



BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION



Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chininfo.org Web: www.chininfo.org

cf

BENEDICTION



Blessed Self,
Hari Om!

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to the Bhagavad-gītā Course. Your decision to study the *Bhagavad-gītā* is commendable for the *Bhagavad-gītā* is indeed the crest jewel of the spiritual wisdom of India. It epitomes all that is of value which will surely usher in enduring happiness and true success in life. The wisdom that you gain from this Course will endow you with a holistic vision of life and provide the clarity of thinking required for success in every sphere of life – spiritual and secular. It is not without reason that Sage Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa has proclaimed in the *Mahābhārata*: “*gītā sugītā kartavyā kimanyaiḥ śāstravistaraiḥ* – The *Bhagavad-gītā* needs to be mastered, what is the need for so many other scriptures.”

May the grace of the Lord and blessings of Pūjya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji enable you to complete this course successfully. May you all discover the joy of living the Gītā Way of Life.

This Bhagavad-gītā Course is offered as a reverential worship unto the Lotus Feet of the Gītā Acāryas – Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa of yore and Pūjya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji of our times.

With Prem and Om,

Tejomayananda

Swami Tejomayananda
Piercy, CA, USA

July 15, 2011
Guru-pūrṇimā



BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION



Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chininfo.org Web: www.chininfo.org

cf

GRATITUDE



Profound gratitude to the author of this Bhagavad-gītā Course, Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji, the Head of the Chinmaya Mission Worldwide. This most wonderful Course is a product of his noble vision, extraordinary insight, great erudition, and vast experience. Seldom do we meet such a great person and saint, who is all these and many more divine virtues, all rolled into one. We, and posterity, shall be ever indebted to Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji.

It is virtually impossible to acknowledge in these few paragraphs the extraordinary contributions that have been made by many, some of whom have preferred to be anonymous. The initial work of typing and preparing the draft was done by the dedicated team of Brni. Darshika Chaitanya, Ācārya, Chinmaya Mission, Trichur, Kerala, Shri R. S. Iyer (Brni. Darshika Chaitanya's father) and Br. Atharvana Chaitanya, Ācārya, Chinmaya Mission, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. This initial, yet very critical, work itself took about two years – ample proof of their devotion and unstinting labour of love.

Once the initial draft was prepared, a team of expert language editors and dextrous typeset and formatting experts came forward to give aesthetic shape to the study material. Smt. Sandhya Sundar, Chennai, Tamilnadu, a professional editor, initially helped in the editing.

My profound gratefulness will remain always for Smt. Jasjit Mansingh, an author and editor, and a senior member of Chinmaya Mission, Delhi, who took up the daunting task of the entire language editing and worked in tandem on all points concerning this Course. It was when she joined

the team that the editing work gathered speed. With exemplary skill she perfected the language and worked for months ceaselessly and tirelessly. But for her invaluable contribution, ironing out the creases so to speak, this Bhagavad-gītā Course would have lacked polish.

The contributions of Br. Sarthak Chaitanya, Br. Kutastha Chaitanya – both of them Ācāryas of the Vedānta Homestudy Courses at CIF – as well as Srudhi Aravind, Yuvaveer, CIF, are praiseworthy. This three-member team proof-read the entire content of the Course, ensured that all corrections desired by the Editors were rightly incorporated, and worked with great vigour and enormous zeal.

The perfection in the Sanskrit aspects were ably taken care of by Smt. Sarala Kumari N.D. and Smt. (Dr.) Ambika C.P., both of them Research Fellows in the CIF Shodha Sansthan.

The extensive glossary for this Bhagavad-gītā Course has been prepared by Swamini Amitananda, Ācārya, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), Mumbai. In this she was ably assisted by Smt. Geetha Vijayan. Smt. Shefali Arvind, a member of Chinmaya Mission, Cochin, Kerala, helped in typing the glossary. Dr. V. Sheeba Sudheer, Deputy Director, CIF Shodha Sansthan, helped in proof-reading, alphabetical arrangement and other tasks pertaining to the glossary.

Preparing 30 questionnaires for all the 30 lessons was no easy task. In this seva, we have had two excellent contributors – Smt. Padmaja Joshi, devotee of the Chinmaya Mission, San Jose, CA, USA and Sri. S. K. Mohan from Chennai, Tamilnadu, who had completed his Sandeepany Vedānta Course under Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji. His questions in the Reflection section are specially praiseworthy. Sri. Sidhu, PRO, CIF, too joined in to assist in the final proof-reading of the questionnaires.

