

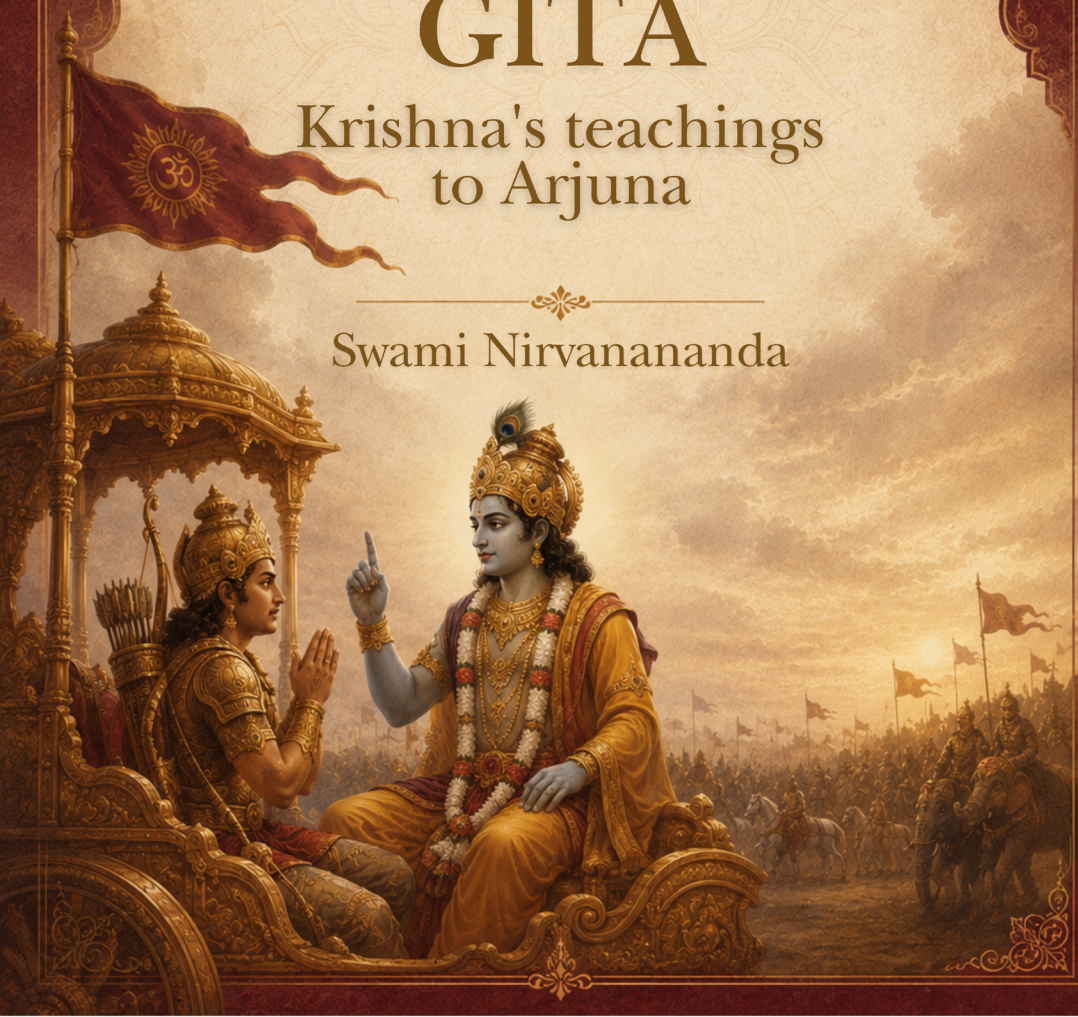


THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Krishna's teachings
to Arjuna



Swami Nirvanananda



The context in which the teachings of the Gita are imparted is the epic battle of the Mahabharata, fought between the Pandava brothers and the Kaurava brothers. On the battlefield, Arjuna, one of the five Pandava brothers, faced with the possibility of his own death and the death that will befall thousands of men, faces the dilemma of Samsara (the incessant cycle of birth, death, and rebirth). In this whirlwind of unanswered thoughts, he surrenders to Lord Krishna, who then imparts to him the great teachings contained in the Bhagavad Gita.

To learn the wisdom of the Gita, one must overcome certain important stages in one's life. First, one must discover the cause of Samsara, for which the Gita provides the explanation and solution. Second, one must feel possessed by a sincere and profound desire to free oneself from Samsara.

