

The Bhagavad Gita Compared to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the First Ray

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Summary

The Bhagavad Gita, which means the “Lord’s Song” in Sanskrit, is popularly known as the Gita, and is a Hindu scripture that is considered to be among the most important texts in the history of religion and philosophy. The Gita’s initial chapters are concerned with karma yoga. The Sanskrit word *karma* means “action,” and the word *yoga* means “union,” so karma yoga can be translated as the path of union through action. Alice Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the First Ray” is a modern text written with abstruse symbols, so it is difficult to understand. This article clarifies Bailey’s Technique by showing that it is similar to verses on karma yoga found in the first five chapters of the Gita.

The Bhagavad Gita

The Gita is embedded as an episode within the much longer *Mahabharata*, which is one of the major Sanskrit epics of ancient India. The initial portion of the *Mahabharata* describes the events that led up to the Gita, resulting in the assembly of two antagonistic armies on the battlefield at Kurukshetra. One army is led by the Kaurava brothers who are one hundred in number, the eldest of which is Duryodhana. The other army is led by the Pandava brothers who are just five in number, one of which is Arjuna. Both sides asked for the support of Krishna, a leading prince of the realm, because he possessed a vast army and was revered as a wise teacher. Krishna responded by offering to give his army to one side and to become a charioteer for the other side, but he refused to touch any weapon or to fight in the battle. Duryodhana chose Krishna’s army, but Arjuna preferred to have Krishna as his charioteer.

The Gita begins with the two armies standing poised for battle. After Arjuna tells Krishna to drive their chariot into the space between the two armies, and Krishna does so, they have a dialog that lasts for the rest of the Gita’s 18 chapters. Arjuna has misgivings about his role in the coming battle, so Krishna explains various Hindu concepts and practices to him. Because of these explanations, the Gita is a practical, self-contained guide to daily living. The actual battle of Kurukshetra occurs after their dialog is completed, and it is described in the subsequent portion of the *Mahabharata*.

Swami Nikhilananda (1895-1973), founder of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, characterizes the Gita’s content:

The Gita is a yogashastra, a scripture on yoga. The word “yoga” ... denotes the union of individual soul with Universal Soul, and also the means to such union. Hence yoga is the goal of all religions and the basis of all religious practices. It implies much more than religion in its usual sense. Instead of laying down creeds and doctrines for acceptance by religious aspirants, it emphasizes the psychological approach to self-unfoldment. Thus yoga takes into consideration the different types of human minds—the active, the philosophical, the emotional,

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and the psychic—and expounds for them, respectively, the path of work (karmayoga), the path of knowledge (jnanyoga), the path of love or devotion (bhaktiyoga), and the path of concentration and self-control (rajayoga). Each of these paths opens upon the infinite horizon of Truth and effects the union of man with God. The Gita describes them all.¹

The foregoing quotation describes a key feature of yoga philosophy: aspirants are regarded as belonging to different psychological types, and a system of yoga, which is a line of self-development, has been devised for each psychological type.

How are the Gita's chapters organized? Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976), founder of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, writes:

The Gita is divided into eighteen chapters, which can be grouped into three sections, or books. The first of these three books deals with karma yoga, the path of work, and here the insistence is upon action. The second book is an exposition of jnana yoga, the path of knowledge, and here the insistence is upon knowledge of the Self. The subject of karma is not entirely dismissed, but is harmonized with the path of knowledge. The last of the books discusses bhakti yoga, or the path of love and devotion, and the insistence here is on worship and love of the one Supreme Lord. Jnana (knowledge) and karma (work) do not disappear, but are both harmonized with devotion.²

Other commentators have also noted that the Gita's chapters can be grouped into three sequential sections on karma yoga, jnana yoga, and bhakti yoga, respectively.³ Although the Gita as a whole has something to teach every type of aspirant, a given chapter's system of yoga is primarily intended for aspirants belonging to the corresponding psychological type.

In Hinduism, the Bhagavad Gita is considered to be a direct message of the Hindu god Vishnu, who is said to be the preserver and protector of creation, because Krishna is con-

sidered to be an incarnation, or avatar, of Vishnu. Consequently, millions of Hindus have esteemed this text over the centuries. Theosophical writers also have a high regard for the Gita. For example, Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), co-founder of the Theosophical Society, states: "Since the birth of the Theosophical Society ... it is being repeated daily that all the Esoteric Wisdom of the ages lies concealed in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad-Gita*."⁴ Alice Bailey (1880-1949), founder of the Arcane School, states, "There are three books which should be in the hands of every student, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *New Testament*, and the *Yoga Sutras*, for in these three is contained a complete picture of the soul and its unfoldment."⁵

Technique of Integration for the First Ray

Teachings on the seven rays are contained in both the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda* and modern Theosophy.⁶ Bailey provides a modern theosophical account:

A ray is but a name for a particular force or type of energy, with the emphasis upon the quality which that force exhibits and not upon the form aspect which it creates. This is a true definition of a ray.⁷

Every human being is swept into manifestation on the impulse of some ray, and is colored by that particular ray quality, which determines the form aspect, indicates the way he should go, and enables him (by the time the third initiation is reached) to have sensed and then to have cooperated with his ray purpose.⁸

In Theosophy, an "initiation" is said to be a milestone on the spiritual journey. Thus, according to Bailey's account, every human being is connected to a specific ray and can receive guidance on the spiritual journey from that ray.

