

The *Yoga* Paradigms of Psychological Discipline: The Perspective of the *Bhagavat Gitā*

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Abstract

The practice of *Yoga* represents a fascinating paradigm of psychological discipline. In a world that is constantly evolving, the importance of *yoga* has surfaced as an essential practice for promoting well-being and cultivating responsible global citizens. Originating from Indian philosophy, *yoga* transcends its philosophical roots to include principles of healthy and sustainable living, along with psychological resilience. It provides practical assistance to individuals facing stress and uncertainty in modern life. This article aims to investigate the meaning and importance of *Yoga* practice as a model of psychological discipline. Psychology, as the study of human behaviour and mental discipline, identifies the mind and its functions as the source of all forms of mental disorders and, consequently, all types of psycho-physical stress and distress. The *Bhagavat Gitā* stands out as the sole text that comprehensively addresses the concept of *Yoga*, relating it to various aspects of human life, including action, knowledge, devotion, and more. It illustrates the practice of *Yoga* through an intellectual comprehension of its meaning and significance, distinguishing it from mere physical exercises such as *Asanas*, essential practices like *prānāyama*, and even psychological exercises such as *dhyāna*, *dhāranā*, and *samādhi*. The *Bhagavat Gitā* emphasizes self-transformation through both theoretical understanding and practical application of the foundational *Yoga* disciplines. It interprets the term '*Yoga*' to signify various meanings, including 'the skill of performing duty', 'the equanimity of mind', 'the capacity to maintain a Yogic posture', 'the ability to be grounded in *Yoga*', 'the capacity to remain anchored in Pure consciousness', 'the sense of *Viveka* and *Vairāgya*', among others. Therefore, in the *Bhagavat Gitā*, *Yoga* is regarded as a multifaceted model of psychological discipline, not limited to a singular interpretation.

Key words: *Yoga*, *Yogi*, mind, mental activities, the *Bhagavat Gitā*, freedom, self-transformation.

I

Introduction

Yoga serves as a paradigm of psychological discipline, aiming to unveil all facets of the Self to a transformative journey through the descent and active influence of the higher, supramental principle. While individuals often exist primarily on the surface within the domains of mind, life, and body, there lies an inner being within everyone possessing far greater potential. By awakening to this inner dimension, one can tap into higher beauty, harmony, power, and knowledge. There are numerous forms of *yoga*, each providing a unique spiritual path or discipline directed towards divine realization and liberation from the sorrows and constraints of mortal existence. Each path has its own specific objective, distinctive approach, and method of practice. Within the Hindu tradition, several schools of *yoga* have emerged: 1) *Hatha Yoga* - designed for those with strong self-discipline and a desire to achieve mastery over the body. 2) *Kundalini Yoga* - concentrates on meditative techniques to awaken subtle awareness of inner processes. 3) *Rāja Yoga* - focuses on deep concentration and mental control. 4) *Jñāna Yoga* - the yoga of knowledge, intended for those with an intellectual pursuit to comprehend the mysteries of creation. 5) *Bhakti Yoga* - the yoga of devotion, perfect for those with a profound emotional yearning for divine love. 6) *Karma Yoga* - the *yoga* of action, appropriate for individuals with a strong will to work and a wish to experience the divine through service. In addition to these types of *Yoga*, the *Bhagavad Gitā* has outlined the concept of *Yoga* in various meanings and significance as a model of psychological discipline. Self-transformation is self-unfoldment through self-enlightenment, self-perfection, and self-surrender. Self-enlightenment is attained by the dialectical understanding of the Truth through *Jnana Yoga*. Self-perfection is attained by *Karma Yogā* and self-surrender is attained by *Bhakti Yoga*.

The teachings of the *Bhagavat Gitā* significantly influence the transformation of human personality. A person is always transformed, being characterized by purity and integrity. His pure and perfect essence has been obscured by his own ignorance and sense of individuality. Once his ego and ignorance are eliminated, the purity inherent in his perfection is unveiled in his personality. This revelation is achievable through the spiritual discipline of self-control and self-effort. It is attainable through practice of *Yoga*. The various schools of thought are differentiated due to their doctrinal variations, which prioritize either *jnana*, *karma*, or *bhakti* exclusively. However, according to the *Bhagavat Gitā*, *jñāna*, *karma*, and *bhakti* do not represent exclusive paths to realizing the highest state. Rather, they signify a three-pronged approach to achieving the ultimate good. Therefore, the *Bhagavat Gitā* articulates the integration of cognitive, conative, and affective faculties (*jñāna-karma-bhakti-samuchaya*) to reach the state of *yoga*. This perspective indirectly highlights the shortcomings of the traditional interpretation

of the *Bhagavat Gitā*, which places exclusive emphasis on *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action), or *bhakti* (devotion). In this article, an effort has been made to examine the contribution of the *Bhagavat Gitā* in interpreting the technique of *Yoga* in various ways, ensuring that Yogic practices effectively lead to self-transformation.

