



4 Keys to Understanding the Bhagavad-gita

w/ Hari-kirtana das

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“This knowledge is the king of all knowledge, the most secret of all secrets, and the ultimate purifier. Realized by direct perception, this transcendental science is the everlasting and supremely joyful perfection of religious principles.”

- *Bhagavad-gita* 9.2

KEY #1: Identifying the subject matter

Setting the scene

- Arjuna’s five reasons for not fighting: verses 27-46:
 - 1.27-30: material compassion
 - 1.31-35: material enjoyment
 - 1.36-38: fear of bad karma
 - 1.39-43: destruction of family traditions and consequent breakdown of society
 - 2.4-9: confusion

Functions of Yoga Philosophy

- *Metaphysical function*: induces a realization that behind the surface phenomenology of the world, there is an unseen transcendent source: yoga reveals the divine nature of the world.
- *Cosmological function*: presents a map or picture of the order of the cosmos and our relationship to it (Yoga shows us where we are in relationship to where we want to be).
- *Sociological function*: supports and validates the specific moral order of the society out of which the myth arises (yoga has a specific set of values that support spiritual growth).
- *Psychological function*: provides a means to live peacefully under any circumstances (yoga offers a process for attaining peace).
- *Revelatory function*: provides the means to re-create the experience of the author or hero

Two Functions of the Bhagavad-gita

- Describe the conclusive truth of the Vedas (*jnana*)
- Describe a practically applicable spiritual technology that facilitates the experience or realization of that conclusive truth (*vijnana*)

Four paths of yoga in the Bhagavad-gita

- *Karma-yoga*: the yoga of action
- *Dhyāna-yoga*: the yoga of meditation
- *Bhakti-yoga*: the yoga of devotion
- *Jñāna-yoga*: the yoga of knowledge

The over-arching theme of the Bhagavad-gītā is *dharma*: the best way to respond to our destiny.

- *Yoga* is the content of the Bhagavad-gītā's instructions on how to harmonize our conditional *dharma* with our constitutional *dharma*.

Bg 1.1

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca:

***dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre -- samavetā yuyutsavaḥ /
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva -- kim akurvata sañjaya //***

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: "O Sañjaya, when my sons and the sons of (my brother) Pāṇḍu assembled on **the field of righteousness** at Kurukṣetra with their respective armies, determined to fight, **what did they do (how did they act)?**"

Bg 18.66

(śrī-bhagavān uvāca):

***sarva-dharmān parityajya -- mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja /
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo -- mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ //***

(Krishna said:) "Abandon all **varieties of righteousness (formulaic religiosity) and come to me alone for shelter**. I shall free you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."

Four definitions of *dharma*:

1. Essential nature
2. The best way to respond to your destiny
3. Righteousness; principles of religion
4. Harmony with cosmic order

The five topics of Bhagavad-gita

1. The finite individual self (*atma, jiva, or jivatma*)
2. The infinite Supreme Self (*paramatma, isvara, or bhagavan*)
3. The material world (*prakrti, maya*)
4. Time (*kala*)
5. Action and reaction (*karma*)

KEY #2: Understanding the Relationships

finite self And Infinite Self: Arjuna and Krishna

- But wait: Three 'self's
 - The lower case 's' self: conditional dharma
 - The lower case 's' self: constitutional dharma
 - The upper case 'S' Self: Supreme Person

“**2: A person thus situated in material nature** experiences a mode of being born of that nature. **1: Clinging to an identity that arises from the qualities of material nature**, one meets with good and evil in the course of taking birth among various species.”

– Bg 13.22

“**3. There is yet another in this body;** the witness, sustainer, and giver of consent, the transcendental enjoyer known as **the Supreme Self, who is the Highest Person.**”

– Bg 13.23

The finite self and the Infinite Self: Shared qualities - overview

- Eternal
- Conscious
- Joyful

The finite self and the infinite Supreme Self: Differentiating qualities - overview

- Marginal vs. transcendental
- Partial knowledge vs. complete knowledge
- Part vs. whole

The finite self and the Infinite Self: Shared qualities – details w/ verses

- **eternal**

“There has never been a time when I did not exist, nor one when you did not exist, nor one when all these kings did not exist; nor is there any possibility that in the future any of us shall ever cease to be.”

