

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Philosophy
Philosophy 154E (001)

Select passages regarding the *trimarga* from our readings in Mitchell's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*

***Jnanamarga* or *Jnanayoga*:**

“But the man who delights in the Self, who feels pure contentment and finds perfect peace in the Self - for him, there is no need to act” (3:17).

“When a man has become unattached to sense-objects or to actions, renouncing his own selfish will, then he is mature in yoga. He should lift up the self by the Self and not sink into the selfish; for the self is the only friend of the Self, and its only foe. The self is a friend for him who masters himself by the Self; but for him who is not self-mastered the self is the cruelest foe. When a man has mastered himself, he is perfectly at ease in cold, in heat, in pleasure or pain, in honor or disgrace. ... He looks impartially on all: those who love him or hate him, his kinsmen, his enemies, his friends, the good, and also the wicked” (6:4-7, 9).

“When his mind has become serene by the practice of meditation, he sees the Self through the self and rests in the Self, rejoicing. He knows the infinite joy that is reached by the understanding beyond the senses; steadfast, he does not fall back from the truth. Attaining this state, he knows that there is no higher attainment; he is rooted there, unshaken even by the deepest sorrow ... Mastering mind and body, purified from all sin, he easily gains true freedom and finds an infinite joy. Mature in yoga, impartial everywhere that he looks, he sees himself in all beings and all beings in himself”(6:20-22, 28-29).

***Bhaktimarga* or *Bhaktiyoga*:**

“Whoever knows, profoundly, my divine presence on earth is not reborn when he leaves the body, but comes to me. Released from greed, fear, anger, absorbed in me and made pure by the practice of wisdom, many have attained my own state of being. However men try to reach me, I return their love with my love; whatever path they may travel it leads to me in the end” (4:9-11).

“When a man has let go of attachments, when his mind is rooted in wisdom, everything he does is worship and his actions all melt away. God is the offering, God is the offered, poured out by God; God is attained by all those who see God in every action” (4:23-24).

“The man of yoga who is able to overcome, here on earth, the turmoil of desire and anger - that man is truly happy. He who finds peace and joy and radiance within himself - that man becomes one with God and vanishes into God's bliss. The wise man, cleansed of his sins, who has cut off separation, who delights in the welfare of all beings, vanishes into God's bliss. He who controls his mind and has cut off desire and anger realizes the Self; he knows that God's bliss is nearer than near ... Knowing me as the enjoyer of all worship, the Lord of all worlds, the dearest of friends of all beings, that man gains perfect peace” (5:23-26, 29).

“When his mind becomes clear and peaceful, he enters absolute joy; his passions are calmed forever; he is utterly absorbed in God. ... The man who sees me in everything and everything within me will not be lost to me, nor will I ever be lost to him. He who is rooted in the oneness realizes that I am in every being; wherever he goes, he remains in me” (6:27, 30-31).

“Though I am unmanifest, fools think that I have a form, unaware of my higher existence, which is permanent and supreme. Veiled in my mystery and power, I am not perceived by most men; their deluded minds cannot see me, the Unborn, the Changeless, the Undying. ... But when a man is released from dualities, he can act purely, without attachment, and can serve me with all his heart. Those who take refuge in me, striving for release from old age and death, know absolute freedom, and the Self, and the nature of action. Those who know me, and the nature of beings, of gods, and of worship, are always with me in spirit, even at the hour of their death” (7:24-25, 28-30).

“These multitudes of beings, in an endless, beginningless cycle, helplessly dissolve when Brahma’s night comes and emerge once more at his dawn. But beyond this unmanifest nature is another unmanifest state, a primal existence that is not destroyed when all things dissolve. This is the eternal unmanifest and is called the ultimate goal; men who reach this, my supreme dwelling, are never reborn. This Supreme Person, Arjuna, who contains all beings and extends to the limits of all that is, can be reached by wholehearted devotion” (8:19-22).

Karmamarga or Karmayoga:

“The superior man is he whose mind can control his senses; with no attachment to results, he engages in the yoga of action. Do any actions you *must* do, since action is better than inaction; even the existence of your body depends on necessary actions. The whole world becomes a slave to its own activity, Arjuna; if you want to be truly free, perform all actions as worship” (3:7-9).

“Though the unwise cling to their actions, watching for results, the wise are free of attachments, and act for the well-being of the world” (3:25).

“It is better to do your own duty badly, than to perfectly do another’s; you are safe from harm when you do what you should be doing” (3:35).

“He who can see inaction in the midst of action, and action in the midst of inaction, is wise and can act in the spirit of yoga. With no desire for success, no anxiety about failure, indifferent to results, he burns up his actions in the fire of wisdom. Surrendering all thoughts of outcome, unperturbed, self-reliant, he does nothing at all, even when fully engaged in actions. There is nothing he expects, nothing that he fears. Serene, free from possessions, untainted acting with the body alone, content with whatever happens, unattached to pleasure and pain, success or failure, he acts and is never bound by his action” (4:18-22).

“The state reached by true knowledge is reached by yoga as well. Both paths lead to the Self; both lead to selfless action. It is hard to renounce all action without engaging in action; the sage, wholehearted in the yoga of action, soon attains freedom. Wholehearted, purified, mastering body and mind, his self becomes the self of all beings; he is sustained by anything he does. The man who has seen the truth thinks, ‘I am not the doer’ at all times - when he sees, hears, touches, when he smells, eats, walks, sleeps, breathes, when he defecates, talks, or takes hold, when he opens his eyes or shuts them: at all times he thinks, ‘This is merely sense-objects acting on the senses.’ (5:5-9)

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