



Karuna Yoga Gita
(The Song of Compassion)

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Karuna Yoga Gita

Hail to the Sadguru!
Who brings all manner of blessings to the world,
Who absorbs its poisons and revivifies it,
Who carries the torch of Dharma,
Who exemplifies perfection for striving humanity,
Who comes to sanctify and rebuild.

Love, love, love beyond love,
Heart-beating, heart-moving, pulsating love;
Light, light, light beyond light,
Outstretching, outpouring, infinite light;
Life, life, eternal life,
Creating, preserving, assimilating life.
And so it was,
And so it is,
And so it will be,
Forever then, forever now, forever thence.
The love sought love,
The light sought light,
The life sought life,
So the world came into being.
Then man stepped forth, created in the Divine Image,
In the Image and Likeness of the One-All-Only.

Hail to man, supreme above created beings!
Hail to man, paramount to every institution!
Hail to man, superior even to the unseen!
Hail to man, may he ever be blessed!
This is the book of Absorption-through-love,
The Karuna Yoga Gita,
Whereby with the opening of heart
The heart can regain heart,
Man comes face to face with his Creator,
The soul finds its eternal resting-place,
And the purpose of existence is revealed.
This is the Karuna Yoga Gita,
The Song of all songs,
Endless and powerful, yet gentle and tender,
Pouring forth and in and through every heart,
Heart seeking heart—let us seek what we may find.

Within the secret confines of the heart
There lies the sacred door;
This is the manger wherein Christ was born,
Who said, "Seek and ye shall find,
Knock and it shall be opened unto you."
What shall we seek? Whither shall we find?
"Lo, the kingdom of the heavens is within you."
In the very centre of the heart abides the key.

Lesson the first: The Meditation of the Heart

This meditation is a difficult task,
For it is not of the body, neither is it of the mind.
It is not associated with chakra-concentration.
It has nothing to do with complexities of any school,
It is not like any process in intellectualization;

Its very simplicity is its difficulty.
This meditation is a simple task:
There is nothing about it that a child cannot do;
Indeed by becoming as little children we may be more successful.
The heart is heart and nothing else,
Yet it is more than flesh, even more than feeling.

The Master has always said, "Thus,"
Whereupon the disciples have said: "Thus-and-thus,"
Including their doctrines concerning the Master with the teachings of the Master;
In every time, in every place have teachings and doctrines conflicted,
So there has been turmoil, tribulation, warfare—
So many doctrines, each opposing the others, all opposing the teachings.
When shall we turn? When shall we return to the heart?
When shall we resume the teachings and discard the doctrines?
Let us turn, in silence let us turn to the heart,
Let us seek the secret asylum of the heart,
For therein lies the city of refuge, great beyond conception;
There is repose, there is salvation.

Seated in quiet comfort,
Laying aside woes and cares and problems,
Placing thoughts outside of consciousness,
Raising consciousness above thought,
Feel the love that emanates from the sun-centre of the heart.
Feel this love, find this love, follow this love—
That is all, that is the simplicity,
The ever-so-easy meditation of the heart.
Thus the baptism in the bosom of Christ;
This is tauba¹, this is shuvo², this is repentance,
This is the Way toward Love.

¹Arabic for repentance or turning, used by Muslims and Sufis.

²Hebrew do, used by the synagogues throughout the world.

Lesson the second: The Concentration of the Heart

Practice not the Concentration until there is progress in Meditation;
Therefore is there need for the Teacher to mark one's footsteps.
In the schools for the young where the many attend,
The pupils do not mark their own papers, the teachers do this;
But in the school of life, where only the few even enter,
Many of those few would mark their own progress,
By their individual egos would they grade themselves,
Becoming thus more tied to karma than even those who do not enter—
If thou wilt judge thyself, come not even into this school,
Remain at the threshold or even stay away;
It will be better for thee.

Seated again in heart-repose as in Meditation,
Concentrate all faculties upon the form of the heart;
Consider that this form is but the externality of the essence,
That essence and form are not two,
That essence and form are unseparate.
Utilize the sense of sight together with the faculty of thought,
Do not discard effort or imagination,
But bind all faculties by the feeling,
Feel and feel, and look with the heart-beat.
Therefore the Meditation is needed first, and afterwards the Concentration.

