

Review: Structure of the Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 1: Arjuna viśāda yoga (sorrow acts as catalyst): Sets the context

- Student must be a good and ethical person who wants to learn

Chapter 2: Sāṅkhya yoga—overview of a person's life

- Some things to be done (*karma*)
- Some things to be known (*jñānam*)
- Since the gaining of liberation is of the type *prāptasya prāptiḥ*, then *karma* is used as a tool (*sādhanā*) for *jñānam* (*sādhya*)

Chapter 3: Karma yoga—*karma* to be used as a *yoga*

- The true effectiveness of action in one's life
- Relaxed *karma* because I know I am well taken care of and have a sense of the freedom that is my own nature—that credit card is here somewhere!
- *Kṛṣṇa* says *Jñānam* is best, but then tells Arjuna to pursue *karma* and fight
- Student must become **qualified** in order to be eligible to receive *jñāna*

Chapters 4, 5, 6—focus moves from *karma* → *jñāna*

Jñāna yoga vs. *jñānam* NOT used as a *yoga*:

→ Knowledge can be misused to increase one's importance in life, as when one becomes an expert in a given field or gains knowledge through purely academic study. This is **not** using *jñānam* as a *yoga*.

→ *Jñāna yoga* is the pursuit of knowledge for one's own good, when *yoga* is the means of gaining total freedom in one's life

3 Stages of gaining knowledge about the self:

1. **Śravaṇam** (Chapter 4, v. 18-24)
 - An authoritative, convincing case that your happiness is within you
 - Exactly what is to be known; *prāptasya prāpti*: you have what it takes, you just don't know it.
 - Knowledge that I have the credit card in the house—it's not lost.
2. **Mananam** (Chapter 5)
 - Analysis of *śravaṇam*; this teaching seems contradictory to my own experience (I'm occasionally happy, but often unhappy)
 - To think; to reconcile; to inquire
3. **Nididhyāsanam** (Chapter 6)

- Assimilation of fruits of knowledge. This takes awhile, so don't be hasty.
- Swami Paramarthananda: when you're hungry, having food is good but doesn't really benefit you. The benefit comes from assimilation and absorption of that food. *Śravaṇam* and *mananam* are like eating. *Nididhyāsanam* is digesting.

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CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: *jñāna karma sannyāsa yoga*

- Right proportion of *karma* and *jñāna*
- *Sannyāsa*: the ability to disengage and not let things bother you; realizing things don't matter as much as I think they should
 - Like finally selling the house with problems (rats, etc.). My identification as owner of the home is now over, and I can relax.

3 Main Topics in Ch. 4 (but not the only ones):

1. *Avatāra rahasya* (v. 1-8)

Rahasya: the secret, something not understood

Avatāra: an incarnation of God

- Knowledge always is. It may be revealed—or maybe not—either way, *Īśvara* is always there.
- *Kṛṣṇa* is an *avatāra* of *Viṣṇu*, born as a human being
- Whether you capture the knowledge in form depends on your preparation to receive it (like radio waves)
- Complete consistency between *vedas* and *Bhagavad Gīta*
- Gita has many topics
 - What is the goal is often misinterpreted
 - The best to seek reference to *veda*
 - Called *tātparyā niścaya* (the ascertainment of essence)
 - Atma is real and free; that which is not the atma is not real and not free
- *Avatāra*: looks like any other person, but 4 differences:
 - Cause:
 - Person: under the control of *karma*
 - *Avatāra*: acts purely out of compassion
 - *Āyurveda*: human body is supposed to be healthy and is self-repairing, but one may need to seek outside help with exceptional problems
 - Nature:
 - Person more involved with *tamo guna rajo guna pradhāna*

- *Avatāra* creation is *sattva guna pradhāna* (wisdom, understanding, love)
- Method of assuming form
 - Person: *Bhautika śarīra* (needs parents/conception)
 - *Avatāra*: Straightaway appearance (like Immaculate Conception)
- Function:
 - Persona: to exhaust *karma papa* vs.
 - *Avatāra*: to protect the good and punish the bad

→ Important part of *avatāra rahasya*: Teaching of Bhagavad Gita is consistent w/the *Vedas* (considered the 5th *Veda*)

2. *Jñāna yoga* (main one): the goal (*sādhya*) (v. 18-24)

- v. 24: The crux of *Vedanta*. An important, apparently contradictory, and difficult to grasp verse.
 - Those who see action in non-action and those who see action in non-action are the wise people
- Paradoxical statements are very important in *Vedanta*
- “Smaller than the smallest, bigger than the biggest” = something that is in both the smallest and biggest (e.g., like water in waves)
- It’s meaning becomes clear, like analogy of electricity and appliance (Swami Paramarthananda)

The 5-fold truth:

Ātmā, the conscious being:

1. Is not a product, part, or property of the body (or the mind)
2. Is an independent entity that pervades and enlivens the body (combination: like when inert appliance becomes alive when electricity flows into it)
3. Is not limited by the boundaries of the body
 - a. Try an open-eyed meditation: Notice that Consciousness is all-pervading. You can be aware of your body, happenings outside your body, as well as movements of the mind/thoughts.
4. Survives even after the fall of the body. Death of body is not the death of Consciousness.
5. The surviving Consciousness cannot interact with the world when the body medium is not available. To interact with the world, you need a medium of interaction. Consciousness cannot be turned off like electricity.

If we cannot see Consciousness, we reason it simply must not be there—like horns of a human being. But there’s an exception: Consciousness is always there, just not always understood/seen. I AM always there.

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Asti (it is, I am) *bhāti priyam rūpam nāma*

Short meditation on this point.

Jñāna yoga the *Gita* conveys:

I AM and I KNOW. This never changes; it always is. "That I AM and That I KNOW"
Different from "What I am and What I know," which changes all the time.

3. *Jñāna sādhanāni*: the means

** We'll cover this next week.