II

Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi (BG. II. 48): *Yogasthaḥ* means meditative mind or a mind of equanimity. The *Bhagavat Gitā* has emphasized the state of equanimity (*Yogastha*) as *Yoga*. The Lord addresses *Arjuna*, saying, O *Arjuna*, fulfill your responsibilities by relinquishing ego and attachment, while maintaining a balanced state of mind in both success and failure. When actions are performed in this manner, the mental equilibrium experienced by the *Yogi* is referred to as *Yoga*. A worldly individual engages in actions driven by attachment and ego, whereas a practitioner of *Karma Yoga* carries out his duties with an awareness of God. The former becomes ensnared in worldly connections, while the latter attains Divine consciousness. The phrase, '*saṅgam tyaktvā*' signifies that a connection will form in the mind between the agent and the results of actions when they are executed with an egocentric mindset. The Lord instructs *Arjuna* to relinquish this illusory attachment and to carry out his responsibilities with an awareness of the Lord. When actions are executed in this manner, the connection between ego and *karma phala* does not manifest in the mind. Consequently, the individual does not accumulate new *karma*, leading to the purification of consciousness. '*Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi*' embodies the mindset of fulfilling our obligations with the contemplation of the Lord, devoid of a sense of agency and concern for outcomes. A *Karma Yogi* should participate in actions by understanding that a balanced state of mind represents his true form of meditation, which must be preserved during the execution of duties without being swayed by other intentions.

Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam (BG. II. 50): Mind is not auto-discipline. *Yoga* makes mind discipline through some yogic skills or *kausalam*. The *Bhagavat Gitā* treats *Yoga* as the skill of performing selfless actions. *Yoga* refers to the practice of executing our responsibilities with an awareness of the Lord, without attachment to the outcomes of our actions. A person who has developed a pure mind through the practice of equanimity will not generate either merit or sin. When a *Karma Yogi* engages in actions, the presence of God's consciousness is inherently felt in the background, like how an individual's ego or consciousness is felt during worldly activities. *Karma yoga* signifies the skill of functioning with complete mental balance in various circumstances (*Samatvam Yoga uchyate*). *Karma Yogi* performs his duties freely in the spirit of *Yajna*. (*Samatvam Yoga uchyate*). *Karma Yogin* detaches from all existing *vāsanās* and performs his duties freely in the spirit of *Yajna*. Another essential skill in duty performance is *Niskāmakarma*.

Niskāmakarma is understood as a qualified *karma* characterized by five fundamental attributes or skills (*kausalam*): 1) *Karma* must be guided by the principle of righteousness (*dharma*), 2) *Karma* should be executed through free will or rational will, 3) *Karma* must be devoid of the sense of agency (*katṛtvabhāva*), 4) *Karma* should be free from attachment to the results or consequences, whether favourable or unfavourable, and 5) *Karma* should be oriented towards the collective well-being (*lokasangraha*).

Yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa (BG. IV. 2): *Yoga* is not casual self-discipline. *Yoga* is construed as ‘the continuity of *Paramparā*’. If we stray from the original system, it becomes ‘*naṣṭa*’ or spoiled. However, it cannot be spoiled if we adhere to the *Paramparā*. This is the key to success. The Lord illustrates the extensive history of the *Yoga* teaching tradition. This *Yoga*, which encompasses the Vedic teachings on activity (*Pravṛitti*) and inactivity (*Nivṛitti*), has been transmitted in an unbroken lineage down the centuries. This *Yoga* appears to be accessible for the benefit of humanity, as well as becoming neglected and obsolete. The golden age of spirituality diminishes, giving way to overwhelming materialism, leaving the generation to endure and lament its adverse values. Nevertheless, some great masters emerge on the horizon to motivate and guide the generation away from suffering towards the paths of cultural revival.

Yoginah paryupāsate (BG. IV. 25): *Yoga* is ‘offering sacrifices’ (*Deva Yajna*) and ‘offering the individual self’ (*Brahma Yajna*), and the better offering is the offering of the individual self or the ego. Psychic discipline becomes easier by the attitude of offering. *Yogis* engage in *Yoga* for various reasons. Some practitioners consistently perform sacrifices to appease the demigods. Other enlightened *yogis*, however, offer sacrifices such as surrendering to Brahman in the fire that embodies Brahman. The sacrifices aimed at achieving material gain and those intended for attaining self-knowledge are distinct to each other. Worldly pleasures can be obtained by satisfying *Indra* and other *Devas* through rituals like *Agnishtoma*, *Dashopornamasi*, and others, while the *Jñāna Yogis* present the offering of individuality (ego) in the fire of Brahman. In essence, they sacrifice the *jivatma* into Brahman, thereby becoming Brahman themselves and experiencing eternal peace. Consequently, the Lord elucidated the fundamental distinction between *Deva Yajna* and *Brahma Yajna*.

