

The Bhagavad Gita



भगवद् गीता

Bhagavad Gītā

THE FIRST TEACHING

Arjuna's Dejection

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच ॥

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca ॥

Dhritarashtra spoke:

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ॥

dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samaveta yuyutsavaḥ ॥

*on the field of dharma, on the field of the Kurus,
gathered together, eager for battle*

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥१॥

māmakaḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kimakurvata sañjaya ॥1॥

*mine and the sons of Pandu
what did they do, O Sanjaya?*

Dhritarashtra

Sanjaya, tell me what my sons
and the sons of Pandu did when they met,
wanting to battle on the field of Kuru,
on the field of sacred duty? 1

Sanjaya

Your son Duryodhana, the king,
seeing the Pandava forces arrayed,
approached his teacher Drona
and spoke in command. 2

"My teacher, see
the great Pandava army arrayed
by Drupada's son,
your pupil; intent on revenge. 3

Here are heroes; mighty archers
equal to Bhima and Arjuna in warfare,
Yuyudhana, Virata, and Drupada,
your sworn foe on his great chariot. 4

Here too are Dhrishtaketu, Cekitaila,
and the brave king of Benares;
Purujit, Kuntibhoja,
and the manly king of the Shibis. 5

Yudhamanyu is bold,
and Uttamaujas is brave;
the sons of Subhadra and Draupadi
all command great chariots. 6

Now, honored priest, mark
the superb men on our side
as I tell you the names
of my army's leaders. 7

They are you and Bhishma,
Karna and Kripa, a victor in battles,
your own son Ashvatthama,
Vikarna, and the son of Somadatta. 8

<p>Many other heroes also risk their lives for my sake, bearing varied weapons and skilled in the ways of war. 9</p>	<p>Drishtadyumna, Virata, and indomitable Satyaki, all blew their conches. 17</p>
<p>Guarded by Bhishma, the strength of our army is without limit; but the strength of their army, guarded by Bhima, is limited. 10</p>	<p>Drupada, with his five grandsons, and Subhadra's strong-armed son, each in his turn blew their conches, O King. 18</p>
<p>In all th movements of battle, you and your men, stationed according to plan, must guard Bhishma well!" 11</p>	<p>The noise tore the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons, and tumult echoed through heaven and earth. 19</p>
<p>Bhishma, fiery elder of the Kurus, roared his lion's roar and blew his conch horn, exciting Duryodhana's delight. 12</p>	<p>Arjuna, his war flag a rampant monkey, saw Dhritarashtra's sons assembled as weapons were ready to clash, and he lifted his bow. 20</p>
<p>Conches and kettledrums, cymbals, tabors, and trumpets were sounded at once and the din of tumult arose. 13</p>	<p>He told his charioteer: "Krishna, halt my chariot between the armies! 21</p>
<p>Standing on their great chariot yoked with white stallions, Krishna and Arjuna, Pandu's son, sounded their divine conches. 14</p>	<p>Far enough for me to see. these men who lust far war, ready to fight with me in the strain of battle. 22</p>
<p>Krishna blew Pancajanya, won from a demon; Arjuna blew Devadatta, a gift of the gods; fierce wolf-bellied Bhima blew Paundra, his great conch of the east. 15</p>	<p>I see men gathered here, eager to fight, bent on serving the folly of Dhritarashtra's son." 23</p>
<p>Yudhisthira, Kunti's son, the king, blew Anantavijaya, conch of boundless victory; his twin brothers Nakula and Sahadeva blew conches resonant and jewel toned. 16</p>	<p>When Arjuna had spoken, Krishna halted their splendid chariot between the armies. 24</p>
<p>The king of Benares, a superb archer, and Shikhandin on his great chariot,</p>	<p>Facing Bhishma and Drona and all the great kings, he said; "Arjuna, see the Kuru men assembled here!" 25</p>