Third, we must realize that we cannot solve this problem alone. At best, we can act as limited human beings: observe the problem, and ultimately, we must surrender to the Guru and seek his guidance. Only with this attitude will we be ready to absorb his teachings.

The problem of Samsara is due to attachment, sorrow, and delusion. Those who are not happy internally will seek happiness externally. This will lead them to depend on external circumstances and become attached to them. Such a disturbed mind can only make erroneous judgments that will make situations even more complicated. This is the true problem of Samsara.

As P. Yogananda explains, the Bhagavad Gita was written by the sage Vyasa not to describe this historical battle as an account of events that occurred on the battlefield (think of the Iliad and the siege of Troy narrated by Homer), but rather as a pretext to describe a psychological battle taking place within the mind of the protagonist Arjuna.

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All the enemies on the battlefield of Kurukshetra actually represent negative attitudes that reside within each of us and that we are reluctant to confront in order to improve and continue on the path of soul purification. The battle is actually a battle that must take place within us, where we discover that our enemies are our own relatives, those negative qualities that

have long coexisted within us, covered by carelessness, negligence, and indiscipline. The Guru now asks us to get into this inner battle to free us from these “beloved” enemies of our spiritual consciousness.

Therefore, all of Krishna's incitements to battle must be understood not as an exhortation to violence, but rather as a motivation to awaken our divine nature, which can no longer wait. Krishna urges us to be decisive and not to hesitate, because the soul must be liberated, and therefore urges us to fight against all the negativity that nests in the ego and our personality. It is no longer time “to take prisoners”, since all the ghosts of many incarnations must dissolve in the light of the Spirit.

Chapter 1 – Arjuna-Vishada Yoga

Arjuna's Sorrow

At the beginning of the first chapter, Arjuna asks Krishna to position his chariot in the center of the battlefield between the two armies. The sound of conch shells rises powerfully, signaling the beginning of the battle. Until that moment, Arjuna believed that his cousins embodied injustice and evil, and that his task was to restore justice.

Now, however, seeing the armies arrayed, he is overcome by a moment of profound weakness. He realizes that the enemies before him no longer represent those who violate Dharma but suddenly, he begins to see them as those relatives and friends who are part of his own family and personal relationships. This creates in him a strong attachment and unexpected pain. With these thoughts, Arjuna is completely clouded by the illusion of Maya and therefore believes that the solution is to abandon the battle. So, with a very decisive gesture, he throws his bow

and arrows to the ground, crying, “I will not fight.”

Chapter 2 - Samkhya Yoga The Path of Knowledge

Rebuked by Krishna, Arjuna must now analyze the situation more deeply, which leads him to two considerations.

His weakness in his attachment is a fundamental problem that cannot be resolved superficially. Indeed, only complete surrender to the Guru can

resolve the problem. Once this relationship is established, only then can the teaching begin. Indeed, Arjuna’s problems are caused by ignorance that only the wisdom of Krishna consciousness can resolve.

a) The first teaching is that the true nature of the soul is immortal. The **Atma** is never subject to change, even if the body changes. Arjuna is not the doer; he is neither the killer nor the killed. So why should he give up fighting? Everything that appears will disappear sooner or later, and vice versa. Therefore, one must learn to accept change. Nor should Arjuna grieve over separation, which is inevitable sooner or later in life.

b) The second teaching is that the duty of a spiritual warrior, **Kshatriya** is to fight to restore order and **Dharma**. Arjuna should not look at the problem from a personal perspective, but from a broader perspective, without hesitating before a moral duty. If Arjuna were to abandon the battle, he would incur a far greater sin. With these arguments, Krishna finally convinces Arjuna not to abandon the battle and concludes the first part of his teachings.

First, Lord Krishna describes the glory and then the principle of **Karma Yoga**. We can choose our actions, but we can never choose their outcome. The outcome depends solely on the laws of Karma. In fact, various factors in the world can lead to completely unexpected results. All of this cannot be predicted

Furthermore, inaction is not a solution. No one can fully understand the law of karma, so actions are often imperfect despite our

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best efforts, and we should be prepared for any outcome. We can hope for the best outcome, but we must also be prepared for the worst. If we act with this awareness, success or failure loses its power to depress or exalt us. Consequently, there is no reaction, since we are prepared.