– Bg 2.12

- **Conscious**

“I shall explain this knowledge and wisdom to you in its entirety. Knowing this, nothing further of this world shall be left for you to know.”

– Bg 7.2

- **joyful**

“One who is not attracted to external sense pleasure and who, looking inward, finds joy in the self, who is linked through yoga to the highest truth, enjoys unlimited happiness.”

– Bg 5.21

The finite self and the infinite Supreme Self: Differentiating qualities – details w/ verses

- **marginal vs. transcendental**

“One who is bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks, “I am the doer of activities”. In actuality, all activities are carried out by the three qualities of material nature.”

– Bg 3.27

“Indeed, you should know that all states of being – be they illuminative, passionate, or opaque – arise from me alone. Yet I am not influenced by these modes of being for they are all within me.”

– Bg 4.9

- **partial knowledge vs. complete knowledge**

“This body is called the field and those with a complete understanding call the one who knows the body ‘the knower of the field. O descendent of Bharata, understand that I am also the ‘knower of the field’ in all bodies.”

– Bg 13.2-3

- **part vs. whole**

“The eternal living beings in this world of conditioned life are fragmental parts of my very self; drawn to material nature, they struggle with the senses, the sixth of which is the mind.” – Bg 15.7

The essential element of the relationship between Arjuna and Krishna: love

“Hear once more my ultimate message, the greatest of all secrets. Because you are so very dear to me, I am speaking for the sake of your well-being.”

– Bg 18.64

- Arjuna's relationship to Krishna: from friends and cousins (Arjuna is in socially superior position) to disciple -> Guru
 - Revelation of Krishna's identity: what it means to be God
- Krishna's relationship to Arjuna: best friend
 - Bhakta-vatsala: a name for Krishna meaning 'the servant of his devotee'

KEY #3: Resolving the Apparent Contradiction

The question of Divinity and morality

We expect God to share our moral values, to be the epitome of ethical conduct. We generally think that killing people for any reason other than self-defense is immoral and even then one should resort to causing the death of another only as a last resort when no other option is available. We also think that wars are self-evidently horrible and to be avoided at almost any cost. We consider people who refuse to be drawn into violence despite extreme provocation to be good and we expect God to be the paragon of virtue, the *Summum Bonum*, the ultimate good.

Why then does Krishna advocate violence in the Bhagavad Gita?

Morality and ethics

- Morality is how one chooses to act
- Ethics are the principles that inform our choice
 - The reasoning by which we judge an action moral or immoral.
 - Guidelines for moral decision-making

Whereas morality is a matter of personal choice, ethics are externally imposed. For example:

- Lawyers, law enforcement officials, and doctors have an obligation to follow consistent ethical codes that are imposed by their respective professions irrespective of their own feelings or personal preferences.

Conditional identity and social position

The Vedic culture of the Bhagavad Gita divides society into four *varnas*, or occupational groups, and four *ashramas*, or stages of life, which together form a system called *varnashrama dharma*.

In the *varnashrama* system, which functions optimally in an agrarian society,

- social designations are determined by one's natural qualities and activities, not by birth.

Mutual respect between *varnas* an integral part of the system: members of each group recognize the inherent spiritual nature of all beings and therefore treat all members of society as spiritual beings having a human experience rather than identifying them strictly according to the qualities of material nature they've acquired or the kind of work that they do.

Deontological or Consequential philosophy

Implications of deontology is that a person's behavior can be wrong even if it results in a positive outcome, and an act can be virtuous even if it results in a negative outcome. In contrast to consequentialism, a philosophy claiming "the ends justify the means," deontology insists that how people achieve their goals is generally just as important as what those goals are.

In the yoga of the Bhagavad Gita, moral behavior in conformation to an objective standard of ethics is not just a matter of obedience to an absolute authority (Deontology) nor is it a utilitarian method for obtaining peace and justice in the world (Consequentialism).

- Rather, it's an issue of access to knowledge and realization: *the reason to abide by ethical guidelines is to cultivate an existential condition that's conducive to the perception of ultimate reality.*

The rationale: our ability to know something is dependent on our state of being. In order to perceive spiritual reality the instruments of perception, the senses, have to be purified. To the extent that we conform our behavior to the ethics of yoga we purify our instruments of perception. **Thus yoga as a moral philosophy is a practical science that bestows direct perception of spiritual reality on the practitioner.**

Everything happens for a reason

If our perception of reality determines the nature of our moral philosophy then the relevant question is now, 'What is reality according to the Bhagavad Gita?'