Bailey claims that her "Seven Techniques of Integration" depict "the pattern of the thought and the process of the life" of aspirants guided by each of the seven rays.⁹ She admits that her techniques are written in such a way that they are difficult to understand: "It is difficult

to make easily comprehensible the nature and purpose of these techniques”; “Our study of the Techniques of Integration was definitely abstruse and couched in language quite symbolic.”¹⁰ She also says, “these ray techniques are imposed by the soul upon the personality after it has been somewhat integrated into a functioning entity and is, therefore, becoming slightly responsive to the soul, the directing Intelligence.”¹¹ In this context, the term “soul” denotes the “superconscious self,”¹² and “personality” denotes the mental, emotional, and physical bodies.¹³

If Bailey’s claim is correct, then her techniques depict the archetypal patterns that underlie all inspired methods of integration. For example, the written esoteric teaching of any religion might be a verbal expression of one of these archetypes, but with some distortions due to the limitations of words. Different esoteric religions might be expressions of the same archetype but with varying distortions. Thus, if her claim is true, it should be possible to show that her techniques, in part or in whole, are similar to various recorded methods of integration that are thought to be inspired.

This article is concerned only with the First Ray. Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the First Ray is as follows:

The love of power must dominate. There must also be repudiation of those forms which wield no power.

The *word* goes forth from soul to form; “Stand up. Press outward into life. Achieve a goal. For you, there must be not a circle, but a line.

Prepare *the form*. Let the eyes look forward, not on either side. Let the ears be closed to all the outer voices, and the hands clenched, the body braced, and mind alert. Emotion is not used in furthering of the Plan. Love takes its place.”

The symbol of a moving point of light appears above the brow. The keynote of the life though uttered not, yet still is clearly heard: “I move to power. I am the One. We are a Unity in power. And all is for the power and glory of the *One*.”¹⁴

The teachings on the seven rays are comparable to those on yoga philosophy, because both sets of teachings regard aspirants as belonging to different psychological types and regard each type as having its own system of self-development. In the teachings on the seven rays, the various systems of self-development are depicted by Bailey’s Techniques of Integration. In the teachings on yoga philosophy, the various systems of self-development, called “yogas,” are outlined by the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu scriptures. How closely do Bailey’s Techniques resemble the yogas?

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the First Ray is similar to verses on karma yoga in the first five chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. Unless mentioned otherwise, Swami Nikhilananda’s English translation of the Gita is used.¹⁵ *Time Magazine* (July 3, 1944) gives the following review of this translation:

The first really readable, authoritative English translation of one of the world’s oldest and greatest religious classics was published last fortnight. It is The Bhagavad Gita (The Song of the Lord), often called the Hindu New Testament, translated by Swami Nikhilananda.¹⁶

In a few instances, Charles Johnston’s translation is used for verses in which his language is closer to that in the corresponding sentences within Bailey’s Technique.¹⁷ Johnston (1867-1931) founded the Dublin Lodge of the Theosophical Society, was a student of Madam Blavatsky, and married her niece.

Bailey states that each of her techniques can be divided into five phases: “The words, covering the process in every case, are *Alignment, Crisis, Light, Revelation, Integration*.”¹⁸ In what follows, our commentary is also divided into these five phases.

Alignment

In the first phase of the integration process, the aspirants bring their mental, emotional and physical bodies into increased *alignment* with their soul. How is this phase treated by our two texts?

The First Ray is called the “The Ray of Will, or Power.”¹⁹ This grammatical construction suggests that will and power are treated as synonyms. Bailey says that “purpose and truth, when grasped, brings into direct conflict the will of the personality (the separative individual, governed by the concrete, analytical mind) and the will of the soul.”²⁰ Thus, an aspirant has two different wills, or powers, that may oppose each other: the will of the personality, and the will of the soul. The Technique of Integration for the First Ray depicts the evolutionary stages in the expression of these wills.

Righteousness is the English translation of the Greek word *dikaosune*, which is used in the original language for Matthew 5:6, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”²¹ In theosophical terminology, *righteousness* can be defined as the will of the soul. Bailey gives a similar account: “Physical plane methods, when motivated by unchanging love of humanity and under the direction of an enlightened soul, become agents of righteousness.”²² Commentators on the Gita often translate the Sanskrit words *dharma* and *adharma* as righteousness and unrighteousness, respectively. For example, Albert Randall, professor of philosophy, states:

In Hinduism, and especially the Bhagavad Gita, *dikaosune* is understood as *dharma*. *Dharma* is often translated as “righteousness” or “righteous duty.” Because Arjuna’s spiritual distress at the destructiveness of the ensuing battle causes him to collapse on the floor of his chariot, the remainder of the Gita is Krishna’s educating him about *dharma* ... While there is no word for sin in the Gita, the term *adharma* is the Hindu equivalent of what monotheisms mean by

sin. Because Sanskrit is Indo-European based ... a word can be negated by adding the indefinite article, “a.” Thus, *adharma* means “unrighteousness,” the opposite of righteousness.²³

The Technique’s first sentence treats the alignment phase: “*The love of power* must dominate.” Here, “*power*” is interpreted as righteousness, or the will of the soul. Thus, for an aspirant to complete this phase, his or her appreciation of righteousness must become greater than that of any possession or pleasure. Such appreciation is the result of the aspirant becoming aligned with what Bailey calls “the unalterable fact of his essentially divine nature or being, which cannot remain satisfied with the gaining of power in a personality sense and in a material world.”²⁴

Next, let us examine how the alignment phase is treated in the first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, at the beginning of which the two opposing armies are already assembled at Kurukshetra. Arjuna tells his charioteer, who is Krishna, to draw his chariot between the opposing armies in verses 1:21-23, using Nikhilananda’s translation:

Arjuna said: O Achyuta, between the two armies draw up my chariot, that I may behold those who stand there eager to fight, and may know, on the eve of battle, with whom I must contend. I would observe those who are gathered here to fight, desiring on the field of battle the welfare of the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.