This equanimity in action is Yoga. In this way, karma becomes a powerful teacher. This is skill in action. A tranquil mind will automatically discard the attributes of the world and turn to the soul. Through self-knowledge, we can establish ourselves in the peace of the soul and achieve liberation.

At this point, Arjuna wishes to know the characteristics of one who is firmly established in Self-knowledge. Knowledge cannot bear fruit unless it is stable and assimilated. For this reason, Krishna gives two important teachings on sadhana: control of the mind and sense organs, and contemplation of the teachings.

Speaking of the characteristics of the sage, Lord Krishna emphasizes that the sage who knows the Self is always satisfied within himself and is consequently free from all desires. Being independent of the world, he is always happy, and naturally also free from attachment, hatred, desires, anger, fear, depression, etc. Even though he lives in the same world as others, he enjoys a freedom and contentment unknown to most. Thus, while the ignorant live in darkness with respect to the Atma, the sage is in the complete light of the Atma.

The best example for the mind of the sage is the ocean, which is always independently full, regardless of the rivers that pour clean or dirty water into it. Likewise, the mind of the sage is always unaffected by the favorable or unfavorable experiences it encounters.

Krishna concludes the teaching by glorifying the state of Brahmi, attaining which the sage is no longer deluded. He lives as a Jivan-mukta liberated during life, who has reached the end of his journey. Therefore, at death, he becomes one with Brahman in Nirvana.

Chapter 3 - Karma Yoga

The discipline of Selfless Service

The third chapter begins with Arjuna's pressing doubt: "Is it Jnana knowledge or Karma action that will lead us to Moksha?"

In his answer, Krishna describes how there are two lifestyles: a social life and a life of seclusion. One can therefore choose either of these two: a family life or a monastic life. But in reality, there is no choice between Karma and Knowledge. Whichever lifestyle one chooses, one must act with purity and then attain knowledge to discover the freedom that is already inherent in one's own nature. Of these two lifestyles, Krishna gives preference to family life throughout the teachings of the Gita. The choice depends on the maturity of the seeker.

Krishna continues by condemning inaction and praising an active and present life instead. Inactivity should be avoided, because an inactive mind becomes lazy and indulges in sense pleasures. Furthermore, such a hypocritical mind quickly fails.

Having created the world and intelligent human beings, the Lord Himself indicates a way of life in **Karma Yoga**. In this way, one can achieve both material well-being and spiritual progress. Our work becomes an offering of loving **Yajna** to God that purifies the mind. Furthermore, Karma Yoga is necessary to maintain the harmony of the universe on which we depend. Since the universe is a cyclical process, it becomes our duty to work responsibly as citizens of the world.

Karma Yoga must be followed because:

1. It contributes to material and spiritual progress
2. It becomes a commandment of the Lord in the world
3. It is an offering of gratitude Yajna for all the gifts we have received from the Lord
4. It is the only way to maintain harmony in **Dharma**.

Any sage in society can influence others positively or negatively. This is why it is important for Arjuna to set a positive example for others. Therefore, both the wise and the ignorant must act: the former

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to teach others and the latter to purify themselves. Only those who follow Karma Yoga achieve the goal of life. The “like, dislike” attitude born of Vasana habits causes one to lose sight of the goal of their life. In fact, we should not do what we like, but what we must do, even if this involves difficulties and sacrifices.

In response to a question from Arjuna, Krishna discusses the problem of sensual pleasure, **Kama** and anger, **Krodha**, which are the true enemies of the seeker. By clouding knowledge, they force one to pursue insatiable desires, destroying the possibility of achieving peace and progress. The senses, mind, and intellect are the basis of desires and therefore must be carefully regulated. When the Kama desire becomes weak, then one can discover the soul that is beyond.

Chapter 4 – Jnana-Karma-Sannyasa Yoga

The path of Renunciation in Action

At the beginning of the chapter, Lord Krishna claims to be the beginning of the lineage from **Vivasvan** (the sun god), **Manu**, **Iksvaku**, and others, at the beginning of creation. Lord Krishna reveals to Arjuna in the

Gita the same ancient wisdom cited in the Vedas. Naturally, Arjuna wonders how Krishna, his contemporary, could have been the initiator of ancient Vedic wisdom.