When the mind has been sufficiently impressed,
Hold the image within,
Let the thought hold the image,
Let the image inspire the thought,
Let the feeling dominate both thought and imagination.
Only when the feeling controls will the interest remain,
Only when the heart is master will the will-power operate.
Then step by step is consciousness elevated,
Then does the healing balm of heart purify the body,
Then does the vital energy of heart sanctify the body,
Then does the life of heart permeate the mind.
This is the baptism by blood,
For without thought is the blood elevated;
This is an elevation when there is no attention to elevation,
This is a healing when there is no consideration of healing,
This is a purification when there is no thought upon purification,
This is a revitalization when there is no consciousness of revitalization.

Keeping away all thoughts of self,
Maintaining fast the act with no ideas of fruits-of-action,
Pursuing inward unity with steadfastness,
The heart begins to ebb and flow, to flow and ebb,
Love seeking love, light seeking light, life seeking life.

What was this image that I saw before me?
I am the image, I am the form, I am the seer.

Lesson the third: Breath as the Way

Hearken not to the ignorant who make mysteries of the unknown,
And by their mystification keep seekers from the door.
Every school has taught it from the most ancient times,
And the Way to God is the Way to God, not man-thought-created.
By the blood and also by "spirit" shall we be baptized;
Alas for those foolish ignorant who separate blood from love,
Who oversimplify breath and overcomplicate spirit!
Alas, that the doctrines have overwhelmed the teachings
In all ages, in all parts of the world, leading to confusion!

The incoming breath is bliss,
The outgoing breath is serenity,
Serenity and bliss, bliss and serenity, out and in, in and out.
When the breath comes in massive waves, irregular, tempestuous,
Then is the life irregular, tempestuous, uncontrolled.
When the breath comes smooth, even, rhythmical,
Then is there life, there is potentiality;
But beware of the evenness of weakness,
Steer far from potentiality without vitality,
For such a breath is short and does not reach the inwards:
The inwards of the body it does not reach,
The inwards of the mind it does not touch,
It never arrives at the threshold of heart.
"With difficulty comes ease," says Qur'an; so be it.
Therefore the rhythm is needed first,
Rhythm, smoothness, tranquility,
And after that may the breath be lengthened,
And when it is lengthened it is strengthened.
But do this with the advice and counsel of the Guru,
Do not do this of self; do not experiment,
Dangerous as it is to experiment teacherless in the laboratory,
Multifold is the danger of self-experimentation;
Yet in water, in breath, in blood lay the mysteries of life.
(How we ignore the teachings even in proportion to revering the texts!)

When Meditation is practiced, calmness comes with ease;
When Concentration is performed, strength comes with facility.
So first the Meditation and the Concentration, then the Breath,
Yet each assists, each accommodates the others,
Each are sign-posts, guides on the Way,
Yet the Way is the Truth, the Way is the Life.
Blessed is he who comes by water, by blood and by breath. Amen.

Lesson the fourth: The Contemplation of the Heart

When the three lessons have been learned,
Then Contemplation may be tried,
But until the three lessons have been mastered at least in part,
Every effort at Contemplation will wipe away what has been achieved,
For to him that hath shall be given,
But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.
The Contemplation of the Heart is an activity of egolessness,
It is not by the ego that Contemplation is performed,
It is a performance without the ego,
So until the ego is subjected it is to be avoided.

When the three lessons have been learned, at least in part,
And when the teacher has requested,
Then is Contemplation to be practiced.
Seated in the same manner as in Meditation and Concentration,
Secure in the control of the penetrating, even, rhythmic breath,
One begins as in Concentration and then reverses it,
For instead of identifying self with ego and seeking heart,
One identifies oneself with heart and seeks ego.
Thus it is that one arrives at egolessness, not-self.
By the not-self, through the not-self contemplate heart-of-self,
Looking from outward in, no longer from inward out,
The Contemplation is the Concentration-in-reverse,
This is the first step in Contemplation.