Yogayajñāsthathāpare (BG. IV. 28): *Yoga* is construed as various forms of selfless sacrifice (*Yajna*) including *dravya yajna*, *tapo yajna*, *yoga yajna* and *jnana yajna*. Certain individuals present wealth as acts of sacrifice, while ascetics who observe self-discipline and stringent vows contribute to the study of scriptures and the quest for knowledge as their form of sacrifice. *Dravya yajna* includes charitable acts, the allocation of wealth, and even the sharing of our feelings. At times, a genuine word of sympathy, a loving glance, a sincere smile, or a friendly word can be interpreted as *Dravya Yajna*. Others lead a life characterized by austerity, referred to as *Tapo-Yajna*. Additionally, some strive to elevate themselves to a higher standard of divine living through the spiritual practice of *Upasana*, known as *Yoga-Yajna*. For

a seeker, this serves as a method for assessing their spiritual progress, while for a Seer, it becomes a means of reveling in their own Self. Others immerse themselves in *Jnana Yajna*, or the sacrifice of knowledge, through which they cast aside all ignorance into the flames of knowledge. All five of these self-development methods—sacrifice of wealth, austerity, *yoga*, study, and knowledge—can be undertaken by seekers who possess strong determination, sincerity, and consistency.

Yogasannyastakarmanam (BG. IV. 41): *Yoga* is the art of renunciation. The Lord addresses *Arjuna*, saying, "O *Arjuna*, the *yogi* who dedicates all actions as an offering to the Lord has eliminated all uncertainties through Supreme Consciousness. Such actions do not entrap the *yogi*." When Supreme Consciousness illuminates an individual who performs all actions as an offering to the Lord, doubt vanishes. Individuals of this nature become *Jñāni*. Ignorance is consumed in the flames of knowledge. The motivation for undertaking actions stems from ignorance or the perception of duality, which fosters the belief that everything is distinct from one another and that one is separate from all else. The tendency to engage in action dissipates when knowledge arises, specifically the understanding that there is ultimately only one essence of consciousness. Nevertheless, a remnant of action persists as long as the body remains. When an individual utters something that does not reflect their true thoughts, those are mere hollow words. In a similar vein, the actions of a *jñāni* are executed solely in the spirit of *Yajna*, yet they do not bind the *jñāni*. The Lord further counsels *Arjuna*, "O *Arjuna*, therefore, sever this doubt, rooted in your heart, regarding the soul, which arises from ignorance, with the sword of knowledge, and rise to engage in *Karma Yoga*." The prescribed duties must be performed with a desire to eliminate the doubt that originates from ignorance through knowledge. The Lord instructed *Arjuna* to view the war as a sacrifice. The Lord helps *Arjuna* understand that it is inappropriate for him to refuse participation in the battle. The Lord encourages *Arjuna* to eradicate the doubt born of ignorance and to embrace his responsibilities for *Karma Yoga*.

Yogayukto munirbrahma (BG. V. 6): *Yoga* is the participation in work with dedication. In this context, the Lord advises *Arjuna* that achieving renunciation is challenging without engaging in the *Yoga* of action. An ascetic who follows the *Yoga* of action can swiftly reach the Supreme Being. For an individual who has not attained mental purity, *Karma Yoga* is superior to *sanyasa*. Conversely, for one who has achieved mental purity, *Karma Yoga* is unnecessary. The Vedas present two distinct paths: *pravṛtti marga* and *nivṛtti marga*. These paths are interconnected through *Karma Yoga*. *Pravṛtti marga* focuses on fulfilling desires through actions aligned with righteousness. Nevertheless, an individual may still feel unfulfilled despite realizing worldly desires, as concerns about the afterlife linger. While enjoying worldly pleasures in *Pravṛtti marga*, one may become ensnared by its temptations. This attachment dissipates upon gaining self-knowledge, leading to a desire to pursue the *nivṛtti marga*, the path of renunciation. However, a direct transition from *pravṛtti marga* to *nivṛtti marga* is not feasible. *Nishkāmakarma*

serves as the means for a mature individual to progress towards *nivṛitti marga*. Once an individual achieves mental purity through the practice of *nishkāmakarma*, they can swiftly enter the *nivṛitti marga*, or the path of renunciation.