In response, Krishna introduces the concept of Avatar. When Dharma is in decline, to restore celestial order, the Lord himself takes human form to restore divine justice. In this way, the Lord restores order to the universe. Since Krishna is the Lord, He has always existed.

Although the Lord appears to be always active, He is free from all activity and the results of actions. He who recognizes the nature of the Lord is also liberated and does not create karma by acting. Those who become one with the Lord, freeing the mind from attachment, hatred, and fear, surrendering to the Lord, and gaining knowledge of the Self, then the Lord grants them what they seek.

In this way, Lord Krishna teaches the nature of action and inaction and the characteristics of one who has this knowledge. The Lord defines the sage as one who sees the inactivity of the Self amidst the activities of the body, as well as the potential actions in an inactive body. It is important, therefore, to perceive inner stillness amidst activities. Complete renunciation is possible only through knowledge.

Because the sage sees nothing but **Brahman** as the truth in everything, he is unaffected whether the body acts or not. He is self-sufficient, contented, independent, equanimous, and free from desires and fantasies, expectations, attachments, and jealousies. His every action is an act of worship of the Lord that uplifts humanity.

All **Sadhanas** lead to liberation by preparing the mind. To attain this knowledge, one must contact a Guru who is established in truth (Sat - Satguru). One must approach him with humility, faith, and reverence. Only in this way can one gain the knowledge that will prevent one from falling back into illusion.

With the vessel of knowledge, the devotee can cross the ocean of the world. Like fire, this knowledge reduces all karma to ashes. Therefore, knowledge is the greatest purifier. Having thus purified the mind, one will obtain all the knowledge from the Guru's teachings.

Chapter 5 - Sannyasa Yoga

The Path of Renunciation

In this chapter, Arjuna still has doubts about how one can remain active and at the same time be free from actions. Krishna then explains to him how both lifestyles can lead to liberation **Moksha**, but the important thing is to be free from the moods **Raga** and aversion **Dvesha**. Krishna explains how in karma yoga, the devotee acts physically and mentally without attachment to the result. In this way, there is no reaction in the mind. Slowly, he develops self-control and eventually discovers his own nature, which is similar in all beings.

According to their nature, the organs act, reaping the fruit of

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action, but he is beyond good or bad results. It is ignorance that deludes us. When ignorance is destroyed by knowledge of the Self, then only the true nature remains, **Brahma**. Freed from all impurities, he attains liberation from where there is no return, thus attaining immortality and the infinite bliss of **Ananda**. Only he who can restrain the impulse of desires, **Kama** and anger, **Krodha** is a man of self-control who can enjoy life.

Having clarified Arjuna's doubt, Krishna explains how, having removed all thoughts of sense objects, regulated breathing, and freed from all desire, fear, and anger, one must meditate with the desire for liberation, which the yogi consequently attains. Knowing that the Supreme Lord of all the worlds is also the friend of all beings, the sage attains peace, Shanti.

Chapter 6 - Dhyana Yoga

The Path of Contemplation

Since meditation is such an important topic, it will be the focus of the entire sixth chapter. Krishna explains that there are five methods of meditation:

1. Bahiranga Sadhana, the disciplines to be followed throughout one's life.
2. Antaranga Sadhana, the disciplines that precede meditation practice.
3. Dhyana Svarupam, the nature of meditation.
4. Dhyana Phalam, the result of meditation.
5. Dhyana Pratibanda-pariharau, the obstacles and remedies.

Bahiranga Sadhana transforms an extroverted mind into a contemplative one and is based on self-control and self-esteem. Furthermore, it is important to be moderate in food and balanced in sleep, work, and rest.

Antaranga Sadhana, the meditator should seek a quiet and undisturbed place, a spiritual and pure place. The meditator must control

his breathing, withdrawing his mind and senses from other activities, to meditate on the Lord.

Dhyana Svarupam and Phalam, meditation is nothing more than withdrawing the mind into the soul (Atma). The mind must not entertain other thoughts, and if it is disturbed, it must be brought back to the source of the Soul. In Vedanta, everything, even thoughts, are an object of attention on Atma. Therefore, true meditation means remaining in the Atma with the awareness “I am the Atma.” This leads to permanent peace.

Dhyana Pratibanda-pariharau, Arjuna now poses a question about the obstacles to meditation: how to combat mental restlessness and how to overcome it. Krishna recommends two methods to resolve the problem: detachment and practice. For this reason, it is important to recognize the temporary nature of desire. Only with constant practice can one conquer desires. This practice requires determination and patience.