In Meditation and Concentration self is and God is sought,
In Contemplation God is and self is sought.
Only by a psychological feat of egolessness can the non-ego be realized;
The philosophy of non-ego otherwise is verbal,
The philosophy of non-ego otherwise is vanity.
How many there are who preach of non-ego!
How many who go through a vain and useless non-violence!
The true Contemplation is the true non-violence,
The accommodation for an ever-expanding life,
Not a retreat from life, not a refuge from effort.
By effort is attainment achieved,
By the true effort resulting from the union of ego and non-ego.
But first one must strive on the path of non-ego.
Even as one has hitherto striven on the path of ego.
One must dissociate oneself from ego to progress,
Yet one must also look with compassion upon the ego to progress;
This is the mystery, this is the purpose of Contemplation,
Wherein the heart seeks heart, even seeks the heart-of-self.

Lesson the fifth: The Expansion of Heart-Consciousness

The expansion of heart-consciousness is not to be essayed
Until Contemplation is practiced and progress achieved;
Therefore do nothing without the Guru.
Unless there is love for the Guru there will be no heart-expansion,
Unless there is love for the Guru there will only be emotional intensification;
How many have identified emotional intensification with love,
Only that on the morrow they identify it with hate!
Emotional intensification is a state of ego,
Wherein one is still bound, even more bound to the Wheel-of-life-and-death,
And it is from this Wheel-of-life-and-death that we seek deliverance.
If there is still emotional intensification,
One should concentrate upon the dot and circle,
One should follow the expansion and contraction of the breath,
One should feel oneself as nothing and as all.
This is a link in severance; this is a step toward liberty.
So long as the self is bound to self it is in bondage,
But the denial of self and of bondage only increases the bonds
And leads one deeper and deeper into the mire of delusion.
Effort without reverence is a waste of vitality,
Effort without reverence is a road to the crown of uselessness,
Effort without reverence destroys the psychic substance,
Effort without reverence only increases the toil of true effort.
Looking upon oneself from the without inwardly,
And from the inward outwardly,
Produce the realization of limitation
Whence expansion and growth are possible.
Feel the heart; find the pin-point within the heart,
Then grow with that pin-point on, and on, and on. . .
There is no limit to this growth,
There is no end to this achievement,
Until the other shore is reached.

Love is not a word,
Love is not a thought,
Love is not a series of changing emotions—
Love is the very life linking self to non-self;
However it be expressed
In whatever modes it manifest,
Love is the way to greatness, to life, to salvation.

Have pity on those who stop at faith and never arrive at love,
Have sorrow for those who revel in faith and never manifest love,
Have compassion for those who accentuate faith and never exercise love;
Who never knew the Master's mind,
Who never dream of the Master's heart,
Who never see the Master face-to-face.

Lesson the sixth: Union of Self and Not-Self

When one has advanced in Meditation,
When one has become skillful in Concentration,
When the breath ebbs and flows smoothly and rhythmically,
When there is serenity, when there is bliss,
When the heart feels the love of the Guru,
When Contemplation becomes the norm of the devotee,
And the heart-sway is expanded while mastery is retained,
Then it is possible to bring about the union of self-and non-self.
If one has not accomplished these things,
There is a return to egoicity,
Which is to be avoided above all things,
For it brings a return to samsara,
And adds to the world-store of unwholesome karma.

When there is humility and lack of ostentation,
Then it is possible to bring about union of self and non-self.
For, with the expulsion of breath one supposes:
“Now I am not, verily I am not, neti, neti!”
With the indrawing of breath one supposes
“Now I am, verily I am, ani, ani!”
I am, I am not, neti, ani,
So the exhalation, so the inhalation,
So the denial, so the affirmation,
But as a pendulum cannot swing in one direction only,
So the consciousness cannot swing,
For if there is denial only death ensues,
And if there is assertion only death-in-life ensues,
So that one does not attain to mastery.
For the death-in-life is the sin or karma,
And the death-in-death is the final enemy,
So has the teaching gone, verily so has it been.
But the teaching is not without the actualization,
So the breath must be controlled,
Then as there are two sides to a coin but one coin,
As there is swing and counter-swing to the pendulum,
So with the two aspects of breath:
Exhalation, inhalation—but a single breath-span.

Now from this singleness of breath
Realizing the two facets of one process,
Whereupon the breath joins man to God,
The breath brings God to man.
Now from this singleness of heart,
Realizing self and non-self as undifferentiated,
Different in the world of manifestation,
Unseparate in the universal life-in-God.
Seek and ye shall find; verily if ye seek, shall ye find.

