from which all knowledge arises
- R: he enables all living beings through his māyā (illusory power)

- 18.62 How to transcend māyā

- R: fighting in this battle is inevitable for you who are ignorant and operate by Kṛṣṇa's illusory power
- R: destination is the kingdom of god

# 18.63: choice: do whatever you want

- R

- Mystery of mysteries: everything to be acquired by aspirants of liberation: karma yoga, jñāna yoga, bhakti yoga
- Do what you chose: according to your qualification with respect to following karma yoga or jñāna yoga or bhakti yoga

- S

- Kṛṣṇa the omniscient god

# 18.64-5: Greatest Secret

- 18.64

- R: bhakti yoga is the most secret of all secrets. Hear about it again
- S: the highest means for attaining knowledge, the most beneficial of all

- 18.65

- R: focus your mind: knowledge, meditation, worship, meditation
- R: renouncing all ego, you will attain Kṛṣṇa by his grace as he will not be able to bear separation from his devotee
- S: Liberation is for certain the result of Kṛṣṇa bhakti do dedicate oneself to the Lord as one's only goal
- S: surrender to god is the secret for success in karma yoga

# 18.66: Greatest Secret cont.

- 18.66

- R: relinquish the sense of agency and the fruits in practicing karma, jñāna, or bhakti yoga, don't relinquish devotional duties. Kṛṣṇa will release you from saṁsāra
- R: alternative interpretation: abandon other duties—take shelter in Kṛṣṇa alone--and commence bhakti yoga
- S: Q: Is knowledge the means to liberation or action or a combination?
- S: action is not the means to the highest good, neither action and knowledge in combination, knowledge alone is the means
- S: In absorption in Brahman (enlightenment), the mistaken idea of self identity and the illusion of mundane existence cease
- S: this knowledge only accrues to renouncers, not ignorant people who perform duties
- S: Liberation is attained without effort, just understanding of self in the natural state

# 18.67-69: Transmission of the Gītā

- 18.67

- S: Kṛṣṇa taught Gītā for Arjuna's benefit to end saṃsāra
- S/R: all requirements must be met; describing those who are not worthy to hear Gītā
- R: indignation: finding defects in Kṛṣṇa's nature, glories, and attributes

- 18.68

- R: the mystery/secret
- S: the text and its meaning
- The repetition of "bhakti" indicates that one becomes fit to hear Gītā by devotion to Kṛṣṇa

- 18.69

- R: explaining the Gītā to those who are not qualified (18.67) is more displeasing to Kṛṣṇa than not teaching those who are worthy

# 18.70-71: Transmission of the Gītā cont.

- 18.70

- S: The sacrifice in the form of knowledge is best b/c it is mental

- 18.71

- R/S: release = free from sin
- R: taught be a qualified teacher
- R: such a person will reach a realm with virtuous devotees and be lead ultimately to liberation

# 18.72-73: Confirmation

- 18.72
  - R: the ignorance which caused the proclamation: I shall not fight
- 18.73
  - R: delusion that the self is the prakṛtic body, that the individual ātman forms the body of the supreme person, and that actions do not bind but can rather be the means to emancipation
  - R: attained knowledge includes 1) self is different than prakṛti, 2) the self is a part of the supreme person who is the supreme Brahman, 3) the supreme person is the foundation of positive attributes like knowledge, strength, etc, 4) Kṛṣṇa is the supreme person in the form of bhakti, 5) bhakti can be attained through actions dedicated to pleasing the supreme person and daily practice of discerning knowledge
  - S: essential fruit: destruction of illusion arising from ignorance and gaining awareness of the self
  - S: Arjuna has achieved the goal of life and there is no further duty for him



BHISHMA

AMBIKĀ

VICITRAVĪRYA

AMBĀLIKĀ

DHRTARĀSTRA

KUNTĪ  
/  
KARNA

PĀNDU

DRUPADA

KAURAVAS

DRONA

PĀNDAVAS

DRAUPADĪ DRISTADYUMNI

① DURYODHANA

KRṢṆA

③ ARJUNA

- ① YUDHISTHIRA
- ② BHĪMA
- ④ NAKULA
- ⑤ SAHADEVA

②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

# 18.74-78: Exaltation

- 18.75

- R/S: the divine sense of perception granted by Vyāsa
- S: this dialogue is itself yoga as it is meant for the supreme

- 18.78

- R: Kṛṣṇa the yogeśvara: ruler of various manifestations of nature
- R: Arjuna, who took sole refuge in Kṛṣṇa's feet