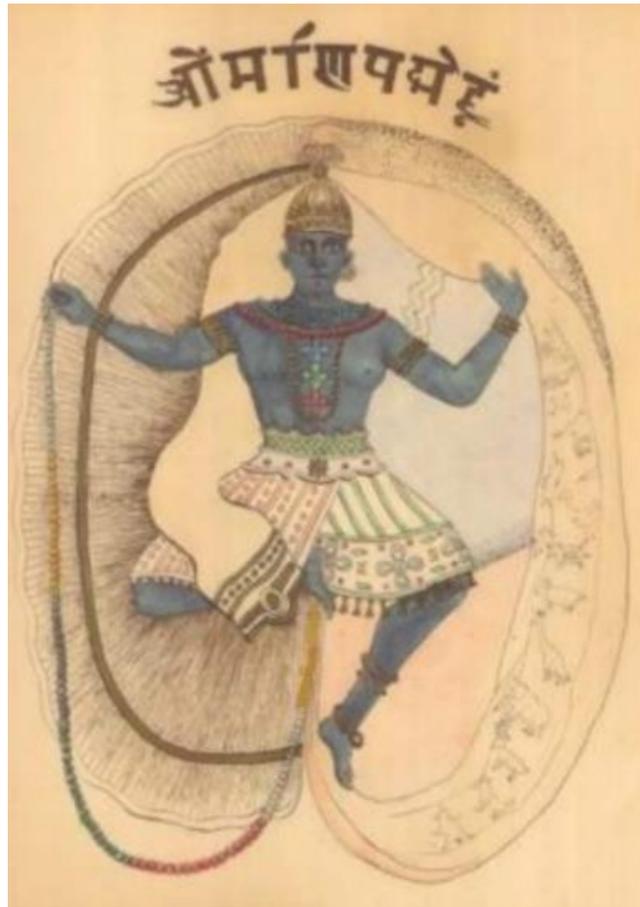


Discover the wisdom of this powerful ancient Indian classic

The Bhagavad Gita

a series of three meetings on its 18 Chapters



The Third Meeting on Chapters 13-18

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Review of Chapters 1 to 12, on Action & Devotion

H. P. Blavatsky says that the *Bhagavad Gita*, “The Lord’s Song,” is a dialogue between Krishna, the “Charioteer,” and Arjuna, his Chela, on the highest spiritual philosophy.

The Theosophical approach to the *Gita* is that “When Krishna uses the personal pronoun throughout the *Gita* [“I,” “Me” etc.] he is not referring to his own personality, but to the Self of All.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad Gita*, 157) This is important as it places our attention inside, instead of outside to an apparent Deity, and encourages us in self-reliance.

In the first two meetings we saw the structure of the 18 Chapters of the *Gita* divided into the three divisions of natural progress. Some of these we saw were:

	Action,	Devotion leading to	Knowledge.
these correlate to	Ignorance,	Learning	and Mastery.

Theosophical teachings are able take us out of Ignorance, show how to navigate the temptations of Learning and are a guide towards self Mastery.

The aim is union with the Divine, its means are twofold. One is positive (to recognise the inner deity), the other is negative (to renounce selfish interests). As an “Integral Yoga” it combines the diverse areas of life into a coherent practice: right Action (which is pure and unselfish), Devotion to the highest (shared in all Beings), and a true Knowledge of Nature.

Devotion to the wellbeing of others is the true “Path,” in *The Voice of the Silence* it is “**The Hall of Probationary Learning.**” There, devotion to the interests of others is the first requirement, and its weakness or absence bars all further progress of the right sort.

From Chapter 7 we find the most sublime teachings, containing an exposition of metaphysics which leads to occult knowledge. It culminates in devotion to the Unmanifested, the essence of which is innate in every being, as the Higher Self, “the Krishna within.” (*The Secret Doctrine* 1:86 & 1:169)

Summary of Chapters 13 to 18 Knowledge, Jnana Yoga

The result of right thought and action is Spiritual Wisdom. The Adept becomes harmless because with Wisdom he is harmony with all in Nature. The Spiritual nature is always compassionate and Self-sacrificing, it is the Hall of Wisdom (*Voice*, 7). Such sacrificial actions of the Wise are actions in accord with the embodied 'One Life.'