Nevertheless, Arjuna believes that liberation cannot be achieved in a single lifetime, and so he asks what happens to those souls who have not completed their Sadhana. Krishna consoles him by saying that he will continue his spiritual quest, incarnating into a prosperous family of yogis. Born into such a context, he will quickly regain the wisdom he previously attained. Thus, by dedicating himself to spiritual pursuits at a young age and bearing the burdens of Samskara of previous lives, the devotee will effortlessly attain liberation.

Chapter 7 – Jnana-Vijnana Yoga

The Path of Knowledge and Discernment

At the beginning of the seventh chapter, Krishna explains that surrender to God and His attributes ultimately leads him to discover the attribute-less God. Knowledge of God as different from himself is called **Jnanam**, while knowledge of God as identical to himself is called **Vijnanam**. This is the supreme knowledge. Krishna then speaks of the nature of God.

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God has two aspects: his higher nature, Para-prakriti, and his lower nature, **Apara-prakriti**. The lower nature has eight divisions: the five subtle elements, the cosmic ego, the cosmic intellect, and the unmanifest. It is called the lower because it is subject to change. The higher nature, on the other hand, is the consciousness behind everyone and which also sustains all creation. This is called the higher because it is immutable, conscious, infinite, and independent. God sustains all creation and He Himself is the essence of everything. In this way, God is independent of everything, yet everything depends on Him.

Here, Lord Krishna describes **Samsara** as the cause of all problems. Being deluded by creation (produced by the **Triguna**), the devotee does not know the superior nature of God. The power of the illusion Maya cannot be conquered by personal effort alone; only those who surrender to the Lord can overcome **Maya**.

All humanity is divided by Lord Krishna into five categories.

a) The lowest are the non-believers who do not accept God. Governed only by their own desires, these people are completely lost in Maya.

b) Another group is that of those who believe in God superficially only when in need.

c) Others turn to God for material prosperity.

d) Others seek God through knowledge. The Jnani is one who has reached the destination of the journey and discovered his identity with the Lord.

e) The wise devotee with a non-dualistic mind is loved by the Lord above all else. Then the Lord reveals to him his true, imperishable nature, which is identical to that of the devotee, who thus remains absorbed in Him even at the moment of death.

Chapter 8 – Akshara-Parabrahma Yoga The Path of the Imperishable Supreme Brahman

At the beginning of the chapter, Arjuna asks Krishna seven questions. The first six concern the nature of Brahman, and the last one concerns the moment of death. Krishna responds that

- a) Brahman is the eternal Truth behind every individual.
- b) Karma is the actions that cause the birth of all beings.
- c) **Adhibhuta** is the entire perishable universe, while Hiranyagarbha (the womb of the universe) gives strength to all beings.
- d) At this point, Krishna goes on to describe how to remember the Lord even at the time of death.

In fact, the dominant thought during the transition of death determines the condition and place of rebirth. However, the dominant thought at the time of death is determined by the pattern of thoughts we have had throughout our existence.

Therefore, it is important to remember Krishna all the time so that we will remember him at the time of death. One must control the sense organs and those of action, and through yoga practice one must withdraw the **Prana**, through the **Sushumna Nadi**, to the crown of the head and withdraw the mind into the heart. One who is sincerely connected to the Lord will simply unite with Him.

There are two types of goals: God and the world. Only God is eternal and immutable beyond the manifest and unmanifest creation. Only by realizing the Lord can one escape the cycle of rebirth Samsara, and therefore this is the supreme purpose of life. There are two paths that lead to different goals. One is the path of light, while the other is the path of darkness. After passing through various paradises, these must be reincarnated. Therefore, the path of light is the path to follow to attain the supreme goal: Lord Krishna himself.

Chapter 9 - Rajavidya-Rajaguhya Yoga The Path of Royal Knowledge and his Secret

In chapter nine, Krishna introduces his glories and the qualities necessary to achieve them. It is important to understand the divine nature of the Lord in **Saguna** form and **Nirguna** formless form. God pervades the entire universe yet is bound by nothing; in fact, there is no other universe but God himself. He appears because of Maya but is always non-dual and limitless like space. Krishna (the Consciousness of) is the origin, existence, and dissolution of the entire universe. Due to ignorance, no one knows the nature of God. Therefore, He is mistakenly mistaken for a human being with birth and form.