Arjuna saw them standing there: fathers, grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends.	26	They are teachers, fathers, sons, and grandfathers, uncles, grandsons, fathers and brothers of wives, and other men of our family.	34
He surveyed his elders and companions in both armies, all his kinsmen assembled together.	27	I do not want to kill them even if I am killed, Krishna; not for kingship of all three worlds, much less for the earth!	35
Dejected, filled with strange pity, he said this: "Krishna, I see my kinsmen gathered here, wanting war.	28	What joy is there for us, Krishna, in killing Dhritarashtra's sons? Evil will haunt us if we kill them, though their bows are drawn to kill.	36
My limbs sink, my mouth is parched, my body trembles, the hair bristles on my flesh.	29	Honor forbids us to kill our cousins, Dhritarashtra's sons; how can we know happiness if we kill our own kinsmen?	37
The magic bow slips from my hand, my skin burns, I cannot stand still, my mind reels.	30	The greed that distorts their reason blinds them to the sin they commit in ruining the family, blinds them to the crime of betraying friends.	38
I see omens of chaos, Krishna, I see no good in killing my kinsmen in battle.	31	How can we ignore the wisdom of turning from this evil when we see the sin of family destruction, Krishna?	39
Krishna, I seek no victory, or kingship or pleasures. What use to us are kingship, delights, or life itself?	32	When the family is ruined, the timeless laws of family duty (<i>dharma</i>) perish; and when duty (<i>dharma</i>) is lost, chaos overwhelms the family.	40
We sought kingship, delights and pleasures for the sake of those assembled to abandon their lives and fortunes in battle.	33	In overwhelming chaos, Krishna, women of the family are corrupted; and when women are corrupted, disorder is born in society.	41

<p>This discord drags the violators and the family itself to hell; for ancestors fall when rites of offering rice and water lapse. 42</p>	<p><i>Lord Krishna</i> Why this cowardice in time of crisis, Arjuna? The coward is ignoble, shameful, foreign to the ways of heaven. 2</p>
<p>The sins of men who violate the family create disorder in society that undermines the constant laws of caste (<i>varna</i>) and family duty(<i>dharma</i>). 43</p>	<p>Don't yield to impotence! It is unnatural in you! Banish this petty weakness from your heart. Rise to the fight, Arjuna! 3</p>
<p>Krishna, we have heard that a place in hell is reserved for men who undermine family duties. 44</p>	<p><i>Arjuna</i> Krishna, how can I fight against Bhishma and Drona with arrows when they deserve my worship? 4</p>
<p>I lament the great sin we commit when our greed for kingship and pleasures drives us to kill our kinsmen. 45</p>	<p>It is better in this world to beg for scraps of food than to eat meals smeared with the blood of elders I killed at the height of their power while their goals were still desires. 5</p>
<p>If Dhritarashtra's armed sons kill me in battle when I am unarmed and offer no resistance, it will be my reward." 46</p>	<p>We don't know which weight is worse to bear— our conquering them or their conquering us. We will not want to live if we kill the sons of Dhritarashtra assembled before us. 6</p>
<p>Saying this in the time of war, Arjuna slumped into the chariot and laid down his bow and arrows, his mind tormented by grief. 47</p>	<p>The flaw of pity blights my very being; conflicting sacred duties (<i>dharma</i>) confound my reason. I ask you to tell me decisively—which is better? I am your pupil. Teach me what I seek! 7</p>
<p>THE SECOND TEACHING <i>Philosophy and Spiritual Discipline</i></p>	
<p><i>Sanjaya</i> Arjuna sat dejected, filled with pity, his sad eyes blurred by tears. Krishna gave him counsel. 1</p>	<p>I see nothing that could drive away the grief that withers my senses; even if I won the kingdoms of unrivaled wealth on earth and sovereignty over gods. 8</p>

Sanjaya

Arjuna told this
to Krishna—then saying,
"I shall not fight,"
he fell silent. 9

Mocking him gently,
Krishna gave this counsel
As Arjuna sat dejected,
between the two armies. 10

