

Buddhi Yoga and Svadharma

*...the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me; their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another and constantly speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction. To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion [Buddhi Yoga] by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment.*

*Bhagavad Gita, X*

The word “yoga” comes from a root meaning: to join together, to yoke. The word “Buddhi” refers both to the highest plane of manifestation, Compassion Absolute and to the potential within every human heart of compassion for all beings. *Svadharma* in a general sense refers to ones’ self-created, self-chosen path of duty under the aegis of Karmic Law.

These three concepts are taught by Krishna to Arjuna within the *Bhagavad Gita* and, when properly understood, are seen to represent the essence of Krishna’s teachings of the spiritual path leading to conscious oneness with him. Of the three primary paths (yogas) portrayed by Krishna, the highest is the path of Buddhi Yoga.

From the highest standpoint Krishna represents universal, boundless, unconditional love, joy and compassion permeating all manifestation and, simultaneously, remains “ever beyond.”

*I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate.*

*Bhagavad Gita, XI*

All manifested existence, every plane of manifested existence, both reflects and embodies a single portion of the

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mysterious majesty of Krishna's Being. His ultimacy, his most mysterious nature is said to reside within Devine Darkness, the Unknowable. The word "existence" derives from a root meaning "to stand out from." In so far as all manifestation, all existence stands out from Krishna's essential being, it can be said the Divine Darkness does not exist. Thus, from non-existence springs all existence. This "all existence" is Krishna's all-inclusive oneness within which the many appear. It is taught that all Rishis and Mahatmas reside within Krishna's Universal Form. So, too, do all beings. Due to the sacrificial gift of self-consciousness to early humanity from the highest beings, we possess the opportunity and the privilege to self-consciously realize our oneness with Krishna, with his bliss, his compassion. Paradoxically, although we, and all else, are one with Krishna, we, due to both natural and karmically induced obscurations, remain unaware of this oneness. Thus, again paradoxically, the spiritual path can be seen as the ardent striving to become one with that which we have always been.

*Hear, Oh Arjuna, the highest teaching: There is no existence for that which does not exist, nor is there any non-existence for that which does exist. Never was I not, nor thee, nor all these princes of men, nor shall we ever, hereafter, cease to be.*

*Bhagavad Gita*

Krishna is Light: the Light of Compassion, the Light in the Sound, as well as the light of daring burning within the pilgrim's heart. This Light emanating from The Central Spiritual Sun, an impersonal representation of Krishna, can be approached and adored by any being, at any time. Existing within this translucent *Light*, in constant adoration of Krishna, are galaxies of Rishis, Mahatmas, and all such beings sacrificially maintaining availability of this Light for seekers that they may prevail in their single-minded quest to serve Krishna. "All the Rishis and Mahatmas reside within the

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universal form (*brahmanda*) of Vishnu-Narayana-Krishna.” Through devotion to, adoration of these beings, the student will experience moments of self-transcendence, bliss, and timelessness.

Any ardent seeker wishing to contribute to the sum total of human good will find the teachings of Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* to be of inestimable value. Both as a whole and in its separate eighteen chapters, the *Gita* is a treatise of the kingly science, of the conscious union of the fully individuated soul with the universal Self, with Krishna. Having become lost within realms of manyness, of apparent separateness, the effort to overcome this illusion, this apparent separation from Krishna is portrayed in the *Gita* as a battle. Krishna teaches this battle can be voluntarily entered upon by self-chosen means or, involuntarily engaged through the forces of Nature and of Karma. One may take an active determined stance or be passively pulled along by the impersonal laws of Karma. This latter—persisted over lifetimes—can lead to dire spiritual consequences. Thus, does Krishna refer to “the priceless boon of learning truth” and to those who encounter the true teachings as “fortune’s favored soldiers.”