Yogayukto viśudhātmā (BG. V. 7): *Yoga* is understood as the union with God through purified intellect, a controlled mind, and conquered senses. An individual who practices *Yoga* with a mind unencumbered by attachment has mastered both the body and the senses, recognizing that his soul is identical to the soul of all living beings. Such a person is never constrained by action, even while actively engaged in it. No action can ensnare an individual who understands that his *Ātma* is the same as the *Ātma* of all living entities. *Karma* binds those who perceive everything they know and see as separate from themselves, thus fostering a sense of duality. Conversely, *Karma* does not bind an individual who has attained *Samyak darshana*, which is the realization that it is I, the One Consciousness, that manifest as the universe and as the body and life of all that is both movable and immovable. An individual who has successfully controlled his *antahakarana* (body, mind, and intellect) is ideally suited for meditation. The sensory desires, emotional disturbances, and desire-driven inclinations are construed as the obstacles of meditation. Once these constraints are severed, the individual revives the state of meditation and rediscovers the Self within.

Yoginah karma kurvanti (BG. V. 11): *Yoga* is performed for the purification of the mind. The *Karma Yogis* relinquish their attachment to the outcomes of their actions and engage in activities using their body, mind, intellect, and senses for purifying the mind. When an individual acts with a desire for the results of their actions, their ego becomes tethered to their mind and senses. Conversely, when a *Karma Yogi*, who has forsaken the desire for outcomes, engages in action, their ego does not become ensnared by the mind and senses; rather, the mind remains self-aware and thus avoids being caught in the cycle of *karma*. As the physical outcomes of actions are not sought after, and the attainment of the *Atma* is the goal, the purification of the mind will naturally follow such actions. The objective of *Karma Yogi* is to maintain a sense of detachment while remaining an interested observer of all that transpires both externally and internally. Through the practice of ego purification, the seeker enters the realm of activity, engaging in work without the burden of a self-aggrandizing ego, ultimately achieving a state of cleansing from the existing impurities of *Vasana*.

Yogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava - Yogi bhavati kaścana (BG. VI. 2): *Yoga* is the union with the Supreme. The Lord addresses *Arjuna*, saying, "O *Arjuna*, it is essential for you to understand that what is referred to as renunciation is equivalent to union with the Supreme. No one can truly become a *yogi* without relinquishing all resolutions. In this context, *Yoga* signifies a connection with the Supreme. A *Yogi* is fundamentally someone who has forsaken all *sankalpas*. Consequently, it is important to recognize that a *yogi* and a *sanyasi* are essentially the same. A *yogi* also harbours *sankalpa* regarding actions and sensory objects, similar to ordinary individuals. However, the *yogi* is regarded as one who has abandoned all

sankalpas. Since the *yogi* lacks an ego, the ego does not become associated with the *sankalpas*. Although the *yogi* may generate *sankalpa*, because this *sankalpa* is devoid of ego, it is as if the *yogi* possesses no *sankalpa* at all. The ego of the common person arises from ignorance, while the *jnani's* ego has been purified in the fire of supreme knowledge. The *jñāni's* ego exists in a state of observation of both sensory objects and *sankalpas*. Therefore, the *jñāni* does not become entangled in the material world. The subtle force within our inner being that unconsciously disrupts the flow of action is known as the unrestrained *Sankalpa Shakti*. No accomplishment can be attained as long as we have not eradicated this *Sankalpa*.

Yogaṁ karma keeranamucyate - Yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva (BG. VI. 3): *Yoga* is the progress or transformation in spiritual elevation. *Yoga-ārurūksu* refers to those *sādhakas* who seek union with God and have just commenced their ascent on the spiritual ladder. Conversely, *Yoga-ārūḍha* denotes those who have achieved the highest level of perfection. *Karma Yoga* is the foundation of wisdom, and equanimity of mind that results from renouncing all actions is the basis for being established in *yoga* (*yoga-ārūḍha*), which is equivalent to the state of a *Sthitaprajña*. *Karma Yoga* involves engaging in action without attachment to the outcomes. This practice fosters a pure mind, and such purity in turn cultivates knowledge. The tranquility that arises from this knowledge is what ultimately leads to liberation.

Yogārūḍhastadocyate (BG. VI. 4): *Yoga* means being elevated in meditation (*Yogārūḍha*). The term '*Yogārūḍha*' denotes an individual who is elevated or firmly established in *yoga*, having achieved a significant level of spiritual realization along with mastery over their mind and senses. When a person relinquishes all resolutions and develops a disinterest in sensory objects and actions, they are regarded as one who is established in *Yoga*. A person who has triumphed over all *sankalpas* has also overcome all desires and actions. It is at this point that they become a *Yogārūḍha*, with all their desires originating from *sankalpa*. Whatever one wishes to pursue is what one ultimately decides to do. Whatever decisions one makes, those are the actions they undertake. Desires stem from *sankalpas*. Consequently, the Lord advises that all desires and *sankalpas* must be relinquished to attain the status of a *Yogārūḍha*. An individual who has forsaken pleasures and enjoyments has also abandoned all desire-driven *sankalpas*. When observing a person who has achieved *Yoga*, it is evident that external actions are occurring. However, such actions do not bind them internally, as they have renounced all *sankalpas*.