1. The world exists for a reason. We are part of the world; we also exist for a reason
2. The material world is not a nice place.

Teleology: the study of ultimate causes in nature; an approach to ethics that studies actions in relation to their ends or utility.

The Gita insists that there always causes to effects, that things happen for a reason. In the yoga of the Gita,

- *self-realization is the process of discovering your reason for being.* Knowing our reason for being requires an understanding of reality and our relationship to or place in reality.

In order to help him move through – rather than around – his crisis, Krishna is re-acquainting Arjuna with his destiny, his place in reality, and his reason for being

Action and responsibility

Even though the battle proceeds beyond the Gita's pages, one may reasonably argue that Krishna's encouragement of violence is, in itself, a form of violence that makes Krishna complicit in the violence that follows.

As we shall see in just a moment, the truth is that Krishna is more than just complicit in the deaths of the soldiers assembled on the battlefield: he is the actual cause of their deaths.

We want to think that somehow the Gita resolves the issue of violence so as to renounce violence: it doesn't. The tangled web of karma sometimes implicates us in unavoidable violence.

- When is violence justified?

The Gita presents us with an archetypal karmic conundrum and its resolution.

- Arjuna's reasons for not fighting
 - 1.27-30: compassion
 - 1.31-35: no happy ending
 - 1.36-38: fear of bad karma
 - 1.39-43: the end of the world as he knows it
- Krishna's initial reaction (Bg 2.2-3):
 - "My dear Arjuna, how has this weakness come upon you at such a critical moment? It is unbecoming a man of your noble character and will lead you not to heavenly glory but to disgrace."
 - "Do not succumb to this unbecoming impotence. Banish this petty weakness from your heart. Rise and *breathe fire on your foes!*"
 - The underlying assumption: Duryodhana, the son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and his allies have earned the wrath of Arjuna and his brothers
- Arjuna's last reason for not fighting
 - 2.4-9: confusion - a lose/lose/lose situation

Key 1: The overarching theme of the Bhagavad-gītā is dharma

Key 2: The three relationships to focus on:

- The finite self and the Infinite Self
- The Infinite Self and the material world
- The finite self and the material world

- Flip the order for KEY #3: RESOLVING THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION
 - *The finite self and the material world*
 - The Infinite Self and the material world
 - *The finite self and the Infinite Self*
- In order to answer the question: ‘What does our destiny look like from God’s point of view?’
 - Scale in terms of size or space
- What does time look like from God’s point of view? ***Gita verses 8.17-21***
 - One life of Brahma = Breath of Vishnu
 - 3.11 T lifetimes
 - Om = 3.11 T BIRTHS... AND DEATHS
 - Like watching 10,000 years of human civilization in 10 seconds
 - No wonder Krishna’s not bent out of shape about the prospect of everyone on the battlefield dying and another civilization biting the dust
 - But it’s significant to us, so...

When, how and why does Krishna appear? *Gita verses 4.6-8*

Although I am, by my very nature, unborn, imperishable, and the Lord of all living entities, I appear in every millennium by my own inner power, standing within and yet presiding over my material energy. - Bg 4.6

O descendant of Bharata, whenever and wherever righteousness declines and irreligion ascends – at that time I personally appear. - Bg 4.7

For the sake of protecting the saintly and destroying the wicked, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion, I appear millennium after millennium. - Bg 4.8

What we want from God vs. what we get in the Gita

- Arjuna as an instrument of Divine Will: ***Gita verses 11.25-33***

Four divisions of society:

“I created the four social orders of human society, which are divided according to the qualities one acquires and the actions one performs. You should know that, although I am the creator of this system, I have no position within it, for I am eternally transcendental to such qualities and actions.” - Bg 4.13

“Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras are distinguished by the qualities born of their own natures in accordance with the material modes, O chastiser of the enemy.”