However, there are those of noble character who seek the Lord to be liberated from worldly bonds. These devotees glorify Him in various ways: as equal to themselves, as different, or as the whole. Some seek Him to fulfill their goals, others to unite with the Infinite. The true devotee, however, seeks only the Lord and nothing else. Those who seek worldly things lose the gift of the Absolute, since the Lord bestows only what one wishes to receive.

What type of worship is necessary to attain the Infinite? Krishna answers that the main thing is attitude. Every action should be converted into an offering at the feet of the Lord. Such a Bhakta is a Karma Yogi and also a since he renounces the fruits of his actions. He will be quickly purified and liberated by receiving the teachings of the Guru. Krishna is for everyone; it is up to us to ask for it or not.

In the final verses, Krishna glorifies **Bhakti** devotion. Indeed, even those who are unqualified for Self-knowledge due to past mistakes, weaknesses, or foolishness can nevertheless reach the goal, because **Bhakti** is universal.

Krishna sums it up thus: "Fix your mind on me, be my devotee, make me your life's goal, be my worshiper, and surrender unto me. By fixing your mind on me, you will attain Me, who am your true self."

Chapter 10 - Vibhuti Yoga The Path of Divine Glories

Vibhuti (the glorious form) is the manifestation of the Lord, and Yoga is the power of manifestation. Even the great sages cannot compare to the glories of the Lord, for they are conceived beings. Therefore, this is the rarest knowledge of all, leading to total liberation. The Seven Rishi, the Four Sages, and the **Manus** are all born from the mind of the Lord.

The devotee accepts everything from God as a gift, for God is the source of all things. **Saguna** devotees always speak and engage with the Lord, yet they lack knowledge of the Lord's superior nature. Only His grace can fully enlighten them about God's superior nature.

No one can exhaust the glories of the Lord, who proclaims them beginning with his own Self. The most evident expression of the Lord is "I am," Consciousness. He is the existence of every being, for He is its true cause. All glory, wealth, and power are but a ray of the expression of God's Glory.

Chapter 11 – Vishvarupa-Darshana Yoga The Path of the Vision of the Universal Form

Here Arjuna announces the nature of the **Jiva** Being and the nature of God. However, since his mind is limited, he asks Krishna to manifest His universal form. Lord Krishna grants this request, and since such a vision is not possible with mortal eyes, Krishna opens his spiritual eye to grant him a complete vision, from a blade of grass to the most distant stars. The entire vision is a succession of wonders and infinite power, where the galaxies are its infinite adornments.

Time **Kala** is represented as a figure that swallows, shattering everything with its jaws. All this creates confusion in Arjuna, who doubts whether the Lord is a loving father or a terrible destroyer. This indicates that Arjuna is not yet capable of a complete vision of the Lord. In fact, he accepts birth, but not death. This partial vision creates fear

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and confusion.

Lord Krishna then explains to him how the destructive side is part of the principle of **Kala**, time; in fact, the moment of death comes for everyone. Arjuna then understands and praises the Lord, accepting His intrinsic qualities as creator, guardian, and destroyer. Understanding Arjuna, he automatically asks forgiveness for all his omissions and misunderstandings.

At the end of the vision, Krishna removes Arjuna's spiritual eye, a gift given to him because of his deep devotion. Indeed, through devotion,

everyone can purify their mind and perceive the universal form that is the true nature of the Lord, in order to be one with Him.

"He who acts out of love for me, who is my devotee and considers me his true purpose, detached from the world, free from hatred for anyone, such a person ultimately knows me."

Chapter 12 - Bhakti Yoga

The Path of Devotion

Chapter 12 begins with Arjuna's question: whether devotion with form or without form is superior. In this context, Krishna praises devotion with form.

He begins by describing how **Jnana Yoga** is difficult for those without the necessary preparation and knowledge. The simplest form of devotion is to perform one's duties as an offering without expecting any reward. This devotion is performed in the form of **Karma Yoga**. One who has passed through these stages then realizes true and pure devotion. The Lord concludes: "He who follows these teachings with faith, keeping Me as the ultimate goal, is very dear to Me."

Chapter 13 - Kshetra-Kshetra-Jnana-Vibhaga Yoga The Path of the Division between the Field and the Knower of the Field

This chapter describes the six themes of creation. **Kshetram**. This is the entire objective universe. Krishna suggests that we also view our body as part of this universe.