Yogi yañjita satatam (BG. VI. 10): *Yoga* is constant and consistent engagement of the mind in meditation. The term '*Yogārūḍha*' denotes an individual who is elevated or firmly established in *yoga*, having achieved a significant level of spiritual realization along with mastery over their mind and senses. When a person relinquishes all resolutions and develops a disinterest in sensory objects and actions, they are regarded as one who is established in *Yoga*. An individual who

triumphed over all *sankalpas* has also overcome all desires and actions. It is at this point that they become a *Yogārūdhā*, with all their desires originating from *sankalpas*. Whatever one wishes to pursue is what one ultimately decides to do. Whatever decisions one makes, those are the actions they undertake. Desires stem from *sankalpas*. Consequently, the Lord advises that all desires and *sankalpas* must be abandoned to attain the status of a *Yogārūdhā*. A person who has forsaken pleasures and enjoyments has also renounced all desire-driven *sankalpas*. When observing someone who has achieved *Yoga*, it becomes evident that external actions are occurring. However, such actions do not bind them internally, as they have renounced all *sankalpas*.

Yogi niyatamānasah (BG. VI.15): *Yoga* is the attainment of supreme peace and liberation from material bondage. *Yoga* focuses on ongoing, disciplined meditation and devotion, which ultimately leads to liberation from material constraints and a sustained state of supreme bliss. The *Yogi*, with a systematically advancing mind centered on the soul, achieves the eternal tranquility that resides in Me, resulting from the union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. When the meditator reaches a state of perfect inner silence, he begins to perceive a serene atmosphere. Peace embodies the essence of Truth. The individual who meditates discovers this Truth through their intrinsic Real Divine Nature. During the ultimate phase of achievement in meditation, the meditator becomes aware of their authentic Self.

Yogino yatachittasya (BG. VI.19): *Yoga* is a steady state of mind, and a *Yogi* has a controlled mind as a non-flickering lamp in a windless place. *Yoga* induces a state of complete tranquility in the mind, allowing for focus and deep engagement in meditation, free from the disturbances of desires and passions. Just as a lamp situated in a calm environment remains steady, so too does the *Yogi* with a disciplined mind, who practices the *Yoga* of the Self. The tip of a flame may not be stable, yet its rapid flickering creates the illusion of a defined shape and solidity. Similarly, thoughts flow through the mind in an unending stream, and these persistent disturbances create the perception of a solid entity known as the mind. When this flame is adequately shielded from the erratic winds, it achieves a steady ascent. Likewise, the flame of the mind, which flickers in response to the transient whims and fantasies of fleeting desires, can be consistently focused on the Self through a continuous stream of *Brahmakāra Vṛittis*. The practice of repeatedly and consistently contemplating Brahman, the fundamental essence of the entire universe, constitutes the *Yoga* of the Self (*Yogam Ātmanah*).

Yoga'nirviṇṇacetasā (BG. VI. 23): *Yoga* is the cessation from suffering. When the mind is fully restrained, it achieves a tranquil stillness, and within that silence, it experiences the essence of the Self. The equanimous mind discovers the Self and represents an ambience of bliss. Such a state is attainable when the individual ego gets identified with the body, mind, and intellect. Upon reaching this state of bliss, one does not revert to stress and distress; having attained this state, there is no greater achievement to pursue, and it remains unshaken even by the most significant tragedies of life. This Self must be understood. The means to

comprehend this goal, as well as the experience of it, is referred to as *Yoga* in the *Gītā*. *Yoga* signifies a disconnection from all unions with pain. This leads to detachment and disconnection from the realms of objects and their experiences. The mind cannot exist without connecting to some object. Mind can be detached from one object only when it is attached to another object. Cessation from pain, stress, and distress is achievable when it becomes attached to Bliss. Consequently, *Vairāgya* is attainable through *Viyoga* from lower tendencies and attachments, and *Sanyoga* with the Self or the state of Bliss.

Yoginam sukhamuttamam (BG. VI. 27): *Yoga* is an elevated state of spiritual consciousness and bliss. Supreme Bliss is attained by the *Yogi* whose mind is entirely tranquil, whose passions have been subdued, who is devoid of sin, and who has realized Brahman. In moments of profound despair, the mind inevitably strays from its focal point due to its inherent restlessness (*chanchala*) and instability (*asthira*). It is incapable of maintaining a constant focus on a single object or consistently shifting its attention among various objects. Consequently, the seeker is encouraged to redirect the mind from these two detrimental states of restlessness and instability. The mind represents the ‘flow of thought’. Therefore, during meditation, the practitioner can shift the flow of thoughts from external distractions to the inner experience of the Blissful state of the Self. The mind ceases with the halt of thought flow, allowing the individual to awaken to the experience of Infinite Bliss. The ‘veiling power’ (*āvarana*) produced by the inertia of the intellect (*tamas*) gives rise to the disruptive ‘agitations’ (*viksepa*) within the mental realm (*rajas*). However, the mind's natural blissful state is characterized by steadiness and tranquility (*sattva*), where passions are calmed (*shanta-rajasam*) and the mind is liberated from stress and impurities.