Chapter 13 is said to contain 'the whole of Occultism,' the Brotherhood of all Consciousnesses. It distinguishes the "**field**" from the "**Knower** of the Field," eliminating the false illusion of "I", Ahankara:

1. Purusha (Atman; or 'Krishna-Narayana, the preserver') is the "**owner** of the field."
2. Mula-prakriti, Buddhi, are all the Skandhas or past experiences, this is the "**field**."
3. These are perceived by Mahat, Higher Manas, the **Man** (the journeying pilgrim-soul).

These are the "Three in One," the Self of all Creatures, which is eternal and our real Self. For we are not our present identities, which are only temporary... however close to us!

Chapter 14 Discrimination of the Three Qualities is a needed experience in the 4th Round; these (purity, action and quiescence) come through the three forms of the Universe, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer-regenerator, Trimurthi.

Chapter 15 Gaining a deep understanding of the Universal One Self, (Maha-Purusha) gives real esoteric Wisdom. It is an alchemical process that realigns our perceptions.

Chapter 16 Knowledge of the 'Pairs of Opposites' enables our Mind to control our Motives. The "Field of Desire" shows all choices are dual and are resolved by spiritual dispassion 'overhead' which sits within us, watching patiently.

Chapter 17 Faith (Shraddha) is triple. Our equipoise and balance depends on Manas choosing rightly, by its innate Wisdom. Lower Manas has to reach perfection through self-reform. Dependence first passes to independence, and then to inter-dependence.

Chapter 18 The Final Act of Wisdom is Love and Sacrifice.
The Eternal Teachers are the "Great Sacrifice" [see *Secret Doctrine* 1:207-210]
There is no coercion; all make their own final choices independently.
(this is the highest state of Union and bliss, attained only by those who love all Beings.)

Chapter XIII Devotion by means of the Discrimination of the Kshetra from Kshetrajna

Krishna states that the 'field' (Kshetra) is to be known by the 'owner of the field,' the Kshetrajna, and, he adds "I am the Knower in every mortal body, O son of Bharata; that knowledge which through the soul is a realization of both the known and the knower is alone esteemed by me as wisdom." (*Gita* 93)

In this chapter is beautifully summarised the whole of the philosophy in a nutshell:

"True wisdom of a spiritual kind is freedom from self-esteem, hypocrisy, and injury to others; it is patience, sincerity, respect for spiritual instructors, purity, firmness, self-restraint, dispassion for objects of sense, freedom from pride, and a meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness, and error; it is an exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household, and a constant unwavering of heart upon the arrival of every event whether favorable or unfavorable; it is a never-ceasing love for me alone, the self being effaced, and worship paid in a solitary spot, and a want of pleasure in congregations of men; it is a resolute continuance in the study of Adhyatma, the Superior Spirit, and a meditation upon the end of the acquirement of a knowledge of truth;—this is called wisdom or spiritual knowledge; its opposite is ignorance." (*Gita* 93-4)

When the spirit is embodied it experiences the sensations that proceed from matter and this, *through attachment to them*, is the cause of its rebirth in good or evil circumstances. (*Gita* 96)

By various methods: meditation-contemplation, philosophical study and, works, men attempt to become free and view the spirit within. But Krishna states "He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed." (*Gita* 97)

Once a man perceives: "...the same Lord present in everything and everywhere, he does not by the lower self destroy his own soul, but goeth to the supreme end." (*Gita* 97)

Chapter XIV Devotion by means of Separation from the Three Qualities

Krishna says it is sublime spiritual knowledge that enables Sages to attain to ultimate perfection, they see that all forms are produced from the Universal womb of Brahma from the rudimentary elements, the three great qualities:

- **Sattva:** the light or truth that captures the soul through lucidity, peacefulness, happiness, attachment to knowledge and *that which is pleasant*. With wisdom, this quality prevails and produces Karmic fruit of righteous acts. When it shines in persons, they achieve renown.
- **Rajas:** passion or desire that produces thirst and propensity, action and its consequences. This quality is marked by the love of gain, activity and the initiating of works. Its karma is gathered in pain. Those who manifest this quality remain in the middle sphere of works.

