



Vedanta Letters

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Shreemad Bhagavadgita

श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता



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Shreemad Bhagavadgita (श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता). It means the 'Lord's Song' or the Song of Krsna (श्री means Supreme; मद् means nectar; भग means Lord; वद् means to speak; and गीता means Song). Bhagavadgita is also known as Gitopnishad. It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and considered by some as one of the most important Upanishads in Vedic Literature. It is the most celebrated scripture and has become the single expression of Hindu religious thought in India. Bhagavadgita is basically a dialogue in a form of a Song between Arjuna and the Lord Krsna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Just as the first day of the Mahabharata battle started, Arjuna, overcome with grief at the prospect of killing relatives, teachers, and friends, asked Krsna, his charioteer, to draw up the chariot between the two armies, and the Bhagavadgita – all 2800 lines of it – was spoken between Krishna and Arjuna.

It is considered as one of the supreme mystical poems of all literature. It cannot be taken as the exposition of a consistent philosophy, for it contains too many contradictions. But the grandeur of its poetic canvas – involving infinite space and infinite time, the position of man in relation to the universe and God, the process of rebirth and the indestructibility of the human soul as conceived in the Vedas – gives it a purely literary, as well as religious power. What makes Bhagavadgita interesting is poetic statements like: "The light of light that is beyond darkness"; "On me all this universe is strung like pearls on a thread"; "the imperishable, the existent, the nonexistent, and that which is beyond both"; or the famous lines, "If there should be in the sky a thousand suns risen all at once, such splendor would be of the splendor of that Great Being." Such poetic statements are powerful, and they certainly take a reader into a cosmic realm that represents one of the furthest flights of the human imagination.

Bhagavadgita basically declares that only deeds springing from altruistic motives (niskama karma), and devotion to (bhakti) to Isvara and faith in his grace (prasada) can lead to the realization of brahman. Gita also confirms the definition of avatar as an incarnation of the Supreme Being, which occurs from age to age in response to a particular need or crisis.

Bhagavadgita is divided into eighteen chapters containing 700 slokas. It forms the sixth (parvan) of the Mahabharata. It is written in Anustubha (अनुष्टुप्) metre. It was compiled and written by the Great Sage Vyasa. It was composed during 3rd or 4th century BC. The present form of Bhagavadgita indicates considerable revision.

The eighteen chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 1 – Arjunavishad yoga
- Chapter 2 – Sankhya yoga
- Chapter 3 – Karma yoga
- Chapter 4 – Gyanakarmasanyas yoga
- Chapter 5 – Karmasanyas yoga
- Chapter 6 – Aatmasanyas yoga
- Chapter 7 – Gyanavigyana yoga
- Chapter 8 – Aksharbrahma yoga
- Chapter 9 – Rajvidhyarajgruhya yoga
- Chapter 10 – Vibhuti yoga
- Chapter 11 – Vishwarupdarshana yoga
- Chapter 12 – Bhakti yoga
- Chapter 13 – Khetrakhetragnavibhag yoga
- Chapter 14 – Gunatrayavibhag yoga
- Chapter 15 – Puroshottam yoga
- Chapter 16 – Daivasursampadwibhag yoga
- Chapter 17 – Shradhaatrayavibhag yoga
- Chapter 18 – Mokshasanyas yoga

Chapter 1. This chapter sets the purpose of Gita. In this chapter, Arjuna is confused, and his devotion to his duty is overshadowed by this attachment to his kinsmen.

Chapter 2. In this chapter Lord Krishna removes Arjuna's despondency and instructs him to fight for the right cause and surrender unto Lord.

Chapter 3 through 5. These three chapters teach the techniques of renunciation of fruit of action, in other words how do we free

Nicknames of Arjuna in Bhagavadgita

Dhanamjaya – Conqueror of Wealth.
Pandava – Son of Pandu.
Kapidhvaja – The Monkey-bannered
Partha – Son of Prtha.
Kaunteya – Son of Kunti.
Gudakesa – Thick-haired One.
Purusasabha – Bull among men.
Mahabaho – Mighty Armed One.



Kurunandana – Son of Kuru, or Joy of Kuru.
Anagha – Blameless One.
Bharata – Descendant of Bharata.
Bharatarsabha – Bull of the Bharatas.
Dehabhrtam Vara – Best of the Embodied.
Kurusrestha – Best of Kuru.
Savyascin – Ambidextrous Archer.
Purusavyaghra – Tiger Among Men.

Source: Bhagavadgita by Winthrop Sargeant

our actions from desires. The philosophy of karma is also explained. One must do good (vikarma) karma and avoid bad (akarma) karma. Karma is the mirror that shows us our weakness and defects.

Chapter 6 through 9. These chapters discuss the varieties of vikarma in various forms of yoga, such as Dhyana yoga, Prapti yoga, Constancy yoga, and Raja yoga. In other words how to purify our mind so that our karma becomes akarma through various yoga.

Chapter 10. In this chapter teaches us that Lord is everywhere and how to see him. One must realize his omnipresenceness.

Chapter 11. In this chapter Lord reveals his visible form to Arjuna. It also indirectly teaches us the significance of image worship and how to establish a link with an image and feel Lord's presence in it and enjoy it

Chapter 12. In this chapter the Lord explains the science of Bhakti yoga. It states that how one can remove the subtle impurities with the help of god or devotion. This is one of the important chapters of Bhagavadgita. The whole philosophy of Pushtimarg is based on this yoga.

Chapter 13 and 14. In these two chapters the philosophy of separating self from the body is explained. The basic tenet of the philosophy is that if we can separate three gunas (tamas, rajas, and sattva) from the self, we can easily separate self and body.

Chapter 15. In this chapter the essences of jnana, bhakti, and karma yoga are combined. This chapter is distilled essence of the vedas and the supreme truth is revealed.

Chapter 16. This chapter describes the conflict between good and evil. It basically states that the light which we should shine to make our life perfect and the darkness with which we have to battle to obtain the light.

Chapter 17. This chapter teaches the self discipline. One must do tapas, dana, and yagna to bring self-discipline in life.

Chapter 18. This chapter concludes the Shreemad Bhagavad Gita. It teaches us that renounce the fruit of action and just perform the action. Also know which action to perform and which not. We should perform all actions without egoism and pluck and throw away the fruit.

कर्मणा जायते जन्तुः कर्मणैव प्रलीयते ।
सुखं दुःखं भयं क्षेमं कर्मणैवाभिपद्यते ॥

**It is by the force of *karma* that a living entity takes birth,
and it is by *karma* alone that he meets his destruction. His
happiness, distress, fear, and sense of security
all arise as the effects of *karma*.**

**Srimad Bhagvatam, Skandh 10, Chapter 24, Sloka 13
(Bal Krishna to Nandrai)**

Nicknames of *Krishna* in Bhagavadgita

Harikesa – The Bristling-haired One.
Madhava – Descendent of Madhu.
Kesava – The Handsome-haired One.
Govinda – Chief of Herdsmen.
Janardana – Agitator of Men.
Bhagvan – Blessed One.
Prabho – Splendid One.
Mahabaho – Mighty Armed One.



Madhusudana – Destroyer of the Demon Madhu.
Purosottama – Supreme Spirit, or Best of Men.
Devesa – Lord of Gods.
Prajapati – Lord of Creatures.
Sahasrabaho – Thousand-armed One.
Vishnu – Lord Vishnu.
Aprameya – Immeasurable One.
Apratimaprabhava – Incomparable Glory.

Source: Bhagavadgita by Winthrop Sargeant