In the typesetting and formatting work, Radhika M.R., Data Entry Operator, CIF and Renjith V.J., Designer, CIF, both worked tirelessly. But for their patient and exacting work we would not have got the neatness of the pagesetting.

Gratitude

Special appreciation also to Ms. Shamika, CCMT, Mumbai who co-ordinated the entire printing process.

The printing cost of the Bhagavad-gītā Course has been sponsored by Smt. Geetha Raghu and Dr. Raghu, Ācāryas of Chinmaya Mission, Atlanta, USA.

To all of them on behalf of CIF, I express my heartfelt gratitude. In the Lord's work, the Lord Himself creates the team and works through them. At no point of time did we encounter any difficulty. That itself is ample proof of the Lord's blessings on this Bhagavad-gītā Course Project undertaken by CIF.

Terā tujjh ko arpan.

Swami Advayananda,
Ācārya, Chinmaya International Foundation

15 July 2011
Guru-pūrṇimā





BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chininfo.org Web: www.chininfo.org



cf

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS



We take great pleasure in welcoming you to the Bhagavad-gītā Course. The Course is authored by His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide.

The salient thoughts of the commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* by Ādi Śāṅkarācārya, as well as insights from Pūjya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji's magnum opus *The Holy Gītā*, the internationally acclaimed practical commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, are incorporated in these lessons.

As steps on the ladder of spiritual progression the Foundation Vedanta Course provides an introduction to Vedānta, the Advanced Vedanta Course provides clarity on concepts of Vedānta, and the present Bhagavad-gītā Course serves as a manual for practical application of the wisdom of Vedānta in everyday life.

The key thrust of this Bhagavad-gītā Course is to ensure a transformative learning process which will culminate in complete integration of principles and priceless wisdom of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in one's personality. The student thus not only studies the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but will also become empowered and inspired to live the Gītā Way of Life.

All the 18 chapters of the *Bhagavad-gītā* are covered in a module of 30 lessons. This Course is planned in such a manner that a diligent student can complete the course in a span of 15 months, that is at the rate of two lessons per month. At the end of each lesson you will be required to answer a questionnaire based on that lesson.

You may take a fortnight to study each lesson and submit your answers to these questions. If you fail to submit your answers regularly and on time,

you will be taken off the rolls. Once you have been taken off, if you want to continue the course, you will be required to re-register and start afresh from the first lesson onwards. However, those of you who have genuine reasons for failing to submit the answers on time may intimate the Course Administrator; Your request will certainly be given due consideration. As and when you complete the lessons you will receive further lessons. The glossary of Sanskrit technical terms used in these lessons, as well as the index of the concepts, are being sent to you at the beginning of the course.

The aim of this course is not to just help you study the *Gītā*, but to enable you to internalise this priceless wisdom and in its light lead the glorious 'Gītā Way of Life'. With this as the objective we recommend the following method of study:

- Devote atleast half an hour daily to study these lessons. Regular study is the key to spiritual knowledge becoming transformative.
- You must devote at least four hours a week on study and reflection.
- Once you are confident that you have understood the contents of the lesson, answer the questionnaire that pertains to that lesson. We expect your answers to be to the point and in your own words. Refrain from referring to the lesson while answering the questions. Answer all the questions in one stretch except the last section that deals with reflection. When you have answered the reflection question send it along with the questionnaire you have already answered.
- Make it a point to revise the earlier lesson before your start studying a new one. Once in six months revise all the lessons you have studied. This will keep you attuned to the thought flow and help you gain fruitful insights.
- As far as doubts are concerned, make a note of them in a separate book. As the concepts unfold in the subsequent lessons, most of your doubts will be automatically cleared. Hence, we discourage learners from writing to us about their doubts as and when they arise. You are however welcome to write/e-mail us to clarify doubts which persist.
- In a separate book jot down the ideas and concepts that truly inspire you. Read this book often and make a conscious attempt to practise these

Guidelines and Instructions

ideals in day-to-day life. Simply browsing through this book that you have prepared will certainly give you the insight and inspiration to face problems and to meet life as it unfolds.