- Bg. 18.41

Ksatriya means 'giver of protection'

- Ksatriyas: governance and defense / Arms of the social body: protectors
- When is violence justified? *a look at Just War Theory*
 - The conditions under which the use of military force is justified.
 - **Just cause:** Pandava's are rightful heirs
 - **Comparative justice:** Duryadhana is a criminal
 - **Competent authority:** A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice.
 - **Right intention:** correcting a suffered wrong is considered a right intention
 - **Probability of success:** (Deontology but Krishna assures success)
 - **Last resort:** all peaceful and viable alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted
 - **Proportionality** (benefits outweigh detriments – Arjuna's argument)

Krishna's opening argument in favor of fighting: Bg 2.31-2.38

Krishna's closing argument in favor of fighting: Bg 11.32-33

Does God command a particular action because it is morally right

Is God accountable to a higher law outside of himself? No

Is a particular action morally right because God commands it?

Is morality is an arbitrary function of God's power? No

Could God simply decree that torturing babies was moral? "No: God would never do that. It's not a matter of command;. It's a matter of character.

*Morality does not precede God nor proceed from God; **Morality is rooted in God's nature.***

Is Krishna Good?

- Anslem's proof: God is that being who is greater than any other conception of greatness one can think of.

Which is greater?

- God as a figment of human imagination?

- God as an indifferent creator?
- God as a judgmental psycho who'll send you to Hell forever for not believing in him?
- God as a homicidal maniac who wants everyone who doesn't worship him a certain way to die or be enslaved by those who do?
- God as someone who personally shows up to be your life coach
 - Unlimited do-overs until your life is perfect

- If the purpose of Krishna's appearance is to re-establish dharma then the purpose of the battle of Kuruksetra is to re-establish dharma because Krishna appears on the battlefield on the side of the Pandavas (Arjuna and his brothers)

"Thou shalt not kill"

vs.

"I think you should kill your grandfather, your teacher, your cousins, and all of their friends."

"There is a season for everything and a time for every purpose under Heaven"

- Ecclesiastes 3:1

Direct and Indirect Interpretation

- *Self-evident meaning: a real war is about to begin*
- *Allegorical meaning: the armies and the battlefield are symbolic*
- *Self-evident meaning: the Vedic tradition speaks for itself*
- *Allegorical meaning: a speculative philosophical overlay that re-directs the reader to something other than the self-evident meaning of the text*

WE NEED BOTH IN THE RIGHT ORDER OR HALF THE SIGNIFICANCE IS LOST

KEY #4: SEEING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

Two potential interdependent transformations

- Personal transformation
- Social transformation

Time expands when we live in a spiritual context –

- Past lives – future lives - more than just this one life
- Bg. 6.37 – 45: You don't have to do it all in one lifetime

Arjuna suggests renunciation in the forest would be better than fighting.

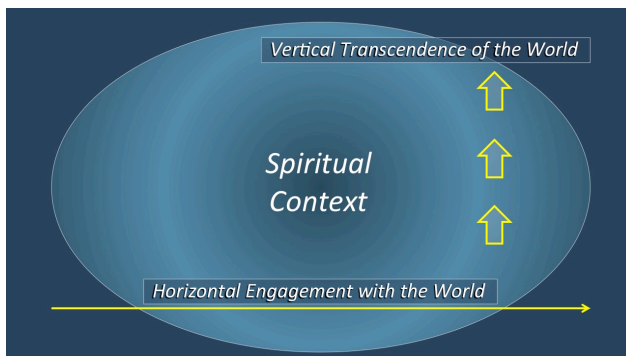
- Krishna describes what that would be like

Turning away from the world is one path of yoga

- Arjuna rejects it and Krishna doesn't recommend it for him

Our engagement with the world becomes the means by which we transcend the world

- Krishna recommends it and Arjuna accepts it and Krishna



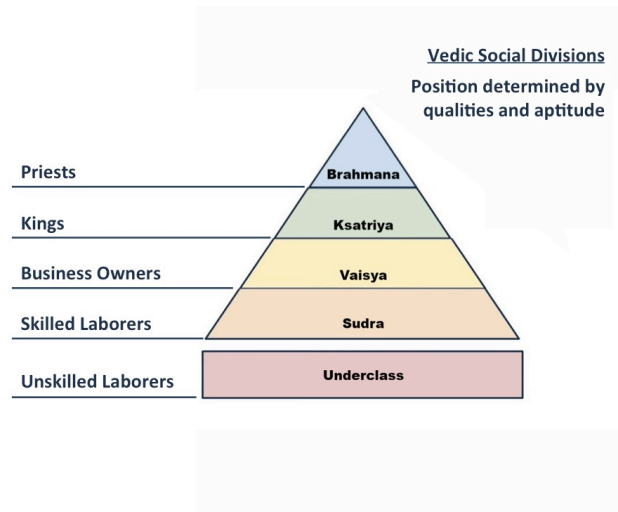
Four divisions of society

1. *Brāhmaṇa*: spiritually enlightened intellectuals - guidance
2. *Kṣatriya*: warriors - governance and defense
3. *Vaiśya*: entrepreneurs - agriculture and commerce
4. *Śūdra*: artisans, artists, and laborers - support

What happens to the four divisions of society in Kali-yuga?