(Note: The above is a deep practical application of the Sufi Fikr.)

Lesson the seventh: Compassion

The union is not a blind event devoid of life,
The union is a complete event abundant with life;
The union is not a theoretical happening,
The union is that rebirth from within of which sages speak;
The union is an expansion of consciousness transcending limitation,
The union brings light, the union brings life, the union is love.

Oh, for that marvelous love beyond intellectualization,
Which makes of this very universe a sport,
Which makes the greatest of the happenings of earth,
Yet overlooks not the smallest suffering of the least;
Whether the meek inherit earth or not, they inherit the heavens;
Whether the peacemakers are blessed on earth or not, they are above,
And the blessings become realities,
Not words or images or thoughts or ideals,
Verily are they real, truly are they supremely real.

When the love is fixed upon self, it is degraded toward pity;
When the love is fixed upon non-self, it is lost in passion,
Yet pity is a shadow of compassion,
And passion also is the umbra of compassion.
Not by Meditation or Concentration is compassion realized,
But by the ever-expanding heart,
Trained in the ways of love through devotion to the Guru,
Marked in the ways of love by the stimulation of the Guru,
Skilled in the ways of love through constant practice.
There is no theory of universal attitude,
There is either a complete view or its absence,
Not pretended but exhibited by one's every deed,
For the earth-born are veiled by their very egos,
While the twice-born are no longer veiled,
No longer see through a glass darkly, but face-to-face.
With the expansion of the heart comes Compassion,
And with Compassion comes increased expansibility of heart,
That thereupon man becomes a Bodhisattva—
He is the vessel of heaven in the bowels of earth,
He incarnates God-in-man through his change of status.

Ah, the blessed Guru who makes this possible!
Oh the wonderful Guru who bestows his gifts to us!
Producing happiness even here on earth,
Through the sublimation of self after union with non-self,
Whereupon the expanded consciousness full of light
Extends its sway of Mercy and Compassion,
Becomes freed from the toils of lust and greed and temper,
And rises full-fledged like an image from the chrysalis.

Lesson the eighth: Bodhisattva

What we shall be, that we are;
Time is a bewitching delusion weaving enchantments,
Each enchantment unveiling the past but secluding the future,
All standing like gossamer webs over reality.
O soul, let me see your face!
Ask it of the stars whose light shines eons after they are not—
So true light shines for eons before it is,
For what it is is nothing before the seeing eye.
No man can see God, and live,
But dying-to-self becomes reality.
When heart is filled with compassion,
The deeper consciousness becomes aware of all;
Then man can say, "I am."
To another he cannot say, "I am not thou,"
For his "I am" is his "Thou Art,"
And the veil of the temple has been rent.
Where would the light of the stars if the sun were not?
Where would the light of the eyes if the soul were not?
When these are, we are:
Then our beating sun-hearts pour forth compassion,
Pour forth love, pour forth mercy, pour forth blessing.
What is the aim of Karuna Yoga?
It is this, it is nothing but this.
The deep music of Reality produces the Nirmanakaya,
The body where matter and spirit meet,
Wedded by the eternal cohesion of dense and ethereal;
The abysmal and the hyperbolic are no longer apart,
Time is no more.

Avalokitesvara, need I look to thee?
Manjusri, art thou but mind enfoldment?
O the beating heart that feels all beating hearts!
O the sorrowing heart that knows all suffering hearts!
O the living heart that knows all quivering hearts!
This and the ether beating hearts maintain the universe,
By them alone is karma squelched,
By them his the underlying truth made manifest,
The underlying fire recreates fuel from the ashes,
The living waters of the cosmic flood are ebbing,
And man becomes his own exemplary and savior—
Not in what he says or teaches,
But what he is.

Lesson the ninth: Karuna Yoga

Hail to the Guru, Self of my self!
Whose body was different, whose mind was delineate,
Whose heart I have become.
To me ever attached to him
I become the him-in-me and me-in-him, Svah!