Yogi vigatakalmaṣaḥ (BG. VI. 28): *Yoga* is the attainment of the highest happiness of transcendental contact with the Supreme Being. The practitioner of *Yoga*, by engaging the mind in this manner, liberates himself from sins and readily experiences the Infinite Bliss associated with ‘Brahman-contact’. As the *Yogi* focuses his mind on the Self, he gradually emerges from the obscured realms of spiritual ignorance and flaws. When the *Yogi* maintains an undistracted mind within the tranquil environment of his inner self, his mind becomes purified and revels in the Infinite Bliss. Similar to a balloon that, as it ascends to greater heights, bursts into the thin atmosphere of elevated altitudes and its internal space merges with the external space. Similarly, the mind, at deep meditation, also disintegrates the ego, and unites with the Supreme. Just as the air within the balloon seamlessly integrates with the external atmosphere once the balloon has burst, so too does the finite mind, upon its dissolution, achieve the Infinite Bliss through its connection with Brahman or the Self. A restless and curious intellect comprehends that positive and dynamic Reality only when both the mind and intellect are transcended. When the mind is harmonized through *Yoga*, the seeker perceives the Self residing in all beings and all things within the Self. (BG. VI. 29)

Yogi paramo mataḥ (BG. VI. 32): *Yogi* is the best who is blessed with equal vision

for all living entities. He who perceives equality in all things, whether in pleasure or pain, through the similarity of the Self, O Arjuna, is considered the highest *Yogi*. The *Yogi* recognizes the magnificence of the Self in all actions. Everything encountered in the external gross world and in the internal subtle realm is merely a manifestation of the Eternal Self. After experiencing the Self, the *Yogi* comes to see the entire world as an extension of himself. *Yoga* is characterized by perfect equanimity amidst all conditions, challenges, and circumstances of life. The steadiness of thought during focused meditation can be disrupted by frequent and intense desires. As new desires emerge continuously, thoughts stray into various channels of activity, disturbing the inner balance and ultimately fracturing the true inner self. This process is cyclical. Each element reinforces the others in a mutually supportive manner. The seeker should dispel the misconception that *vairāgya* is merely a byproduct of our usual behaviours. *Vairāgya* arises from the persistent practice of meditation (*abhyāsa*), and subsequently, it bolsters our practice with greater stability and consistency. *Vairāgya* that emerges solely from *Abhyāsa* is the pathway to spiritual advancement. Accidental *Vairāgya*, lacking *Abhyāsa*, will be overwhelmed by adverse experiences and challenging situations. When enduring detachment is cultivated through proper practice, the mind comes under our governance. This mind no longer perceives a world filled with diverse objects; instead, it recognizes only the realm of unity.

Yogāccalitamānasah – Yogasāmasiddhiṃ (BG. VI. 37): *Yoga* transcends the deviated mind (*chhalita manasa*) and makes us attain the highest perfection (*yoga sansiddhiṃ*). Despite a strong belief in the Self, an individual's mind may stray and become detached from both the limited joy of *Viśwa-ānānada* and *Brahmānanda*. In other terms, *shraddhā* can mislead the seeker, causing a disconnection from the experience of Infinite Bliss. However, this misunderstanding can be rectified if we interpret the concept of *Shradhā* positively, as illustrated in the *Bhagavat Gītā*. *Shradhā* is not merely blind faith; rather, it represents a correct intellectual understanding of the deeper meanings and greater significance of the teachings imparted by the teachers and the declarations of the scriptures. *Shradhā* embodies the inspired devotion that arises from firm intellectual beliefs, capable of overcoming great obstacles and bringing the heavens down to earth.

Yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate (BG. VI. 41): *Yogabhraṣṭa* is one who falls from the state of *Yoga*. An unsuccessful *Yogi* will be reborn repeatedly. Only those engaged in virtuous deeds can experience a life filled with greater joy and spiritual advancement. There are two categories of virtuous actions: 1) those driven by desires, and 2) those performed with devotion and reverence. The former leads to karmic bondage, as these actions are based on desires, while the latter facilitates the attainment of a higher state of consciousness by transcending all desires. Once all desires are exhausted, individuals will be reborn in the world within a family of purity and prosperity. Every intense desire of humanity will eventually be fulfilled, provided that the desires are sufficiently strong and are pursued with vigorous efforts appropriate for their realization.