Kshetyrajna. This is the conscious principle that illuminates the objective universe. It is the Lord Himself who is the consciousness in all bodies. (Also called Jiva)

Jnanam. There are certain values that prepare the mind for self-knowledge. They are humility, simplicity, nonviolence, endurance, honesty, service to the Master, purity, determination, detachment, selflessness, awareness of the unhappiness that birth and death bring, equanimity, steadfast devotion, solitude, and constant questioning without ever losing sight of the spiritual goal.

Jneyam. Here Krishna speaks of the Truth that must be known in all its aspects. It is the light of consciousness that dwells in everyone's heart. Being subtle, it cannot be known in its pure form. It shines in the body as Consciousness and in the world as Existence. Naturally, one must be able to distinguish its pure form from the body-world duality.

Purusha and Prakriti. Here we have a pair that shares the quality of infinity. Blessed by Purusha, Prakriti creates everything. While Purusha is immutable and real consciousness, Prakriti is inert, changeable, and unreal.

The body, mind, and their activities belong to Prakriti, while Purusha is the principle that illuminates everything. Problems arise when Purusha identifies with the body and mind. Only those who can discern achieve immortality. Those who assimilate this knowledge become **Brahman** itself and attain liberation through **Dhyana Yoga**.

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Chapter 14 - Gunatraya-Vibhaga Yoga – The Path of the Division of the 3 Gunas

To attract Arjuna's attention, Krishna praises self-awareness. It is the greatest knowledge that leads the devotee to the goal of liberation from birth and death. **Prakriti** and **Purusha** are the parents who created this universe and all the beings within it. At the beginning, Krishna gives an elaborate analysis of the qualities of the three Gunas: **Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas**. All beings have mixed characteristics where one of the Gunas prevails.

Krishna then describes the methods for transcending the Gunas, emphasizing that transcendence is a form of knowledge. Purusha is already beyond the Gunas, which are found in Prakriti. Since the self is identified with the body, it also seems to be influenced by the Gunas.

Arjuna then asks what **Sadhana** methods are needed to attain **Gunatita** (the Gunaless quality). The first way is to detach oneself from Prakriti and the "sense of I and mine." The correct sadhana to attain **Gunatita** is through devotion. Furthermore, through the Guru, one also attains knowledge of Gunatita, and consequently, immortality and absolute bliss.

Chapter 15 - Purushottama Yoga The Path of the Supreme Being

At the beginning of this chapter, Lord Krishna describes Samsara as the **Ashvattha Tree**. Indeed, like the tree, Samsara is vast and has many branches, deep roots, and is difficult to destroy. The first step to breaking free from Samsara is to recognize its binding nature. Withdrawing the mind from sense pleasures, one must seek the Absolute Brahman, the true cause of everything. It is necessary to be free from the pair of opposites, from pride, illusion, and attachment. The nature of Brahman is the light that illuminates everything. At the time of death, Jiva transfers the mind and sense organs from one body to a new one. Therefore, only the Lord expresses Himself through life itself in every

being.

Krishna then shows how the universe, **Jagat** is also an expression of the Lord. In the form of the light of the sun and the moon, He sustains every living being. In digestion, He is the fire that digests food. He is the Lord of all mental faculties, the author and knower of the Vedas. Because of his superiority, he is called **Purushottama**, the cause of all things. He who knows all this becomes a realized one.

Chapter 16 – Daiv-Asura-Sampad-Vibhaga Yoga **The Path of the Division between Divine and Demoniatic Natures**

Here Krishna describes the values the devotee must follow. While these alone do not confer liberation, they are necessary for the acquisition of knowledge. Krishna therefore divides all mental characteristics into two groups, angelic and demonic. The first group is Sattvic, while the other is Rajasic and Tamasic. With the first, one acquires knowledge of the self, while the other is the obstacle that prevents one from reaching the goal. He then lists the characteristics of the nature of the two groups.

To summarize: the demonic group is based on desires, anger, and attachment. By avoiding them, one becomes qualified for knowledge of the self and quickly attains liberation.

Chapter 17 – Shraddha-Traya-Vibhaga Yoga **The Path of the Division of Threefold Faith**

The chapter begins with Arjuna's question: "To what category does a person who follows with faith but lacks knowledge of the three gunas belong?" Krishna answers that he can belong to any category depending on his temperament. Krishna divides faith into three types. For example, those with tamasic faith undertake practices that are very severe on the body. He similarly divides the various types of food, offerings, **Yajnas**, austerities. **Tapas**, and **Dana**, charitable works

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according to the three gunas.