- The Decline and Fall of Western Civilization

15th Century European Social Divisions relative to Vedic Social Divisions



- At the end of the Holy Roman Empire: Christianity was universal, led by the Pope. People were primarily concerned with salvation and the only way was through the church. Religious leaders were at the head of the social order.
- Education was for the religious class (brahmanas - monks) European Kings had advisors: Priests

Corruption of Religion Reaches a Tipping point

- Head of Church became King; controller of land and wealth; illegitimate sons became Cardinals”
- Spiritual authority associated with worldly power –
 - Ability to read Latin, control of information distribution channels
 - Pope functioned as a King; controller of land and wealth; illegitimate sons became Cardinals, led armies against Christian states to claim land
 - Money to build St. Peter’s Basilica raised by selling ‘indulgences’: buy your way to heaven – “good works” (God’s grace is the other way to heaven)

The Protestant Reformation

- Argument against ‘indulgences’
- Spiritual authority in scripture rather than Pope
 - Luther – not enough good works in the world to get to heaven – only by the power of God through faith alone – not earned by human beings; a gift of God
 - Scripture is the way to understand God – advocacy of learning to read.

- Monarchs and Princes tired of ceding so much political power, wealth, etc. to Rome back Luther's Reformation as a way to take control

Rebellion of Kings against the Church by way of the Protestant Reformation

- Luther's criticism of Pope had support of German Kings;
- Henry VIII took Church properties and gave them to his allies
- **RESULTS:**

Kings Displace Priests

- Conflict between Catholic and Protestant continues into 21st Century

Rebellion of Business Owners against the Kings: the American and French Revolutions

- Royal power transferred via hereditary nobility rather than qualities and aptitude: no social mobility no matter how wealthy or intelligent you are
- Patrick Henry: "Give me liberty or give me death."
 - Liberty to make money without King George taking a piece of the action
- Denis Diderot: "Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest."
- As Business Owners make more money / develop technology / establish colonies: vaishyas rebel against Ksatriyas via American and French Revolutions
- **RESULTS:**

Business Owners Displace Kings

- Business owners are ruthless exploiters of human resources: slavery; child labor; minimal compensation for maximum labor, etc.

Workers of the World: Unite! Rebellion of the Laborers against the Business Owners

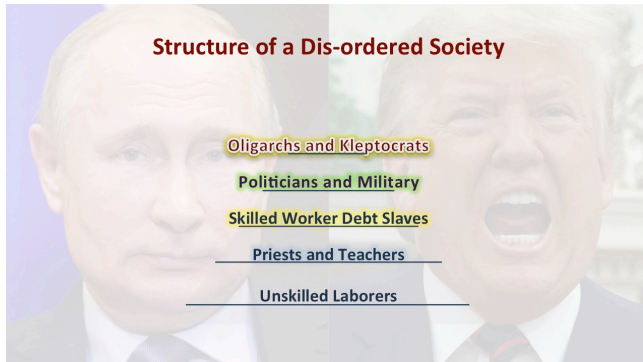
- Socialism / Communism fizzles out in late 20th Century: Communism is undermined by capitalism
- Business owners win... for now

Technology Conquers the World / Elevation of Skilled Laborers

- Science and Technology Displace Religion
- Financial instruments reach new level of abstraction and cheating
- Hedge fund = bet on stock movement up or down
- Cheating = inside info / prime mortgages, too big to fail, etc.
- No country survives morally bankrupt citizens: society taken over by criminals with good lawyers

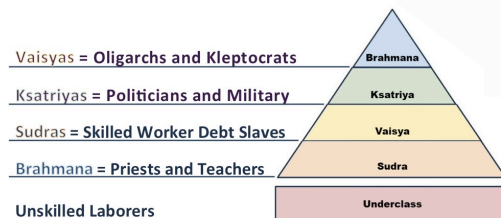
Socialist Ideas Resonate

Because...