- **Tamas:** indifference or darkness; surrounding the power of judgment it deludes all creatures, imprisoning the Ego in a body through idleness, folly, sleep, and heedlessness; it is marked by absence of illumination. Its karmic fruit is marked by ignorance, delusion and folly. Those afflicted with this gloomy quality sink into obscurity. (*Gita* 101-3, 115-8)
[See also WQJ's *Letters That Have Helped Me*, 27]

The Wise, perceiving that the embodied Self overcomes the qualities of goodness, action and indifference are released from the bonds of rebirth, death, old age, and pain, and *drink of the waters of immortality*. (*Gita* 124)

Arjuna asks "What are the characteristic marks by which the man may be known, O Master, who hath surpassed the three qualities?"

"He...who doth not hate these qualities—illumination, action, and delusion—when they appear, nor longeth for them when they disappear; who like one who is of no party, sitteth as one unconcerned...and undisturbed by them; who is of equal mind in pain and pleasure, self-centered, to whom a lump of earth, a stone, or gold are as one; who is of equal mind with those who love or dislike, constant, the same whether blamed or praised; equally minded in honor and disgrace, and the same toward friendly or unfriendly side, engaging only in necessary actions, such an one hath surmounted the qualities." (*Gita* 103-4)

Chapter XV Devotion through Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit

Krishna uses the Ashwattha tree (Banyan) as a *symbol* of the Universe. [see *Isis* 1:153; *SD* 1:406, 1:536, 1:549] He declares that it grows inverted, with its roots above and its branches among mankind.

The many "leaves" are the Vedas (Holy Scriptures and Rules, *Gita* 108) which Krishna declares himself to be the sole interpreter.

"Its branches grow out of the three qualities (Sattva - Rajas - Tamas)... with the objects of sense as the lesser shoots, spread forth, some above and some below in the regions of mankind are the connecting bonds of action (Karma)." (*Gita* 105)

The eternal "Mundane Tree" cannot be fully understood as a symbol unless we see that it is the mind aspect of Nature. Because of Desire's connection with Manas it has to be "hewn (cut) down with the strong axe of dispassion." (*Gita* 105)

Dispassion is achieved by those who "...are free from pride of self and whose discrimination is perfected, who have prevailed over the fault of attachment to action, who are constantly employed in devotion to meditation upon the Supreme Spirit, who have renounced desire and are free from the influence of the opposites known as pleasure and pain." (*Gita* 106)

"The deluded do not see the Spirit when it quitteth or remains in the body... But those who have the eye of wisdom perceive it, and devotees who industriously strive to do so, see it

dwelling in their own hearts; whilst those who have not overcome themselves, who are devoid of discrimination, see it not, even though they strive thereafter..." (*Gita* 106-7)

Chapter XVI Devotion through Discrimination between Godlike and demoniacal Natures

Krishna then describes the godlike nature which comes to the free, unattached person:

"Fearlessness, sincerity, assiduity in devotion, generosity, self-restraint, piety and alms-giving, study, mortification, and rectitude; harmlessness, veracity, and freedom from anger, resignation, equanimity, and not speaking of the faults of others, universal compassion, modesty and mildness; patience, power, fortitude, and purity, discretion, dignity, unvengefulness, and freedom from conceit." (*Gita* 110-1)

However, those who are not free are born with demoniacal dispositions, knowing "not the nature of action nor of cessation from action, they know not purity nor right behavior, they possess no truthfulness. They deny that the universe has any truth in it, saying it is not governed by law, declaring that it hath no Spirit; they say creatures are produced alone through the union of the sexes, and all is for enjoyment only. Maintaining this view, their souls being ruined, their minds contracted, with natures perverted, enemies of the world, they are born to destroy.