Lord Krishna

You grieve for those beyond grief,
and you speak words of insight;
but learned men do not grieve
for the dead or the living. 11

Never have I not existed,
nor you, nor these kings;
and never in the future
shall we cease to exist. 12

Just as the embodied self
enters childhood, youth, and old age,
so does it enter another body;
this does not confound a steadfast man. 13

Contacts with matter make us feel
heat and cold, pleasure and pain.
Arjuna, you must learn to endure
fleeting things—they come and go! 14

When these cannot torment a man,
when suffering and joy are equal
for him and he has courage,
he is fit for immortality. 15

Nothing of nonbeing comes to be,
nor does being cease to exist;
the boundary between these two
is seen by men who see reality. 16

Indestructible is the presence
that pervades all this;
no one can destroy
this unchanging reality. 17

Our bodies are known to end,
but the embodied self is enduring,
indestructible, and immeasurable;
therefore, Arjuna, fight the battle! 18

He who thinks this self a killer
and he who thinks it killed,
both fail to understand;
it does not kill, nor is it killed. 19

It is not born, it does not die;
having been, it will never not be;
unborn, enduring, constant and primordial,
it is not killed when the body is killed. 20

Arjuna, when a man knows the self
to be indestructible, enduring, unborn,
unchanging, how does he kill
or cause anyone to kill? 21

As a man discards worn-out clothes
to put on new and different ones,
so the embodied self discards its worn-out
bodies
to take on other new ones. 22

Weapons do not cut it,
fire does not burn it,
waters do not wet it,
wind does not wither it. 23

It cannot be cut or burned;
it cannot be wet or withered;
it is enduring, all-pervasive,
fixed, immovable, and timeless. 24

<p>It is called unmanifest, inconceivable, and immutable; since you know that to be so, you should not grieve!</p>	25	<p>you will abandon your own duty and fame only to gain evil.</p>	33
<p>If you think of its birth and death as ever-recurring, then too, Great Warrior, you have no cause to grieve!</p>	26	<p>People will tell of your undying shame, and for a man of honor shame is worse than death.</p>	34
<p>Death is certain for anyone born, and birth is certain for the dead; since the cycle is inevitable, you have no cause to grieve.</p>	27	<p>The great chariot warriors will think you deserted in fear of battle; you will be despised by those who held you in esteem.</p>	35
<p>Creatures are unmanifest in origin, manifest in the midst of life, and unmanifest again in the end. Since this is so, why do you lament?</p>	28	<p>Your enemies will slander you, scorning your skill in so many unspeakable ways— could any suffering be worse?</p>	36
<p>Rarely someone sees it, rarely another speaks it, rarely anyone hears it— even hearing it, no one really knows it.</p>	29	<p>If you are killed, you win heaven; if you triumph, you enjoy the earth; therefore, Arjuna, stand up and resolve to fight the battle!</p>	37
<p>The self embodied in the body of every being is indestructible; you have no cause to grieve for all these creatures, Arjuna!</p>	30	<p>Impartial to joy and suffering, gain and loss, victory and defeat, arm yourself for the battle, lest you fall into evil.</p>	38
<p>Look to your own duty; do not tremble before it; nothing is better for a warrior (<i>kshatriya</i>) than a battle of sacred duty (<i>dharma</i>).</p>	31	<p>Understanding is defined in terms of philosophy; now hear it in spiritual discipline (<i>yoga</i>). Armed with this understanding, Arjuna, you will escape the bondage of action (<i>karma</i>).</p>	39
<p>The doors of heaven open for warriors who rejoice to have a battle like this thrust on them by chance.</p>	32	<p>No effort in this world is lost or wasted; a fragment of sacred duty (<i>dharma</i>) saves you from great fear.</p>	40
<p>If you fail to wage this war of sacred duty (<i>dharma</i>),</p>		<p>This understanding is unique in its inner core or resolve; diffuse and pointless are the ways irresolute men understand.</p>	41