Contemporary Social Order vs. Vedic Social Order

Position determined by wealth, ethnicity, and gender



Dharma Displaced by Adharma: Bg 16.7-9

The Inversion of the Four Values of Dharma

- Austerity displaced by Pride
- Purity displaced by Lust
- Mercy displaced by Cruelty
- Truthfulness displaced by Deception

The over-arching theme of the Bhagavad-gītā is *dharma*: how to respond to our destiny: Bg 1.1 and 18.66

The purpose of Krishna’s appearance is to re-establish *dharma*: universal principles of religion: Bg 4.8

Krishna wants Arjuna to be his instrument: Bg 3.9, 11.32, and 18.66

- Arjuna agrees to become Krishna’s instrument

Arjuna is our role model,... therefore:

Responding to our destiny by becoming an instrument for re-establishing universal principles of religion is the key to experiencing the transformative potential of the Bhagavad-gita

Step 1: Personal Transformation

- How do we get this way: By contemplating the objects of the senses...

Bg 2.62

“When one’s thoughts dwell on objects that attract the senses, attachment to those objects develops. From attachment to such sense objects, the desire to satisfy the senses is born and from the desire to satisfy the senses, anger arises.”

Bg 2.63

“Anger gives rise to bewilderment and with bewilderment comes a loss of memory. When one’s memory is lost, the power of discernment is lost with it. As the power of discernment recedes, the self vanishes from view.”

In other words:

1. Through an act of our free will, we develop a desire to control the universe with the expectation that aligning the universe with all of our subsequent desires will make us happy.
 - a. This becomes our life’s project: to move the universe into alignment with our desires. Our primary desire is to have our desires fulfilled.
2. As soon as this inclination arises, we acquire a set of material senses through which to interact with the material world. The quality of the material senses we develop is based on the quality of the material desires that we have.

3. Our material desires draw our thoughts to sense objects that correspond to those desires. By allowing our thoughts to dwell on those sense objects we deepen the intensity of our attraction to them.
4. Over time, our attraction evolves into an attachment to those sense objects and an aversion to whatever is contrary to those sense objects. Our fixation on these attachments and aversions evolves to the extent that we come to define ourselves in terms of those attachments and aversions
5. When we find, as we inevitably do, that we cannot align the universe in accordance with our attachments and aversions, at least not for very long, we become frustrated.
6. This frustration starts a chain reaction that gives rise to anger, which gives rise to bewilderment, which gives rise to a loss of memory: we forget the truth about who we really are and think of ourselves exclusively in terms of our attachments and aversions.
7. In this state of forgetfulness and misidentification, with our spiritual senses covered over by a set of material senses, our true self vanishes from view. This condition is called material consciousness.

How do we reverse our condition?

We can re-activate our spiritual senses by engaging our material senses in spiritual activities.

I'll say it again: We can re-activate our spiritual senses by engaging our material senses in spiritual activities.

Think of it like placing an iron rod in a fire. An iron rod is normally dull and has a neutral temperature. But if you put an iron rod in a fire and leave it there, it gradually begins to take on the same characteristics as the fire it's in: it glows and throws off heat. Similarly, if we immerse our material senses in a spiritual environment, they gradually regain their original spiritual characteristics.

The sequence for re-activating our spiritual senses is just the opposite of how they got de-activated. All we have to do is reverse-engineer the process. Here's how you do it:

1. Start by setting a little bit of time aside every day, preferably early in the morning, to focus your thoughts on an object of meditation, specifically, a spiritual sound: a mantra. Ironically, the best way to waken your spiritual sense of sight is through spiritual sound.

Like anything else, this will be challenging at first. You'll quickly see that your mind has a mind of its own and wants you to think about anything other than the sound of your mantra. Just stick with it: with a little bit of steady practice, just 10 minutes a day, your mind will start to get used to it.

2. By regular practice over time, you'll begin to feel the effects of your practice

and develop an attachment to your meditation practice.