Here, Achyuta, which literally means the “Changeless One,” is an epithet of Krishna, and “the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra” denotes Duryodhana. Krishna responds to

Arjuna's request by moving the chariot in verses 1:24-25:

Krishna drew up the excellent chariot between the two armies, facing Bhishma, Drona, and all the rulers of the earth, and said, "Behold, O Partha, all the Kurus here assembled!"

Here, Partha is an epithet of Arjuna, the Kurus refer to Arjuna's enemies, and Bhishma and Drona are leaders of the Kurus.

Both Krishna and Arjuna are symbols. Bailey speaks of "The battle of Kurukshetra, with Krishna, the soul, heartening Arjuna, the aspirant, on to steady and continuous effort."²⁵ The Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), in his commentary on the Gita, speaks of "Krishna the divine Soul" and "Arjuna, the human soul."²⁶ Bailey also uses the terminology of divine and human souls: "Thus gradually, and with infinite pain, the human soul learns to function first as a member of the human family, and, secondly as a spiritual entity, the divine soul."²⁷ "Soul" and "divine soul" appear to be synonymous, and "aspirant" and "human soul" also appear to be synonymous, so Aurobindo provides independent support for Bailey's premise that Krishna symbolizes the soul and Arjuna symbolizes the aspirant.

The *pairs of opposites*—such as good and evil, pleasure and pain, as well as victory and defeat—play a key role in both the Technique and Gita. Human beings make sense of and organize their experiences by constructing concepts out of pairs of opposites, so they confuse the actual world with their concepts of the world, and tend to think of the world as divided into separate and independent parts rather than as a unitary and interdependent whole. To avoid being misled by dichotomous conceptualization, human beings need to, in the Gita's words of verse 2:43, "Be free from the pairs of opposites."

Bailey speaks of "the Kurukshetra of the 'pairs of opposites,' wherein Arjuna sits in the middle and seeks to balance the warring forces."²⁸ Thus, the two opposing armies symbolize the pairs of opposites. In verses 1:21-23, Arjuna characterizes the leader of

the opposing side as "evil-minded," so he must think of his side as "good-minded." The movement of Arjuna's chariot to midway between the opposing armies symbolizes, in Bailey's words, "that mental illumination which will reveal the 'middle way' between the pairs of opposites."²⁹ Given the premise that Arjuna symbolizes the aspirant and Krishna symbolizes the soul, verses 1:21-23 depict the aspirant as invoking assistance from the soul, and verses 1:24-25 depict the soul as responding by illuminating the aspirant's mind so that the middle way is revealed.

What is the effect of the soul's illumination on the aspirant? After Krishna places Arjuna's chariot between the two armies, Arjuna sees his situation in a new way in verses 1:26-40:

Then Partha saw, arrayed in both the armies, fathers and grandfathers, maternal uncles and brothers, sons and grandsons, comrades and friends, fathers-in-law and teachers. Casting his eyes on all these kinsmen stationed on opposing sides, the son of Kunti was overcome with deep pity and sorrowfully spoke.

Arjuna said: O Krishna, at the sight of these my kinsmen, assembled here eager to give battle, my limbs fail and my mouth is parched. My body is shaken and my hair stands on end ... Nor do I perceive, O Krishna, any good in slaughtering my own people in battle. I desire neither victory nor empire nor even any pleasure ... Though they, their understanding overcome by greed, perceive no evil in the decay of families and no sin in hostility to friends, why, O Janardana, should not we, who clearly perceive the evil in the decay of families, learn to refrain from this sin? With the decay of a family, perish its dharmas, which have existed from time out of mind. With the ending of the dharmas, adharma overwhelms the whole family.

Here, Kunti denotes Arjuna's mother; Janardana means "the Destroyer of the demon Jana," and it is another epithet of Krishna. As discussed earlier, dharma can be taken as

righteousness, and both sin and adharma as unrighteousness.

According to the foregoing verses, the effect of the soul's illumination is that the aspirant desires "neither victory nor empire nor even any pleasure." Instead, the aspirant prefers to "learn to refrain from this sin" and to avoid "the ending of the dharmas," showing that his or her appreciation of righteousness dominates that of any possession or pleasure.

Thus, the Gita's treatment of the alignment phase is a symbolic elaboration of the Technique's concise initial sentence.

Crisis of Evocation

Bailey writes, "The soul is a unit of energy, vibrating in unison with one of the seven ray Lives, and colored by a particular ray light."³⁰ In other words, each soul has the quality of a particular ray, which is called its "soul ray." In the second phase of the integration process, the aspirants sense intuitively their soul ray, which in this case is will, or power, because they have increased their alignment with their soul. The inconsistency between their sensed potential and their daily life brings them to an inner *crisis* in which they begin to bring forth the guidance of their soul.