Undiscerning men who delight in the tenets of ritual lore utter florid speech, proclaiming, "There is nothing else!"	42	Disciplined by understanding, one abandons both good and evil deeds; so arm yourself for discipline (<i>yoga</i>)— discipline (<i>yoga</i>) is skill in action.	50
Driven by desire, they strive after heaven and contrive to win powers and delights, but their intricate ritual language bears only the fruit of action (<i>karma</i>) in rebirth.	43	Wise men disciplined by understanding relinquish the fruit born of action (<i>karma</i>); freed from these bonds of rebirth, they reach a place beyond decay.	51
Obsessed with powers and delights, their reason lost in words, they do not find in contemplation this understanding of inner resolve.	44	When your understanding passes beyond the swamp of delusion, you will be indifferent to all that is heard in sacred lore.	52
Arjuna, the realm of sacred lore is nature—beyond its triad of qualities (<i>gunas</i>), dualities, and mundane rewards, be forever lucid, alive to your self (<i>Atman</i>).	45	When your understanding turns from sacred lore to stand fixed, immovable in contemplation, then you will reach discipline (<i>yoga</i>).	53
For the discerning priest, all of sacred lore has no more value than a well when water flows everywhere.	46	<i>Arjuna</i> Krishna, what defines a man deep in contemplation whose insight and thought are sure? How would he speak? How would he sit? How would he move?	54
Be intent on action (<i>karma</i>), not on the fruits of action; avoid attraction to the fruits and attachment to inaction!	47	<i>Lord Krishna</i> When he gives up desires in his mind, is content with the self within himself, then he is said to be a man whose insight is sure, Arjuna.	55
Perform actions, firm in discipline (<i>yoga</i>), relinquishing attachment; be impartial to failure and success— this equanimity is called discipline (<i>yoga</i>).	48	When suffering does not disturb his mind, when his craving for pleasures has vanished, when attraction, fear, and anger are gone, he is called a sage whose thought is sure.	56
Arjuna, action (<i>karma</i>) is far inferior to the discipline (<i>yoga</i>) of understanding; so seek refuge in understanding—pitiful are men drawn by the fruit of action.	49	When he shows no preference in fortune or misfortune and neither exults nor hates, his insight is sure.	57

When, like a tortoise retracting its limbs, he withdraws his senses completely from sensuous objects, his insight is sure.	58	Without discipline, he has no understanding or inner power; without inner power, he has no peace; and without peace where is joy?	66
Sensuous objects fade when the embodied self abstains from food; the taste lingers, but it too fades in the vision of higher truth.	59	If his mind submits to the play of the senses, they drive away insight, as wind drives a ship on water.	67
Even when a man of wisdom tries to control them, Arjuna, the bewildering senses attack his mind with violence.	60	So, Great Warrior, when withdrawal of the senses from sense objects is complete, discernment is firm.	68
Controlling them all, with discipline (<i>yoga</i>) he should focus on me; when his senses are under control, his insight is sure.	61	When it is night for all creatures, a master of restraint is awake; when they are awake, it is night for the sage who sees reality.	69
Brooding about sensuous objects makes attachment to them grow; from attachment desire arises, from desire anger is born.	62	As the mountain depths of the ocean are unmoved when waters rush into it, so the man unmoved when desires enter him attains a peace that eludes the man of many desires.	70
From anger comes confusion; from confusion memory lapses; from broken memory understanding is lost; from loss of understanding, he is ruined.	63	When he renounces all desires and acts without craving, possessiveness, or individuality, he finds peace.	71
But a man of inner strength whose senses experience objects without attraction and hatred, in self-control, finds serenity.	64	This is the place of infinite spirit; achieving it, one is freed from delusion; abiding in it even at the time of death, one finds the pure calm of infinity.	72
In serenity, all his sorrows dissolve; his reason becomes serene, his understanding sure.	65		