Yogi samśuddhakilbiṣhaḥ (BG. VI. 45): *Yoga* trains the mind function in double directions. The individual dismisses the erroneous negative inclinations of the mind while cultivating the fields of the mind with new, positive, and constructive divine tendencies. A purified state of mind, which is entirely devoid of impressions (*Vāsanā*-less), signifies the culmination of the mind, as the mind is merely a collection of *vāsanās*. However, the *Yogi* who diligently strives, cleansed of sins and gradually perfected over many lifetimes, ultimately achieves the highest Goal. The functioning of the mind-intellect is influenced by actions taken in previous lives. This interpretation emphasizes the key factors of our mental disposition (*vāsanās*) in shaping our thought processes and current activities. These channels of thought traverse the realms of the mind, influencing the direction of its thoughts and the nature of its actions in the present. Consequently, the mind operates in dual directions.

Yogi jñānibhyo'pi mato'dhikaḥ – Yogi tasmādyogi bhavārjuna (BG. VI. 46): The *Yogi* is regarded as superior to ascetics and even to those who possess mere scholarly knowledge; he is also deemed superior to Men of Action. Consequently, one should aspire to be a *Yogi*. In the realm of spiritual development, meditation holds greater value than both knowledge and action. The Lord concludes that a silent and tranquil meditator, who diligently strives to detach himself from false identifications with his body, mind, and intellect through persistent and focused contemplation on the nature of the Self, is indeed the best. In this context, when comparing a meditator to an individual who practices complete self-denial, a scholar of scriptures, and a ritualist, the Lord places the highest regard on the meditator, who is closest to the Truth. Therefore, Lord *Krishna* advises *Arjuna* to embrace the path of a *Yogi*.

Yogināmapi sarveṣāṃ (BG. VI. 47): The most devoted *Yogi* possesses unwavering faith and has his inner self united with the Lord. He merges his inner self (mind and intellect) with the Self and dedicates himself to the Self with *shraddhā* and he is the most resolute and steadfast practitioner of meditation. The core of meditation lies not merely in our efforts to unify the mind, but in the ultimate integration of the inner faculties (*Antahakarana*), achieving complete sublimation in the final realization of Self. This can only be accomplished by one who contemplates the Self with utmost shraddha.

Yogaṃ yuñjanmadāśrayaḥ (BG. VII.1): *Yoga* practice by taking complete refuge in the Self does not leave any scope for doubting the very essence of the Self. Understanding the Lord in His entirety does not imply knowing Him solely through His qualities (*saguna*) or devoid of qualities (*nirguna*). Rather, the seeker must comprehend both the *saguna* and *nirguna* dimensions of the Self. A *Yogi* who begins to contemplate the Truth should relinquish all *saguna* aspects from his thoughts and focus on envisioning the *nirguna* aspect. Nevertheless, a genuine *Yogi*, upon achieving enlightenment, elevates the *saguna* aspects into his awareness and perceives the Self from both *saguna* and *nirguna* viewpoints. Consequently, the individual who recognizes that both *saguna* and *nirguna* aspects are unified

within the Self possesses complete knowledge of Him without any uncertainty (*samsaya*).

Yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ (BG. VII. 25): *Yogamāyā* means the manifestation veiled by the Divine power. The Lord declares, concealed by the Divine Power, I am not revealed to all. Consequently, these misguided individuals do not recognize me as the Unborn and Indestructible. As the ignorant remain trapped by *Māyā*, the true essence of the Lord is not apparent to them. They cannot comprehend the Unborn and Imperishable Lord without transcending *Māyā*. The Lord is obscured by two aspects of Maya, namely *āvarana* and *viksepa*. Even if the Lord assumes a human form, His authentic nature will remain hidden from everyone. The Lord will be understood by those who reside in Supreme Consciousness.

Yogayukto bhavāṛjuna (BG. VIII. 27): The *Yogi* remains contemplated to the Divine Consciousness all the time. Understanding that the opposite paths of light and darkness operate continuously within our mental existence, a genuine seeker will not succumb to feelings of despair or stress. The individual, having detached from false identifications with dedicated contemplation of the Self, becomes a *Yogi*. One should endeavour to have selfless identification with divine awareness, even while engaging in worldly activities. Due to the connection with the physical body, there exists a risk for the *Karma Mumukṣu* to become confused. However, as he remains steadfast in *Yoga* at all times, the deities guide him along the correct path. To this end, the *Yogi* worships the deities in advance, ensuring that he does not become misled on his journey.

Yogi param śhānmupaiti chādyam (BG. VIII. 28): The *Yogi* transcends all expected results of meditation and the study of the Veda. Meditation is accessible to anyone who possesses even a minimal capability for it, as the Lord elucidates. The scriptures promise various meritorious outcomes from the study of the Vedas, the performance of *Yajnas*, the practice of austerities, and selfless charity. However, a *Yogi* not only attains all these results but also surpasses them. The dedicated meditator cultivates within himself a requisite level of dispassion and discernment. A true *Yogi*, having achieved the fruits of selfless *Karma* and *Upāsana*s through meditation, does not return to this world of bondage.