The wisest of aspirants are those who consciously cooperate with cosmic necessity, “with their own divine destiny, sacrosanct duty or *svadharma*.” The wisest among seekers are those who chose, as early after encountering the teachings as possible, to make an irreversible, unconditional commitment to render service to Krishna, mirroring his gracious and generous spirit. Without doubts or hesitations the path Krishna teaches and his prescribed modes of action are chosen. Thus, does the battle commence. Each and every force and being inimical to ones’ commitment to tread Krishna’s path will arise within the consciousness of the would-be devotee. The more deeply felt and sincere the aspiration, the greater will be the array of forces against which the seeker must battle. If there is developing devotion, adoration, persistence and prostration, there will come—often unexpectedly—a moment in which all such trials are perceived

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as precious moments of opportunity—for which there arises a spontaneous, deeply felt sense of gratitude. From this moment onward, though it may at times become obscured, there remains an inner awareness of non-duality, of Krishna’s ever-present divine grace. “The only failure is the failure to try...Try, try, ever keep trying. Is it not thus that mountains are climbed?” [*The Voice of the Silence*, H.P. Blavatsky]

*Yet the performance of works (Karma Yoga) is by far inferior to mental devotion (Buddhi Yoga)...seek an asylum, then, in this mental devotion, which is knowledge...he who by means of this yoga is mentally devoted dismisses alike successful and unsuccessful results, being beyond them: yoga is skill in the performance of actions: therefore do thou aspire to this devotion.*

*Bhagavad Gita, II*

Through unflagging efforts at self-study, self-correction, and single-mindedness, undertaken for the sake of all, the student will become increasingly aware of the gracious gift of choice, of the ability to consciously affect one’s life towards Krishna, towards the universally diffused light of Buddhi. Such awareness of choice is in contrast to being a mere passive instrument in the hands of individual and collective karma, a state sadly, alas, characterizing most of today’s mankind. As the student deepens awareness of choice, it becomes possible to make strong affirmations of one’s inherent human dignity, to make deep determinations to persevere in the quest with increasing deliberation in thought and speech, thus gaining mastery over each, containing rather than mindlessly frittering away sacred energies. Somewhat paradoxically, it is often more discernable to sense a ray of pure divinity within the basest of men than in those held in high esteem. The Divine Light of Buddhi shines within all, yet from all does not shine forth.

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Krishna teaches that between the head and the heart there is a chasm, a battlefield. The vagaries—of the passive, uncontrolled mind—obscure heart-light. Through ignorance springs obsessive attachment to the fruits of action, productive of expectations often leading to increased suffering, even despair. It is only through gradually centering consciousness within seamless Buddhist awareness that the seeker begins to sense a presence of *Ishvara*, of Krishna within. This leads to an overwhelming sense of gratitude, of adoration and devotion, which in its mysterious turn, makes conscious the ever present divine dialectic of Krishna's dance. The deep intimations within the seeker—the resultant ardor of devotion and Krishna's enjoyment of both, of the seeker's apparent separateness from Krishna, when devotedly pondered—provides intuitive, Buddhist awareness of the illusory distinction between the One and the Many. It is through Krishna's grace that this illusion is overcome, enabling the seeker to fulfill *Svadharma* without the slightest attachment to results.

Fortunate souls encountering Krishna's teachings, seeking to become one with them in heart-mind, speech, and action gradually establish true continuity of consciousness centered upon Krishna's unconditional compassion. This may be depicted in terms of the AUM, the WORD in the first sentence of the "Book of John" in the *New Testament*. In the former, the letter A represents Brahma, creations, beginnings, on any plane, from the vast to the minutest. The letter U represents Vishnu, preservation, continuity. The letter M represents Shiva, endings/regenerations/beginnings. Thus, in maintaining continuity of consciousness of AUM, one is aligning oneself to the three underlining, primordial variables of manifestation. One is becoming *en rapport* with the highest manifest reality. When Shiva is understood to represent the simultaneity of creation and destruction, of cause and effect, the seeker has transcended all polarities, all contrasts, sequential time and three-dimensional space. To have gained such a state is to have truly entered the magnificence of Krishna's universal Being.

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*With thy heart place all thy works on me, prefer me to all else, exercise mental devotion [Buddhi Yoga] continually, and think constantly of me...Take sanctuary with his [me] alone, O son of Bharata, with all thy soul; by his [my] grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place.*

*Bhagavad Gita, XVIII*

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