"They indulge insatiable desires, are full of hypocrisy, fast-fixed in false beliefs through their delusions.... convinced until death that the enjoyment of the objects of their desires is the supreme good. Fast-bound by the hundred chords of desire, prone to lust and anger, they seek by injustice and the accumulation of wealth for the gratification of their own lusts and appetites.

"In this manner do those speak who are deluded. Confounded by all manner of desires, entangled in the net of delusion, firmly attached to the gratification of their desires, they descend into hell.... Indulging in pride, selfishness, ostentation, power, lust, and anger, they detest me who am in their bodies and in the bodies of others.

"Wherefore I continually hurl these cruel haters, the lowest of men, into wombs of an infernal nature in this world of rebirth. And they being doomed to those infernal wombs, more and more deluded in each succeeding rebirth, never come to me." (*Gita* 111-3)

"The gates of hell are three – desire, anger, covetousness, which destroy the soul; wherefore one should abandon them. Being free from these three gates of hell, O son of Kunti, a man worketh for the salvation of his soul, and thus proceeds to the highest path." (*Gita* 113)

Chapter XVII Devotion as regards the Three Kinds of Faith

Arjuna asks Krishna about the state of those who, while neglecting the Scriptures, yet worship in faith. Is it of the sattva, rajas, or the tamas quality?

Krishna states all faith proceeds from sattva, and depends on a man's innate, spiritual nature.

The Sattva quality of faith is marked by worship of the gods. Food that is sattvic is pleasing and healthy, increasing vigor and strength, of permanent benefit and congenial. Sacrifices performed by those who expect no reward, but who are convinced they are necessary, is of the quality of light and goodness. Control of body, speech and mind among those who are sattvic is marked by honor paid to the gods and Wise; by purity, rectitude, chastity, harmlessness; gentle speech, truthful and friendly; regular study, serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, and absolute straightforwardness in conduct. Gifts bestowed at the right time and to the proper person, by one who has no hope for a reward are Sattvic.

The Rajas quality of faith is marked by a worship of the celestial (astral?) powers, the Yakshas and Rakshasas. Rajasic foods are those that are over bitter, too acid, excessively salty, hot, dry and burning, and which cause unpleasantness, pain and disease. Sacrifice that is performed in the hope of a return, or as an ostentation of piety, is passionate and Rajasic. Actions performed out of hypocrisy, to obtain the respect or favor of others are Rajasic. Gifts made in the expectation of a return or with reluctance are Rajasic.

The Tamas quality of faith is marked by gloom and indifference; these are noted for their worship of elemental powers and the ghosts of dead men. Ascetics of an infernal tendency are found torturing their body; full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for the past to return, deluded, they torture the powers and faculties and even the Higher Self, in the body. Tamasic foods are those that were cooked the day before, and are tasteless, rotting, and impure. Worship, without faith, is Tamasic. Actions, such as self-wounding, false judgment, and the hurting of others are examples of Tamasic actions. Inappropriate and untimely gifts made to the unworthy and with scorn and carelessness are Tamasic.

[see *Gita* 100-3, 115-8, also W. Q. Judge's *Letters That Have Helped Me*, 100-3]

Chapter XVIII "Devotion as regards Renunciation and Final Liberation

Arjuna asks Krishna to repeat his teachings. He says the difference between: "abstention from action" and "giving up the results of action" remains unclear to him. (*Gita* 121)

Krishna says "disregard of the fruits of every action is true disinterestedness in action... Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise. But even those works are to be performed after having renounced all selfish interest in them and in their fruits; this, O son of Pritha, is my ultimate and supreme decision." (*Gita* 121-2)