The Technique's second sentence mentions "forms." In this context, "forms" are taken as referring to the vital body, because Bailey says that the "vital body is the true form from the standpoint of the occultist and not the dense tangible sheath."³¹ Bailey also describes the role of the vital body:

When you remember that the vital body is the recipient of the streams of energy, and is in fact composed and formed of such streams, and that the physical body is driven into activity by these streams, it is apparent that that stream which is the most potent is the one which will control the action of the physical body upon the physical plane.³²

If "power" denotes righteousness, or the will of the soul, then "no power" denotes unrighteousness, or the self-centered will of the personality. Unrighteousness can form a stream

of energy in the vital body, which in turn can drive the dense physical body into activity. Thus, "those forms which wield no power" are taken simply as unrighteous, or self-centered, motivations.

Bailey characterizes First Ray aspirants who have integrated their personalities but have unrighteous motivations:

Such integrated personalities are frequently ruthless at first, selfish, ambitious, self-centered, cruel, one-pointed, implacable, undeviating, aware of implications, of significances, and of the results of action but, at the same time, unalterable and undeviating, moving forward to their purposes. They destroy and tear down in order to rise to greater heights upon the ruin they have wrought. They do thus rise. They trample on other men and upon the destinies of the little person.³³

The Technique's second sentence treats the crisis phase: "There must also be repudiation of those forms which wield no power." Repudiation can mean "the exposure of falseness or pretensions." Accordingly, for this phase to be completed, there must be the exposure of unrighteous motivations to the soul's illumination.

The Gita gives its treatment of the crisis phase in verses 2:4-7, in which "Destroyer of Madhu" is another epithet of Krishna, and Madhu is another demon:

Arjuna said: But how, O Destroyer of Madhu, O Slayer of enemies, can I fight with arrows on the battlefield against Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship? It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world rather than to slay these high-souled teachers. But if I kill them, even here I shall enjoy wealth and desires stained with their blood. We do not know which would be the better for us: that we should conquer them or they should conquer us. Arrayed against us stand the very sons of Dhritarashtra, after slaying whom we should not wish to live. Overpowered in the very essence of my being by this evil of commiseration, my mind confused about dharma, I

supplicate You: tell me in sooth which is the better. I am Your disciple. Instruct me, who have taken refuge in You.

These verses show that Arjuna is “confused about dharma” and asks Krishna to tell him “in sooth which is the better” action. Given the premise that Arjuna symbolizes the aspirant and Krishna symbolizes the soul, these verses have the following meaning: the aspirant evokes the soul’s illumination to discriminate between dharma and adharma, or righteousness and unrighteousness. Thus, these verses illustrate the treatment of the crisis phase by the Technique’s second sentence.

Light

Because of their crisis of evocation, the aspirants take stock of their situation and search within themselves. Eventually they enter the phase of *light* and see clearly their need to change their direction, method, and attitude.

Bailey says, “Hold the mind steady in the light and thereby discern the basic principles,”³⁴ and speaks of “the First Ray capacity to take a stand upon principle.”³⁵ Accordingly, in the Technique’s second paragraph, “the *word*” is taken as a principle that is discerned during the light phase. The term “form” can be used in various ways. In the Technique’s second sentence, “forms” refers to the vital body, as already discussed. Bailey, however, speaks of “the personality or form,”³⁶ which shows that these two terms can be synonyms. In the second and third paragraphs, “form” is taken to mean personality.

The Technique’s second paragraph treats the light phase, and it depicts four principles that are conveyed by the soul to the aspirant’s personality (“The *word* goes forth from soul to form”). Each principle describes a change that needs to be made.

The first principle is “stand up.” “Stand” signifies alignment, as in Romans 5:2, “this grace wherein we stand,” so “stand up” signifies the effort of achieving alignment. Thus, the first principle means: align your physical, emotional, and mental bodies, which brings

your personality into alignment, and then align your personality with the soul. Bailey describes a First Ray aspirant who is applying this principle:

Standing thus in quietness at the center, and searching within himself for responsiveness to his environment, he thus loses sight of self and the light breaks in. It is as if a curtain were raised. In that light, the first thing which is revealed to him is the devastating sight of that which he has destroyed. He is subjected to what has esoterically been called “the light which shocks.”³⁷

Here, “center” is taken as the highest point of mental consciousness, because Bailey says, “This the disciple must also do, gathering his forces (to use a common expression) into the highest point of his mental consciousness and holding them there in a state of absolute tension.”³⁸ “Standing thus in quietness at the center” is equivalent to establishing and maintaining the alignment of the personality, and “searching within himself for responsiveness to his environment” brings about alignment with the soul.