THE SIXTH TEACHING

*The Man of Discipline**Lord Krishna*

One who does what must be done
without concern for the fruits
is a man of renunciation (*sannyasin*) and
discipline,
not one who shuns ritual fire and rites. 1

Know that discipline (*yoga*), Arjuna,
is what men call renunciation (*sannyasam*);
no man is disciplined
without renouncing willful intent. 2

Action (*karma*) is the means for a sage
who seeks to mature in discipline (*yoga*);
tranquility is the means
for one who is mature in discipline (*yoga*). 3

He is said to be mature in discipline (*yoga*)
when he has renounced all intention
and is detached
from sense objects and actions. 4

He should elevate himself by the self (*Atman*),
not degrade himself;
for the self (*Atman*) is its own friend
and its own worst foe. 5

The self (*Atman*) is the friend of a man
who masters himself through the self (*Atman*),
but for a man without self-mastery,
the self is like an enemy at war. 6

The higher self (*Atman*) of a tranquil man
whose self is mastered
is perfectly poised in cold or heat,
joy or suffering, honor or contempt. 7

Self-contented in knowledge (*jnana*) and
judgment,
his senses subdued, on the summit of
existence,
impartial to clay, stone, or gold,
the man of discipline (*yogi*) is disciplined. 8

He is set apart by his disinterest
toward comrades, allies, enemies,
neutrals, nonpartisans, foes, friends,
good and even evil men. 9

A man of discipline (*yogi*) should always
discipline himself, remain in seclusion,
isolated, his thought and self well controlled,
without possessions or hope. 10

He should fix for himself
a firm seat in a pure place,
neither too high nor too low,
covered in cloth, deerskin, or grass. 11

He should focus his mind and restrain
the activity of his thought and senses;
sitting on that seat, he should practice
discipline for the purification of the self. 12

He should keep his body, head
and neck aligned, immobile, steady;
he should gaze at the tip of the nose
and not let his glance wander. 13

The self tranquil, his fear dispelled,
firm in his vow of celibacy, his mind
restrained,
let him sit with discipline,
his thought fixed on me, intent on me. 14

Disciplining himself,
his mind controlled,
a man of discipline (*yogi*) finds peace,
the pure calm that exists in me. 15

Gluttons have no discipline, nor the man who starves himself, nor he who sleeps excessively or suffers wakefulness. 16	He should entirely relinquish desires aroused by willful intent; he should entirely control his senses with his mind. 24
When a man disciplines his diet and diversions, his physical actions, his sleeping and waking, discipline (<i>yoga</i>) destroys his sorrow. 17	He should gradually become tranquil, firmly controlling his understanding; focusing his mind on the self (<i>Atman</i>), he should think nothing. 25
When his controlled thought rests within the self (<i>Atman</i>) alone, without craving objects of desire, he is said to be disciplined. 18	Wherever his faltering mind unsteadily wanders, he should restrain it and bring it under self-control. 26
"He does not waver, like a lamp sheltered from the wind" is the simile recalled for a man of discipline (<i>yogi</i>), restrained in thought and practicing self-discipline. 19	When his mind is tranquil, perfect joy comes to the man of discipline (<i>yogi</i>); his passion is calmed, he is without sin, being one with the infinite spirit (<i>Brahman</i>). 27
When his thought ceases, checked by the exercise of discipline (<i>yoga</i>), he is content within the self (<i>Atman</i>), seeing the self (<i>Atman</i>) through himself. 20	Constantly disciplining himself, free from sin, the man of discipline easily achieves perfect joy in harmony with the infinite spirit. 28
Absolute joy beyond the senses can only be grasped by understanding; when one knows it, he abides there and never wanders from this reality. 21	Arming himself with discipline (<i>yoga</i>), seeing everything with an equal eye, he sees the self (<i>Atman</i>) in all creatures and all creatures in the self (<i>Atman</i>). 29
Obtaining it, he thinks there is no greater gain; abiding there, he is unmoved, even by deep suffering. 22	He who sees me everywhere and sees everything in me will not be lost to me, and I will not be lost to him. 30
Since he knows that discipline (<i>yoga</i>) means unbinding the bonds of suffering, he should practice discipline (<i>yoga</i>) resolutely, without despair dulling his reason. 23	I exist in all creatures, so the disciplined man (<i>yogi</i>) devoted to me grasps the oneness of life; wherever he is, he is in men. 31