"The three causes which incite to action are **knowledge**, the **thing to be known**, and the **knower**, and threefold also is the totality of the **action** in the act, the **instrument** and the **agent**... Know that the wisdom which perceives in all nature one single principle, indivisible and incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen, is of the *sattva* quality. The knowledge which perceives different and manifold principles as present in the world of created beings pertains to rajas, the quality of passion. But that knowledge wholly without value, which is mean, attached to one object alone as if it were the whole, which does not see the true cause of existence, is of the nature of tamas, indifferent and dark." (*Gita* 124)

To reach to the Supreme Spirit, Krishna offers these steps:

"Embued with pure discrimination, restraining himself with resolution, having rejected the charms of sound and other objects of the senses, and casting off attachment and dislike; dwelling in secluded places, eating little, with speech, body, and mind controlled, engaging in constant meditation and unwaveringly fixed in dispassion; abandoning egotism, arrogance, violence, vanity, desire, anger, pride, and possession, with calmness ever present, a man is fitted to be the Supreme Being. And having thus attained to the Supreme, he is serene, sorrowing no more, and no more desiring, but alike towards all creatures he attains to supreme devotion to me." (*Gita* 129)

"If anyone shall study these sacred dialogues held between us two, I shall consider that I am worshipped by him with the sacrifice of knowledge... Has the delusion of thought which arose from ignorance been removed, O Dhananjaya?" (*Gita* 131-2)

Arjuna answers: "... my delusion is destroyed, I am collected once more; I am free from doubt, firm, and will act according to thy bidding." (*Gita* 132)

The "Lord's Song": a Personal Book and Guide

W. Q. Judge wrote *Notes on the Bhagavad Gita* before his edition of the *Gita*. The declaration he makes that the "Lord's Song" is a "personal" book is important. It does not lead the pupil to search for a guru outside, but points to the inner God, Krishna "seated at the heart of all beings," including in his own heart and seated in the hearts of all beings in the Universe—family, friends, enemies, animals, plants, minerals, elemental forces, the many forces and powers that unify the complex Kosmos in a vast web of eternal and ever-active law.

Krishna, the inner God of each of us, the Master of Devotion, is a Perfected Man who constitutes himself by self-sacrifice into the Servant of the Universe, is also Servant of the least of all creatures.

To him come the Pandavas Princes (Arjuna and his brothers) by natural attraction—the advanced, the higher skandhas of those who having purified their own natures can

directly assist Him in his work of raising the "whole mass of matter up to the nature and stature of conscious god-hood."

Krishna is the 'servant' of Arjuna (the embodied Mind) in his temporarily character of the divine charioteer, in the "chariot" of the body. For us as learning pupils, this is encouraging.

What is this "chariot of the body?" This form, made of millions of living entities, each intelligent at its own level, each informed with its own "spark" of the One Spirit, is a collaborative whole. Each of these has been attracted to and used by us. Impressed with our nature they become the carriers of our karma from the past.

Wise is the pupil who realizes that he can speak to the Highest of Intelligences who are seated in his own "heart." The voice of that Master, which some call "intuition" or the "voice of conscience" which speaks before we make decisions. Therefore the advice to us is to consider each moment, each decision as a mystic experience, as a step on our pilgrimage to such perfection as Earth-life gives in potential.

"Life is a series of progressive awakenings" which must be made by the volunteer, and an entire change in his orientation from selfish-ignorance, to illumined-thought can only be made by himself by his free use of the Will.

The maya-illusion we adopt as a personality is always plain to the Self—Krishna—our Higher Self, but it cannot speak until it is appealed to. This is the condition of Arjuna at the opening setting of the *Gita*. The battle is now, the field is engaged. The forces of evil and of good face each other but Krishna is at hand.

It is in this sense we can understand why William Judge called the *Gita* a "personal book." It is the book of our own lives, an ideal autobiography set before us to inspire and the guide our work. It is this autobiography that forms our dreams, and our deeper thoughts, and finally is the subject of a searching review at the time of our death. Once we are aware of this "Life-Diary," our care and attention in writing it grows.

The Song

'Gita' means a song and 'Bhagavad' the Supreme Lord. This great song is sung throughout nature to every being so it can "know Itself." It is the story of the development and unfolding of consciousness.