The second principle is “press outward into life,” and it means: use the power of your aligned personality and soul to work in the external world. Bailey describes a First Ray aspirant who is applying this second principle:

Slowly and laboriously, using every power of his aligned personality and, in his realized desperation, calling in the power of his soul, he proceeds one-pointedly to rebuild that which he has destroyed. In rebuilding, he lifts the entire structure on to a higher level than any he has hitherto touched.³⁹

The third principle is “achieve a goal.” This goal is taken as detachment, because Bailey tells a First Ray aspirant, “a finer and more clear-cut and clearly realized detachment is for you, therefore, a major objective.”⁴⁰ She later tells the same aspirant:

You are learning the lesson of detachment with rapidity, and you are gradually standing free from the clinging hands of

others ... The many acts of spiritual detachment lead eventually to the severing of that final thread which involves the death of all personality attachments.⁴¹

The fourth principle is “there must be not a circle, but a line.” Here, the “circle” is taken as the swing of the pendulum between the pairs of opposites, and the “line” as the points of equilibrium, or the middle way, between the pairs of opposites. For example, Bailey speaks of “the swing of the pendulum between these pairs of opposites gradually adjusted until the point of equilibrium is reached, and man acts rightly because the law of love or of the soul, directs from above, and not because either good or bad desire attract him on either hand.”⁴² Thus, the fourth principle is interpreted as follows: there must not be the swing of emotional reactions, such as between pride and depression, to the outcome of any work, whether judged success or failure, but instead there must be spiritual balance. Bailey characterizes a First Ray aspirant who is applying this fourth principle: “he can function safely ... without losing his spiritual balance, if we might use such a phrase.”⁴³

Next, let us examine the Gita’s treatment of these principles in verse 2:48, but using Johnston’s translation:

Standing in union with the Soul, carry out thy work, putting away attachment, O conqueror of wealth; equal in success and failure, for equalness is called union with the Soul.

This verse is spoken by Krishna to “O conqueror of wealth,” which denotes Arjuna, so it represents instruction given by the soul to the aspirant. It consists of the same four principles depicted in the Technique and in the same order.

Revelation

By applying their principles to themselves, the aspirants enter the fourth phase and receive the *revelation* of the path and what they need to do in connection with it. Each aspirant receives the revelation of only his or her next step ahead, which, when

taken, enables the subsequent step to be revealed.

During the revelation phase, the effort is to “Prepare *the form*.” Bailey speaks of “the man upon the First Ray who is seeking first of all to control his personality, and then to dominate his environment.”⁴⁴ Thus, the effort is to prepare the personality for effective service. The Technique indicates that there are five main steps in the revelation phase, and that each step is given by the soul to the aspirant’s personality. The Bhagavad Gita contains the same steps and indicates that each step is given by Krishna, who symbolizes the soul, to Arjuna, who symbolizes the aspirant.

Work without attachment to its fruit

The first step in the revelation phase is to “Let the eyes look forward, not on either side,” and it means: press forward to the accomplishment of your next duty, without caring for the fruits of your previous efforts. Bailey comments:

The perfect server is he who does to the utmost of his ability what he believes to be the Master’s will, and the work to be done by him in co-operation with God’s plan. Then, having done his part, he passes on to a continuance of the work, and cares not for the result of his action. He knows that wiser eyes than his see the end from the beginning; that insight, deeper and more loving than his, is weighing up the fruit of his service; and that judgment, more profound than his, is testing the force and extent of the vibration set up, and is adjusting that force according to the motive. He does not suffer from pride over what he has done, nor from undue depression over lack of accomplishment. At all times he does his very best, and wastes not time in backward contemplation, but steadily presses forward to the accomplishment of the next duty.⁴⁵

The Gita makes a similar point in verse 2:47, returning to Nikhilananda’s translation:

To work, alone, you are entitled, never to its fruit. Neither let your motive be the fruit of action, nor let your attachment be to non-action.

Ignore public opinion

The second step is to “Let the ears be closed to all the outer voices,” and it means: ignore public opinion and instead depend on the conclusions that you have reached during moments of illumination. Bailey describes an aspirant learning this step:

It will be needful for him to run counter consistently to the world’s opinion, and to the very best expression of that opinion, and this with frequency. He has to learn to do the right thing as he sees and knows it, irrespective of the opinion of earth’s greatest and most quoted. He must depend upon himself and upon the conclusions he himself has come to in his moments of spiritual communion and illumination. It is here that so many aspirants fail. They do not do the very best they know; they fail to act in detail as their inner voice tells them; they leave undone certain things which they are prompted to do in their moments of meditation, and fail to speak the word which their spiritual mentor, the Self, urges them to speak.⁴⁶

The Gita makes a similar statement in verse 2:52:

When your mind has crossed the slough of delusion, you will achieve indifference regarding things already heard and things yet to be heard.

“The slough of delusion” consists of the entanglements of illusion, so crossing this slough means that the mind is illumined by the soul. The task here is to follow that illumination rather than the opinions of other people who are or will be heard.

Overcome cowardice

The third step is to have “the hands clenched, the body braced, and mind alert.” These symbols are descriptive of someone who is preparing for a fight, such as a boxing match. Their meaning is that aspirants must over-

come any cowardice and instead confront their problems and difficulties, as Bailey explains:

He is the best exponent of the Ageless Wisdom who lives each day in the place where is the life of the disciple; he does not live it in the place where he thinks he should be. Perhaps after all the quality which produces the greatest number of failures among aspirants to adeptship is cowardice. Men fail to make good where they are because they find some reason which makes them think they should be elsewhere. Men run away, almost unrealising it, from difficulty, from inharmonious conditions, from places which involve problems, and from circumstances which call for action of a high sort and which are staged to draw out the best that is in a man, provided he stays in them. They flee from themselves and from other people, instead of simply *living the life*.⁴⁷

The Gita also says to prepare for a fight in verse 2:38:

Regarding alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and defeat, prepare yourself for battle. Thus you will incur no sin.