When the effort passing step by step,
Experiencing stages, recognizing states,
Becomes so filled with love and light and compassion on every side,
And there is nothing to which one is unattached.
When the love transcending self feels equally the pain of all,
When the mercy transcending self sends blessing and healing everywhere,
When self becomes love and there is nothing left to love.
O that transforming wonder of redeeming light!
O that bliss of transcendental bathing!
O that wondrous calm of the life of life!
When time is gone and bodies are no longer,
The dark night of sleep is ended,
The dark sleep of night is gone;
The eye perceiving pierces all the veils
And only suffering is dead.

Arise, awakened one, the Buddha-fields surround thee,
Thou art Christ and thou alone;
The history and the deed have run their course,
The mystery and the travail have been ended,
God among gods, yet a man of men,
The Great Work lays before thee.

What I was I am no longer,
What I was not, that have I become,
Until the I becomes a lie and the was-not is.
Canst thou by taking thought add to the hairs of thy head?
O faith of heart and heart of faith,
Grown thou art now through faith and hope to boundless love,
To boundless bliss, to boundless understanding and wisdom,
Who can teach thee now who surpasseth all!
Who can not teach thee now who is not, yet is!
A little child, a hoary sage, a supernal being—
The shiny dewdrop has entered the Great Sea.*

*Paraphrase on the last line of *The Light of Asia*.

Lesson the tenth: Hierarchy

Hail to the marvelous brotherhood of wonder-workers!
Hearts linked to hearts to homogenize the universe,
Ladders from heaven to earth and earth to heaven,
Pulsations in the mystic, cosmic heart,
Ones in all and alls in one are they.

Go, adventurous one,
And when thou hast accomplished thy mission,
When thou hast fulfilled the purpose of thine outer life,
When thou also hast experienced states and stages,
When Meditation is thy wont
And Contemplation is thy constant habit,
When all the love and mercy blossom in thee,
Link thee to the before-and-after,
Err not in recognizing only those before thee,
Neither be thou deluded in blind evolution
Which falsely pictures perfection in the future.
The day is come and the day is now
And the day is naught but revelation of thy spirit,
And night thy sleep.
Thou art joined with thy brethren
Whose khalif thou art there in thine unfoldment.
Behold the group of men and women acting as a unit!
A stream of living lights connected with one central power station,
Unseparate, drawing from one unlimited unadulterated pool,
Unseparate, sending forth beneficence,
Unseparate in essence, heart beating with heart,
But whose rhythms are all for each and each for all.
When the earth in dark travail looks for help—thou art there;
When mothers bereaved and fathers wander aimlessly—thou comest;
When the orphans look for guidance and affection—who else manifests?

Who can conceive the Universal Adam!
Who can comprehend the single Grand Man!
Those who know, who have given up without thought of reward;
Those who understand, who give because it is their nature;
Those who love, and loving, pour forth radiance;
These are the Sons and Daughters of God—
Not in the past, not in the future, evermore now:
These are the Messiahs of Humanity.

Lesson the eleventh: Perfection

O song of songs beginning and ending in stillness!
O light of lights drawing from the abyss!
O Karuna Yoga which joins and joins not.
For joining and separation alike are illusions.
When there is realization that Naught else is,
When there is the supertranscendent perception—
This is it: Aye, this is it!
Carry on, o song of love, into that symphony!
Carry on, heart of heart, into that love!
Let me be enveloped in that glory
And let that glory manifest through me.
Here, body, lay thyself down;
Here, mind, give thyself up;
Here, heart, let thyself go!
For what art thou, O body, without thy Maker!
And what art thou, O mind, without thy Preserver!
And what art thou, O heart, without thy Essence!
Go, words, into the Word of Wisdom!
Go, thoughts, into the stream of Intelligence!
Naught shall ever be, can ever be.
I die, and dying live evermore;
My sepulchre is light, my grave is glorification;
My resurrection is my very self.
Let this light shine ever in me and before me;
Let there be nothing which is without this light.
Fill the interstices, make straight the crooked paths,
Level the mountains, upraise the depths,
And let divine blessings flow ever through my person.
Before the all am I nothing—
But before the nothing am I all.

Hail to thee, O Guru of Gurus,
The man-in-God and God-heart in humanity!
Thou art come to make this possible!
Thou art gone to enlighten grievous burdens!
Thou art here when no one is aware!
Thou art not when people say they see thee!
Hail to thee, God-incarnated-Saviour!
Hail to thee, very man of very humanity!
Aum!

Svah!

Shanti!