Some videos of the Bhagavad Gita with classic Indian musical accompaniment:

Dhyana Sloka ¹	4 mins	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37UqD5woZdc
Chapter One "Arjuna Vishada Yoga"	10 mins	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvTNfUJW9Mg
The 18 Chapters of <i>The Bhagavad Gita</i>	1 hour+	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjIdTlkJJkA

¹ The Dhyana Sloka (not Chapter 6) is an introductory poem, invocation and meditation of nine verses " which is usually sung before the beginning of Bhagavad Gita reading."

The full text in Sanskrit and English <http://aumamen.com/topic/bhagavad-gita-dhyanam-dhyana-slokas> for those who wish to sing it.

The Dhyana Sloka

The Dhyana Sloka is an introductory poem, invocation and meditation of nine verses “which is usually sung before the beginning of *Bhagavad Gita* reading.” It will be played at the start of the meeting.

1. Bhagavad Gita taught to Arjuna, by Lord Narayana himself, written in the middle of the Mahabharata by the Old Sage Vyasa.²
O Divine mother, she who showers Elixir of Advaita on us, O mother of 18 chapters, I meditate on thee, O Bhagavad Gita, the destroyer of illusion of manifestation (Samsaara).
2. Salutations O Vyasa, one with the great intellect, with eyes like the fully blossomed lotus. Through whom, the lamp of light is filled with oil of knowledge.
3. Salutations to Krishna, the bestower of all desires of the desirees. The holder of Jnana-Mudra,³ the milker of the Elixir of Bhagavad Gita.
4. All the Upanishads are cows; the Milker is Krishna, the cowherd boy; Arjuna is the calf; Wise and pure men drink the milk, the supreme, immortal nectar of the Gita.
5. O son of Vasudeva, O Lord who destroyed Kamsa⁴ and Chanuura. O Joy of mother Devaki, Salutations O Krishna, the teacher of the world.
6. Bheeshma, Drona were the two banks,⁵ Jayadrada was the water, Shakuni (king of Gandhara) was the blue lotus, Shalya was the crocodile, Kripa was the tide, Karna was the mighty wave.⁶ Aswathama and Vikarna⁷ were the dangerous alligators, Duryodhana⁸ was the whirlpool, Pandavas crossed this river of war with Krishna as their helmsman.
7. May this lotus of the Mahabharata, born in the lake of the words of Vyasa (Son of Parashara), with intense sweet fragrance of the essence of Gita, with many stories as its stamens, fully opened by the discourses on Hari, the destroyer of the effects of Kaliyuga, and drunk joyously by the bees of good men in the world, day by day become the bestower of good to us.
8. I bow down to Sri Krishna, the source of all joy, whose compassion brings speech from the lips of the dumb and carries the lame over mountains.
9. Salutation to him who is worshipped with divine chants by Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra, Maruta, who is pleased by singers of Sama Veda by singing Vedas and Upanishads following the word sequence, who is seen by yogis who are absorbed in him, with their mind merging in him, and whose end is not known even by the hoards of devas and Asuras.

A sung version of this meditation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37UqD5woZdc>

² The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are the two Sanskrit epics of ancient India, Vyasa the legendary Indian author.

³ Jnana Mudra, a special meditation mudra. In Sanskrit ‘Jnana’ = Wisdom, ‘mudra’ = sign/gesture.

⁴ Kansa, the tyrant ruler of the Vrishni kingdom at Mathura, was the uncle of Krishna and his devoted enemy.

⁵ Symbolising respectively “the necessary rules and regulations” and “military skills,” they supported both sides.

⁶ Karna, a “flawed good man” of exceptional abilities, who illustrates the dilemmas of right duty, ethics, morals.

⁷ Vikarna acknowledged his brothers’ injustices against the Pandus, but ultimately supported the established order.

⁸ Duryodhana, eldest of Kauravas, the hundred sons of blind king Dhritarashtra, symbolises passion without humility.