Yogakṣemam vahāmyaham (BG. IX. 22): *Yoga* means liberation from *samsāra* and *kṣema* means the protection against re-entering the cycle of birth and death. Individuals who have firmly established faith in the Lord engage in continuous worship of Him, seeking only the Lord Himself rather than the rewards of heaven. In contrast, those who perform rituals and sacrifice often seek the pleasures associated with the heavenly realm; however, upon reaching heaven, they inevitably return to the cycle of birth and death. Conversely, those who devote themselves to the Lord with the sole desire for Him, without seeking heavenly rewards, ultimately attain the Lord Himself. Such individuals do not experience the anguish of life and death. The concept of '*Yoga*' is the ability to assimilate and the concept of '*kṣema*' is the ability to protect, and both are relevant to the life circumstances of each person. Throughout life, all conflicts, competitions,

struggles, and sorrows manifest in various forms. The phrase *Yogakṣemam vahāmyaham*, regardless of how it may be interpreted, varies from one individual to another, from one location to another, and from one moment to another.

Yogenāvyabhicāriṇyā (BG. XVIII. 33): *Yoga* refers to pure 'fortitude'. *Dhṛtti* represents the inner strength that enables us to consistently visualize our desired goals, and as we work towards them, *Dhṛtti* reveals the essential perseverance needed to follow our chosen path, despite the numerous challenges that may arise. The unwavering ability to control the mind and its activities with focused attention and concentration is the Sattvik type of *Dhṛtti*. Our *Karma-Indriyas* and *Jnana Indriyas* are controlled by the mind. Without directing the mind towards something more noble and elevated, it remains tethered to its current engagements. This detachment is achievable through the practice of *Yoga*.

Yogaṁ yogeśvarātkṛṣṇātsākṣātkathayataḥ svayam (BG. XVIII.75): *Yoga* is the ultimate achievement of moral victory, success and glory. "Wherever *Krishna*, the Lord of all *Yoga*, is present, and wherever *Arjuna*, the supreme archer, is found, their prosperity, victory, happiness, and sound policy prevail; this is my belief." In this context, the names '*Krishna*' and '*Arjuna*' symbolize 'pure science of reality' and 'applied science of perfection' respectively. When both Lord *Krishna* and *Arjuna* coexist within an individual, that person experiences glory and triumph. Simply being prepared to engage in battle is insufficient. Likewise, mere wisdom does not suffice. A dynamic approach to living is essential for achieving perfection. The combination of the science of reality and the technology of self-perfection can lead one to success and glory. Every scientific discipline encompasses these two dimensions: pure science and applied science. Pure science discusses various theories and possibilities, yet it rarely contributes to the happiness of the community. True communal happiness can only be realized when individuals begin to apply scientific knowledge for the benefit of society. One must elevate oneself through personal effort and strive to direct the mind towards a higher, integrated consciousness.

III

Conclusion

The *Bhagavat Gitā* emphasizes the comprehensive potential of various forms of *Yoga* and their diverse practical applications in human existence aimed at achieving self-transformation. True transformation is realized by overcoming both *Vastu Vāsanā* and *Viśaya Vāsanā*, which encompass sensory experiences and psychological desires. This is achievable through *Yoga Sadhanā*. The objective of *Yoga* is to liberate the mind from all such impositions. The rational advancement of an individual is contingent upon the degree to which one has managed to control the influence of instincts. An individual on the path to Liberation willingly liberates

himself from the constraints of *Prakṛti* during this process, subsequently experiencing a state of absolute freedom from *Prakṛti's* control. The transition from imperfection to perfection results from the struggle against the limiting effects of the *gunas*. A person who recognizes the inherent divinity in all created entities and behaves accordingly is considered liberated. The *Bhagavat Gitā* harmonizes *jñāna*, *karma*, and *bhakti* within a spiritual practice referred to as *Yoga Sadhanā*. These three forms of *yoga* complement each other. Knowledge, action, and devotion are the three faculties that enhance a person's complete personality (*Purna Byaktitva*), allowing them to thrive and elevate like a *Yogi*. A wise individual must be cultivated through the discipline of action and devotion. Likewise, an individual of action should be nurtured with the disciplines of knowledge and devotion. This integration results in a complete personality (*Purna Byaktitva*). Achieving a complete personality is attainable through self-transformation. The *Bhagavat Gitā* is rightly revered as a *Yoga Sāstra* rather than a *Dharma Sāstra*, as it places significant emphasis on the psychological discipline of individuals, interpreting the practice of *Yoga* with various meanings and implications.

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