3. From attachment to your mantra meditation practice, a taste for absorbing your senses in spiritual activities will develop
4. As your taste for spiritual engagement becomes established, your dormant spiritual senses will begin to stir, and a desire to satisfy those spiritual senses will arise. It's the same kind of sensation as when you're possessed by cravings for chocolate, except it's a spiritual craving.
5. Unlike our attempts to fulfill our material desires, which produce feelings of anxiety and frustration, the pursuit of spiritual desires produces feelings of tranquility and contentment.
6. With tranquility and contentment come clarity of thought and clarity of vision: the fluctuations of the mind subside and, as our thoughts and sight become clear, our memory is restored.
7. When our memory is restored, we remember the truth about who we really are and think of ourselves in terms of our true spiritual identity rather than in terms of the attachments and aversions that define our material identity.
8. In this state of remembrance, our spiritual senses fully emerge from their material covering and we once again abide in our true nature, experiencing ourselves as we really are.

Now the question is, 'what is the best object of meditation for triggering a spiritual awakening? How do we know which mantra to focus on?'

What does Krishna tell Arjuna to do?

- Most important instruction 2x: 9.34 and 18.65 – central and end

Bg 9.34

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto - mad-yājī mām namaskuru /
mām evaiṣyasi **yuktvaivam - ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ** //*

Bg 18.65

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto - mad-yājī mām namaskuru /
mām evaiṣyasi **satyaṁ te - pratijāne priyo 'si me** //*

TRANSLATION:

Direct your mind toward me, become my devotee, offer your sacrifices to me and act in reverence for me. Thus you will surely come to me, **having completely absorbed your self in me alone.**

TRANSLATION:

Direct your mind toward me, become my devotee, offer your sacrifices to me and act in reverence for me. Thus you will surely come to me. **I promise you this because you are so loved by Me.**

The four key verses of the Bhagavad-gita

- The essence of the relationship:

Bg 10.8

I am the source of everything. Everything emanates from me. Those who are wise, whose knowledge is perfect, serve me with devotion and worship me with all their heart.

Bg 10.9

With their thoughts dwelling in me and every breath of life offered to me, those who are devoted to me experience complete satisfaction and transcendental bliss by continually enlightening one another and speaking about me.

Bg 10.10

To those who are always associating with me through offerings of devotional affection, I illuminate the path by which they can come to me.

Bg 10.11

Feeling especially compassionate for those who are devoted to me, I, dwelling within their hearts, dispel the darkness born of ignorance with the radiant lamp of knowledge.

Bhakti-yoga as Spiritual Activism:

Social or political action performed as devotional service seeks to spiritualize consciousness in the course of solving a social or political problem by acting on the basis of *dharmic* principles: spiritual values.

The Four Values of Dharma

- Austerity
- Purity
- Mercy
- Truthfulness

The Four Action Strategies

- Advocacy
- Service
- Non-cooperation
- Confrontation

FORMULA FOR SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM

Value = Cause

Cause + Strategy + Values = Spiritual Activism

The Ladder of Motives

Divine Love
Spiritual Compassion
Spiritual Vision
Spiritual Unity
Spiritual Duty
Gratitude
Civic Duty
Extended Selfishness
Selfishness

Example: environmental activism

- I want unpolluted natural resources
- I want unpolluted natural resources for future generations
- It's my duty to take care of the earth
- The earth is a transformation of divine energy
- Seeing the Supreme Lord as everything
- Seeing the Supreme Lord within everything
- Spontaneous affection for all living beings
- Service to the Lord's devotee: Mother Earth
 - *Service to the Krishna's devotee is higher than service to Krishna*

Krishna and Arjuna on the Chariot

- Krishna serves his devotee as an example for us: we endear ourselves to Krishna by serving those who are dear to Krishna

Bg 7.17

Of these, the one who has complete knowledge and thus remains ever united with me through singular devotion is the best. I am very dear to one in possession of such knowledge, and they are dearly loved by me.

Also: Bg 12.13-20

One who is free from envy, who is a kind friend to all living beings, who is not controlled by illusory conceptions of 'I' and 'mine', who is equipoised in both happiness and distress, who is quick to forgive and remains always satisfied, who offers service to me with determination and devotion...

[ESPECIALLY Bg 18.68-69 applies to one engaged in spiritual activism: the service Krishna especially values as most endearing](#)

Pure devotional service is assured for one who explains this confidential secret (of yoga) to those endowed with devotion. By such transcendental service, they are sure to return to Me. No servant in the world is more dear to Me, nor will there ever be one more dear.