Cowardice can arise when we feel exalted by pleasure, gain, and success, but feel depressed by pain, loss, and defeat. We can overcome any cowardice by regarding those outcomes as being alike.

Overcome desire

The fourth step is to apply the idea that “Emotion is not used in furthering of the Plan.” Here, “the Plan” refers to the divine plan, which can be defined as the “blueprint of the evolutionary development of consciousness.”⁴⁸ Bailey discusses the relationship between emotion and desire, using the term “astral body” as a synonym for “emotional body”:

All feeling-emotion inevitably evokes desire. If the emotion evoked by the mind’s recognition of the feeling (registered in the astral body) is pleasurable,

then desire is evoked for the continuance or the repetition of the experience. If it is not pleasurable, but painful, then the reaction is desire for the cessation of the experience and therefore liberation from it.⁴⁹

The Gita gives a similar account in verse 2:62:

When a man dwells on objects, he feels an attachment for them. Attachment gives rise to desire, and desire breeds anger.

Thus, this step's idea can be amplified as follows: striving to fulfill a personal desire may continue or repeat a pleasurable emotion, but such activity does not further the evolutionary development of consciousness and so is in vain.

Bailey gives related instructions to a First Ray aspirant:

It is, for instance, your personality fanaticism and your personality devotions (both to people and to ideas) which need *tempering* if your First Ray power is to manifest. Your fanatical devotee *will* must be superseded by the *purpose*, ordered and steadfast, of your First Ray soul ... In conformity to soul impulse mold your life and shift out of the realm of high desire and aspiration into that of settled purpose and an undeviating attachment to reality.⁵⁰

The Gita considers desire to be the enemy and describes how to overcome it in verses 3:39-43, using Johnston's translation:

Wisdom is enveloped by that eternal enemy of the wise, whose form is Desire, O son of Kunti, an insatiate fire. The sense-powers, the emotions, the understanding are its dwelling place; through them Desire deludes the lord of the body, enveloping wisdom. Therefore in the beginning restraining the sense-powers, O bull of the Bharatas, do thou put away this evil, destroyer of wisdom and knowledge both. They say the sense-powers are higher than objects; than the sense-powers emotion is higher; than emotion understanding is higher; but higher than understanding is

He. Thus awaking to Him who is above understanding, establishing thy soul on the Soul, slay the enemy, O mighty armed one, whose form is Desire, who is hard to overcome.

Here, "O bull of the Bharatas" denotes Arjuna, "soul" denotes the human soul, and both "He" and "Soul" denote the divine soul. The foregoing quotations from both Bailey and the Gita say that personal desire needs to be overcome through the power of the divine soul.

Express love

The fifth step is to apply the idea that "Love takes its place." Bailey describes a First Ray aspirant who has taken this step: "A change of attitude can be noted, for he reaches out his arms to his fellow men—to the greater whole—and thus becomes inclusive."⁵¹

The Gita also describes this change of attitude in verse 3:25, returning to Nikhilananda's translation:

As the ignorant act, attached to their work, O Bharata, so should an enlightened man act, but without attachment, in order that he may set people on the right path.

Here, Bharata denotes Arjuna. Just as ignorant people act zealously for their personal pleasure, an enlightened person needs to act with the same zeal but for the welfare of other people.

Integration

*I*ntegration is the fifth and final phase, and refers to uniting personality with soul so that they act in unison and function as a single organism. Such integration is the goal of both the Technique and the Bhagavad Gita.

The final paragraph of the Technique gives a description of an aspirant who has reached the integration phase, as seen from the vantage point of an observer who is both clairvoyant and telepathic. A clairvoyant is able to perceive symbols representing the inner state of consciousness of the one being observed. Here, a clairvoyant is able to see that "the symbol of a moving point of light ap-

pears above the brow.” This symbol shows that the aspirant is actively utilizing the ajna center, because, in Bailey’s words, “This is the center between the eyebrows and is found in the region of the head just above the two eyes.”⁵² This symbol also shows that the ajna center is receiving illumination from the soul, because, again in Bailey’s words, “As a recipient of mental energy or of energy from the soul, the ajna center becomes the directing agency.”⁵³ Thus, a clairvoyant can discern that the aspirant knows the soul’s illumination, which consists of inspiration, higher knowledge, and intuitions.

Afterward the aspirant’s mind becomes active, and a telepathic observer is able to register the following sequence of thought (“The keynote of the life though uttered not, yet still is clearly heard”). First, “I move to power,” which means that the aspirant realizes that he or she acts in a righteous way, which in turn means that he or she expresses the will of the soul rather than the gratification of personal desire. Bailey makes a similar point: “The long journey ends thus, in the glory of the renunciation of personal desire, and in the dedication to living service.”⁵⁴ Second, “I am the One,” which means that the aspirant realizes that his or her self is the Self of all beings. Bailey suggests that we ask ourselves the following question: “Can I recognize the One Self in all selves?”⁵⁵ Third, “we are a Unity in power,” which means that the aspirant realizes that the various parts of his or her constitution act together to express the will of the soul. Bailey speaks of “The disciple, whose integrated personality is now being rapidly integrated into and absorbed by the soul.”⁵⁶ Fourth, “all is for the power and glory of the *One*,” which means that the aspirant’s actions are for the sake of the One Self. Bailey speaks of “The sacrifice of the personal self for the good of the One Self.”⁵⁷

[Bailey’s] “Seven Techniques of Integration” depict “the pattern of the thought and the process of the life” of aspirants guided by each of the seven rays... “these ray techniques are imposed by the soul upon the personality after it has been somewhat integrated into a functioning entity and is, therefore, becoming slightly responsive to the soul, the directing Intelligence.”