Lord Krishna concludes by mentioning the meaning of the mantra **“Om Tat Sat.”** It originated from the mouth of Brahma at the time of creation and is regularly recited during worship. Sat means existence, goodness, and steadfastness. Finally, Krishna emphasizes the word Faith, **Shraddha**, because without Faith, every action becomes fruitless and false **Asat**.

Chapter 18 – Moksha-Sannyasa Yoga

The Path of Liberation through Renunciation

In the final chapter, Arjuna asks his final question, seeking to understand the difference between **Sannyasa** and **Tyaga**. Krishna takes the opportunity to summarize all his teachings from the beginning of the Bhagavad Gita. The Lord explains that there is actually no difference between the two terms of renunciation. In fact, renunciation depends on the three types of Guna. Naturally, sattwic renunciation is the best.

The Karma Yogi, in fact, renounces all the results of his actions, and therefore the self is not involved in any action, as he is not the true doer. In this way, the sage acts without ego, and the action is free of karma.

Here, Krishna describes the six factors of **Vyavahara** (operations that remove various doubts): the knower, knowledge, the known, the doer, the action, and the instrument of action. Of these six factors, Krishna further divides knowledge, action, and the doer, subdividing them in turn according to the Gunas.

Finally, Krishna concludes by speaking of the three types of happiness and how the Gunas determine all the qualities of creation. The duties of the four castes, or **Varna** (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra) are also prescribed according to the nature of the Gunas.

By surrendering to the Lord, the devotee reaches the goal effortlessly, easily overcoming all obstacles. If, however, he shirks his duties, then he will only commit evil and ignorance. By surrendering his heart to the Lord, the devotee will attain supreme peace with His

Grace, **Kripa**.

With these explanations, Krishna concludes his teachings emphatically, repeating to Arjuna: “Fix your mind on me, be my devotee, worship me, surrender to me. Then you will come to me, I truly promise you, for you are dear to me. Renouncing all actions, seek me as your only refuge.”

Satisfied with the teachings he has received, Arjuna gratefully thanks the Lord, promising to follow him completely.

“Where Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, is, and where Arjuna, the possessor of the invincible bow, is, there will always be wealth, victory, prosperity, abundance, and justice.”

With these words from the sage Sanjaya, the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna’s teachings to Arjuna, concludes.

“That yogi, deeply rooted in divine union, whatever his mode of life, understands that I pervade all beings, dwells forever in me.

Oh Arjuna, the perfect yogi is he who feels both the pain and pleasure of others as if they were his own.”

Conclusion

In the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, Vyasa managed to concentrate all the teachings of the four **Vedas** and the 108 **Upanishads** spanning thousands of years, along with all the secrets revealed by the **Rishis**. Reading and learning the Gita is therefore so important for all spiritual seekers. Indeed, in Sri Krishna’s teachings to Arjuna, all the wisdom of the Vedic tradition is summarized in a simple and direct way, describing chapter after chapter:

The immortal and divine nature of the soul; the equanimity of actions performed with detachment and only for altruistic purposes; the binding nature of desires, passion, and anger, of attachments and aversions; the importance of controlling the mind and breath; the self-knowledge and discernment to overcome ignorance; meditation and surrender to God; the personal and impersonal nature of God; how to leave the body at death; the vision and knowledge of God that transcends

The Bhagavad Gita. Krishna's teachings to Arjuna.

the senses; the three qualities of creation; the path of devotion and the secret of actions that do not create Karma, but free souls from the bonds of **Samsara**.

Of course, simply reading the Bhagavad Gita will not yield any real results without putting its teachings into practice. I have known many Swamis and Sadhus who know every verse of the Gita by heart, but this is not sufficient to give them spiritual liberation. Only a Bhagavad Gita embodied in our daily lives, in our thoughts and actions, can transform the personality of our small ego into the wisdom of Krishna's words. Only then will the transformation be complete, because love for God will awaken within us, but above all, it will awaken the power to love Him in every creature and in all creation.

HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA
RAMA HARE HARE
Chant: NO KARMA



SWAMI
NIRVANANANDA
SARASWATI