When he sees identity in everything, whether joy or suffering, through analogy with the self (<i>Atman</i>), he is deemed a <i>yogi</i> . 32	<i>Lord Krishna</i> Arjuna, he does not suffer doom in this world or the next; any man who acts with honor cannot go the wrong way, my friend. 40
<i>Arjuna</i> You define this discipline by equanimity, Krishna; but in my faltering condition, I see no ground for it. 33	Fallen in discipline (<i>yoga</i>), he reaches worlds made by his virtue, wherein he dwells for endless years, until he is reborn in a house of upright and noble men. 41
Krishna, the mind is faltering, violent, strong, and stubborn; I find it as difficult to hold as the wind. 34	Or he is born in a family of disciplined men; the kind of birth in the world that is very hard to win. 42
<i>Lord Krishna</i> Without doubt, the mind is unsteady and hard to hold, but practice and dispassion can restrain it, Arjuna. 35	There he regains a depth of understanding from his former life and strives further to perfection, Arjuna. 43
In my view, discipline (<i>yoga</i>) eludes the unrestrained self, but if he strives to master himself, a man has the means to reach it. 36	Carried by the force of his previous practice, a man who seeks to learn discipline (<i>yoga</i>) passes beyond sacred lore (<i>Vedic hymns</i>) that expresses the infinite spirit (<i>Brahman</i>) in words. 44
<i>Arjuna</i> When a man has faith, but no acetic will, and his mind deviates from discipline (<i>yoga</i>) before its perfection is achieved, what way is there for him, Krishna? 37	The man of discipline (<i>yogi</i>), striving with effort, purified of his sins, perfected through many births. finds a higher way. 45
Doomed by his double failure, is he not like a cloud split apart, unsettled, deluded on the path of the infinite spirit (<i>Brahman</i>)? 38	He is deemed superior to men of penance, men of knowledge, and men of action; be a man of discipline, Arjuna! 46
Krishna, only you can dispel this doubt of mine completely; there is no one but you to dispel this doubt. 39	Of all the men of discipline, the faithful man devoted to me, with his inner self deep in mine, I deem most disciplined. 47

THE FOURTEENTH TEACHING
The Triad of Nature's Qualities

Lord Krishna

I shall teach you still more
of the farthest knowledge one can know;
knowing it, all the sages
have reached perfection. 1

Resorting to this knowledge,
they follow the ways of my sacred duty;
in creation they are not reborn,
in dissolution they suffer no sorrow. 2

My womb is the great infinite spirit;
in it I place the embryo,
and from this, Arjuna,
comes the origin of all creatures. 3

The infinite spirit is the great womb
of all forms that come to be
in all wombs,
and I am the seed-giving father. 4

Lucidity (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), dark inertia
(*tamas*)—
these qualities (*gunas*) inherent in nature
(*prakriti*)
bind the unchanging
embodied self in the body. 5

Lucidity (*sattva*), being untainted,
is luminous and without decay;
it binds one with attachment
to joy and knowledge, Arjuna. 6

Know that passion (*rajas*) is emotional,
born of craving and attachment;
it binds the embodied self
with attachment to action (*karma*). 7

Know that dark inertia (*tamas*) born of
ignorance
as the delusion of every embodied self;
it binds one with negligence,
indolence, and sleep, Arjuna. 8

Lucidity addicts one to joy,
and passion to actions,
but dark inertia obscures knowledge
and addicts one to negligence. 9