Next, let us consider verses 5:7-11 in the Gita:

He who is devoted to yoga and is pure in mind, who has conquered his body and subdued his senses, who has realized his

Self as the Self of all beings—he is undefiled though he acts. “I do nothing at all,” thinks the yogi, the knower of Truth; for in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting; in walking, breathing, and sleeping; In speaking, emitting, and seizing; in opening and closing the eyes, he is assured that it is only the senses busied with their objects. He who works without attachment, resigning his actions to Brahman, is

untainted by sin, as a lotus-leaf by water. Only with the body, the mind, the understanding, and the senses do the yogis act, without attachment, for the purification of the heart.

Nikhilananda, as part of his commentary, states that the “yoga” and “yogi” mentioned in these verses are “karmayoga, or selfless action” and “the karmayogi, who is devoted to selfless action,” respectively.⁵⁸ The yogi’s characteristics listed in these verses are similar to those in the Technique’s final paragraph. To highlight this similarity, let us examine the yogi’s characteristics while following the Technique’s order:

The appositive phrase, “the knower of Truth,” which is translated by Johnston as “who truly knows,” suggests that the yogi knows the soul’s illumination rather than mere intellectual knowledge.

The adjectival phrase, “untainted by sin,” means that the yogi expresses the will of the soul without the interference of personal desire.

The adjectival clause, “who has realized his Self as the Self of all beings,” shows

that yogi recognizes the One Self in all selves.

The sentence, “Only with the body, the mind, the understanding, and the senses do the yogis act, without attachment, for the purification of the heart,” indicates that the various parts of the yogi’s constitution act together to express the will of the soul.

The participial phrase, “resigning his actions to Brahman,” means that the yogi works for the sake of the Supreme Reality, because Brahman is the Supreme Reality of Vedanta philosophy.

What is the role of a First Ray aspirant during the integration phase? Bailey provides this answer: “The time eventually comes when the First Ray man can be trusted to be God’s Destroying Angel—the Angel who brings life through the destruction of the form.”⁵⁹ In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna to perform a similar role in verses 11:32-34:

The Lord said: I am mighty, world-destroying Time, now engaged in slaying these men. Even without you, all these warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall not live. Therefore stand up and win glory; conquer your enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom. By Me and none other have they already been slain; be an instrument only, O Arjuna. Kill Drona and Bhishma and Jayadratha and Karna, and the other great warriors as well, who have already been killed by Me. Be not distressed by fear. Fight, and you shall conquer your foes in the battle.

Conclusion

Professor G. K. Devanand—who is recognized as a vedacharya, or teacher of the ancient Vedic wisdom—provides the following summary of karma yoga:

Karma Yoga is consecration of all actions and their fruits unto the Lord. Karma Yoga is performance of actions dwelling in union with the Divine, removing attachment and remaining balanced ever in success and failure. Karma

Yoga is selfless service unto humanity. Karma Yoga is the Yoga of action which purifies the heart and prepares the *Antahkarana* (the heart and the mind) for the reception of Divine Light or attainment of Knowledge of the Self. The important point is that you will have to serve humanity without any attachment or egoism.⁶⁰

Devanand’s summary of karma yoga is also a summary of the previously cited verses from the Bhagavad Gita that were taken from its first five chapters. Thus, Devanand’s summary confirms what various commentators have claimed: the Gita’s initial chapters are concerned with karma yoga.

Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the First Ray must also be concerned with karma yoga, because the prior sections demonstrated that it is similar to the cited verses from the Gita’s initial chapters. This demonstration clarifies the Gita’s treatment of karma yoga, because we can see how its verses embody a coherent technique. This demonstration also clarifies the Technique, because we can see how its abstruse symbolic statements can be expressed in a more comprehensible way and be applied.

Hindu scriptures are traditionally divided into two categories: *scruti* (often spelled *sruti* or *shruti*) —“that which is heard,” which consists of texts that are thought to be directly received through inspiration or revelation from a divine origin; and *smrti* (often spelled *smriti*)—“that which is remembered,” which consists of traditions, or memories of wisdom, that sages have passed on to their disciples over the years. What is the appropriate category for the Bhagavad Gita? Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta (1896-1977) gives his answer in a letter:

Regarding your philosophical question, if the Bhagavad Gita is part of Mahabharata which is considered *smrti*, how can we claim Bhagavad Gita to be GITOPAN-ISAD, or one of the Upanishads which are *scruti*? Actually because the Gita is spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead it is *sruti*. But people take it as *smrti*

because it is part of the Mahabharata. We take it as scruti as far as we are concerned.⁶¹

Many other people think of the Gita as an inspired, or revealed, text, because Swami Bhaktivedanta founded, taught, and led the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which is a worldwide confederation that currently has more than 400 centers, including 60 farm communities, 50 schools, and 90 restaurants.⁶²

Can the teachings on the seven rays be transformed into a science? In other words, can these teachings be tested in a scientific way, so that they can be accepted on the basis of empirical evidence rather than a belief in the authority of an external source of information? Any scientific test entails formulating a hypothesis, collecting evidence, and analyzing results, although procedures vary from one field of inquiry to another.

Let us consider the following hypothesis: Bailey's "Techniques of Integration" for the seven rays depict symbolically the archetypal patterns of integration that aspirants are intuitively directed to apply to themselves. This hypothesis can be tested by comparing Bailey's ray techniques with various recorded methods of psychological or spiritual integration that are thought to be inspired. The foregoing demonstration, which shows the similarity between the First Ray technique and the Bhagavad Gita's treatment of karma yoga, supports this hypothesis, because of the widespread belief that the Gita is an inspired text.

Our analysis of the Gita's treatment of karma yoga is based on its first five chapters. Other chapters of the Gita are said to be concerned with other yogas, such as jnana yoga and bhakti yoga. According to the above hypothesis, the Gita's chapters that treat those other yogas ought to be similar to other ray techniques. If such similarity is demonstrated by subsequent research, then that demonstration would provide additional empirical support for the above hypothesis.

Previous articles show that the *Second Epistle of Peter* is similar to the Second Ray

technique,⁶³ the *Tao Te Ching* is similar to the Fourth Ray technique,⁶⁴ chapter 10 of the *Revelation of St. John* is similar to the Third Ray technique, the *Myth of Isis and Osiris* is similar to the Fifth Ray technique,⁶⁵ and *Ecclesiastes* is similar to the Sixth Ray technique.⁶⁶ Thus, there is increasing evidence that the above hypothesis is correct, namely, that Bailey's ray techniques do symbolically depict the archetypal patterns of integration.

¹ Swami Nikhilananda, *The Bhagavad Gita* (1944; reprint; New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1969), 6-7.

² Swami Prabhavananda, *Spiritual Heritage of India* (Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press, 1979), 99.

³ Eknath Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita* (Tomalas, CA: Nilgiri Press, 2007), 49; Varghese Malpan, *A Comparative Study of the Bhagavad-Gita and the Spiritual Exercises of Loyola on the Process of Spiritual Liberation* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical BookShop, 1992), 101.

⁴ Helena P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. X (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 2002), 177.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (1927; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), xii.

⁶ Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Vedic Teachings on the Seven Rays," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2010.

⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I (1936; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 316.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (1942; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1981), 345, 352.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 346-347, 378.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 351.

¹² *Ibid.*, 339.

¹³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 339.

¹⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 351-352. Nikhilananda, *The Bhagavad Gita*.

¹⁵ "The Gita," *Time Magazine*, July 3, 1944, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,852089,00.html> (accessed July 21, 2011).

¹⁶ Charles Johnston, *Bhagavad Gita* (New York: J. J. Little, 1908).

¹⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 347.

- ¹⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 224.
- ²⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 346.
- ²¹ All biblical quotations in this article come from the King James Version.
- ²² Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (1957; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 311.
- ²³ Albert B. Randall, *Strangers on the Shore: The Beatitudes in World Religions* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), 95.
- ²⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 353.
- ²⁵ Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 61.
- ²⁶ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita* (1916-1920; reprint; Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 2003), 156.
- ²⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (1951; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 52.
- ²⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I (1944; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 179.
- ²⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 115.
- ³⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 42.
- ³¹ Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 281.
- ³² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (1953; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1978), 34.
- ³³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 352.
- ³⁴ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 500.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 630.
- ³⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 187.
- ³⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 353-354.
- ³⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (1960; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 487.
- ³⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 354.
- ⁴⁰ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 310.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 311-312.
- ⁴² Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 391.
- ⁴³ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 354.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 352.
- ⁴⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1922), 348-349.
- ⁴⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 586.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 586-587.
- ⁴⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 456.
- ⁴⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 624.
- ⁵⁰ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 243.
- ⁵¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 353.
- ⁵² Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 146-147.
- ⁵³ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 432.
- ⁵⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calvary* (1937; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1989), 228.
- ⁵⁵ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 399.
- ⁵⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 498.
- ⁵⁷ Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, 349.
- ⁵⁸ Nikhilananda, *The Bhagavad Gita*, 149-150.
- ⁵⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II, 352.
- ⁶⁰ G. K. Devanand, *Teaching of Yoga* (New Delhi, India: APH Publishing, 2008), 131.
- ⁶¹ Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta, 1974 Correspondence, http://www.vaniquotes.org/wiki/Regarding_our_philosophical_question,_if_the_Bhagavad_gita_is_part_of_Mahabharata_which_is_considered_smriti,_how_can_we_claim_Bhagavad_gita_to_be_GITOPANISAD,_or_one_of_the_Upanisads_which_are_sruti%3F (accessed March 19, 2011)
- ⁶² International Society for Krishna Consciousness, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Society_for_Krishna_Consciousness (accessed March 19, 2011).
- ⁶³ Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Second Epistle of Peter compared to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Second Ray," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2011.
- ⁶⁴ Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Tao Te Ching compared to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Fourth Ray," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Winter 2010.
- ⁶⁵ Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Use of Ancient Texts to Test Hypotheses on the Seven Rays," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2010.
- ⁶⁶ Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Ecclesiastes compared to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Sixth Ray," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2011.