When lucidity dominates
passion and inertia, it thrives;
and likewise when passion or inertia
dominates the other two. 10

When the light of knowledge
shines in all the body's senses,
then one knows
that lucidity prevails. 11

When passion increases, Arjuna,
greed and activity,
involvement in actions,
disquiet, and longing arise. 12

When dark inertia increases,
obscurity and inactivity,
negligence
and delusion, arise. 13

When lucidity prevails,
the self whose body dies
enters the untainted worlds
of those who know reality. 14

When he dies in passion,
he is born among the lovers of action;
so when he dies in dark inertia,
he is born into wombs of folly. 15

The fruit of good conduct
but suffering is the fruit of passion,
ignorance the fruit of dark inertia. 16

From lucidity knowledge is born;
from passion comes greed;
from dark inertia comes negligence,
delusion, and ignorance. 17

Men who are lucid go upward;
men of passion stay in between;
men of dark inertia,
caught in vile ways, sink low. 18

When a man of vision sees
nature's (*prakriti*) qualities (*gunas*) as the agent
of action and knows what lies beyond,
he enters into my being. 19

Transcending the three qualities (*gunas*)
that are the body's source, the self
achieves immortality, freed from the sorrows
of birth, death, and old age. 20

Arjuna

Lord, what signs mark a man
who passes beyond the three qualities?
What does he do to cross
beyond these qualities? 21

Krishna

He does not dislike light
or activity or delusion;
when they cease to exist
he does not desire them. 22

He remains disinterested,
unmoved by qualities of nature;
he never wavers, knowing
that only qualities are in motion. 23

is pure and untainted they say,
Self-reliant, impartial to suffering
and joy, to clay, stone, or gold,
the resolute man is the same
to foe and friends, to blame and praise. 24

The same in honor, and disgrace,
to ally and enemy, a man
who abandons involvements
transcends the qualities of nature. 25

One who serves me faithfully,
with discipline of devotion,
transcends the qualities of nature
and shares in the infinite spirit (*Brahman*). 26

I am the infinite spirit's foundation,
immortal and immutable,
the basis of eternal sacred duty (*dharma*)
and of perfect joy. 27

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KEY TERMS

भगवद् गीता

Bhagavad Gītā
Bhagavad Gita

The Song of the Blessed One

कर्म योग

karma yoga
karma yoga

the yoga of action

राज योग

rāja yoga
*raja yoga*the “royal” yoga; the yoga of knowledge
yoga of meditation

भक्ति योग

bhakti yoga
bhakti yoga

the yoga of devotion

गुण

guṇa
*Guna*a thread or strand; the qualities of *Prakriti* or nature

सत्त्व

sattva
*Sattova*the *guna* of *lucidity*

रजस्

rajas
*Rajas*the *guna* of *passion*

तमस्

tamas
*Tamas*the *guna* of *inertia*

QUESTIONS

1. What is the setting of the *Bhagavad Gita* and what is the dilemma faced by Arjuna?
2. Is the *Bhagavad Gita* meant to be understood literally or metaphorically? What does it mean to suggest that the *Bhagavad Gita* is metaphorical in character? Who do Arjuna and Krishna represent in this story?
3. What central teachings of the *Upanishads* are expressed in Krishna's response to Arjuna in the Second Teaching (Verses 11-30)?
4. What is *Karma Yoga* and how is this explained in the Second Teaching (Verses 47-48)?
5. What is *Raja Yoga* and how does Krishna describe the *yogi*? What are the essential features of an awakened person? How does the simile of the lamp or flame in the wind in the Sixth Teaching help to describe the one who has mastered *Raja Yoga*?
6. What is *Bhakti Yoga* and why might it be regarded as the greatest of all yogas? How might all the various paths of yoga be understood to form a unitive whole?
7. What is the teaching concerning the three qualities (*gunas*) of nature (*prakriti*) expressed by Krishna in the Fourteenth Teaching?