- You may also discuss, and share with like-minded friends, ideas and insights that truly inspire you and have helped you live life more intelligently. Such discussion is bound to enhance your personal clarity on the subject matter.
- For spiritual knowledge to be truly kindled in us two factors are imperative: (1) purity of mind (heart), and (2) clarity of knowledge (head). In order to cultivate both do the reflection/meditation excersices given in the lesson and questionnaire very sincerely for this is what will crystallise your learning and enable you to live up to your understanding.

If you ensure all these, it is needless to say that this study of the Bhagavad-gītā Course will transform the way you feel, think, and live. We suggest the following books for your further study and reference:

1. *The Holy Gītā*
2. *The Holy Gītā Ready Reference*
3. *The Art of Man Making (Part I and II)*
4. *The Vision of the Gītā*

All these books can be ordered from Chinmaya International Foundation or the local Chinmaya Mission Centres.

All your correspondence with respect to the Bhagavad-gītā Course should carry your registration number and should be addressed to:

Acharya/ Administrator

Bhagavad-gītā Course

Chinmaya International Foundation

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad – 682 319

Ernakulam Dist., Kerala, India

Ph: +91-484-2749676 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chinfo.org

We wish you the very best in your endeavour and assure you that we are here to help you always.





BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chinfo.org Web: www.chinfo.org



cif

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

The Sanskrit language, written in the Devanāgarī script, has nearly twice as many characters in its alphabet as has English. In these lessons, the Devanāgarī characters have been transliterated according to the scheme adopted by the International congress of orientologists at Athens in 1912 and since then generally acknowledged to be the only rational and satisfactory scheme. The following is the key for the transliteration and pronunciation of the Sanskrit alphabet. One 'sound value' is given to each letter; f, g, w, x, and z are not used at all.

अ	a	like the o in son
आ	ā	like the a in far
इ	i	like the i in if
ई	ī	like the ee in feel
उ	u	like the u in full
ऊ	ū	like the oo in pool
ऋ	ṛ	like the ri in rig
ॠ	ṝ	no equivalent in English
ऌ	ḷ	no equivalent in English
ए	e	like the a in gate
ऐ	ai	like the y in my
ओ	o	like the o in note
औ	au	like the ou in loud
क्	k	like the k in look
ख्	kh	like the kh in khan
ग्	g	like the g in gap
घ्	gh	like the gh in ghost
च्	c	like the ch in chuckle
छ्	ch	like the ch in treachery

Bhagavad-gītā Course

ज्	j	like the j in jam
झ	jh	like the geh in hedgehog
ट्	t	like the t in tank
ठ्	th	like the th in ant hill (approximate)
ड्	d	like the d in dog
ढ्	ḍh	like the dd in midday (approximate)
त्	t	like the th in thump
थ्	th	like the th in Othello
द्	d	like the th in then
ध्	dh	like the dh in dhobi
प्	p	like the p in put
फ्	ph	like the ph in uphill (approximate)
ब्	b	like the b in bad
भ्	bh	like the bh in bhangra
ङ्	ṅ	like the ng in sing
ञ्	ñ	like the ny in canyon (approximate)
ण्	ṇ	like the n in under
न्	n	like the n in nose
य्	y	like the y in yap
र्र्	r	like the R in Raja
ल्	l	like the l in lap
व्	v	like the v in avert (approximate)
श्	ś	like the sh in shri
ष्	ṣ	like the sh in shall
स्	s	like the s in sand
ह्र्	h	like the h in hat (approximate)
:	ḥ	a distinct hard aspiration that echoes the vowel which immediately precedes it
.	m̐	the nasal belonging to the preceding vowel, the precise sound of which depends upon the consonants that follow it. Represented by a dot above the alphabet.





BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION



Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chininfo.org Web: www.chininfo.org

cif

COURSE CONTENT

(18 Chapters, 30 Lessons)



1. Introduction to Bhagavad-gītā

Many Gītās

The Bhagavad-gītā – The Universal Book of Guidance

The Glory of the Bhagavad-gītā

The Mahābhārata

The Author and Conceiver

The Scribe

What is the Gītā?

Gītā as Upaniṣad

Gītā as Yoga-śāstra

As a religious book (dharma-grantha)

As an authoritative source of knowledge (pramāṇa-grantha)

As a book of spiritual knowledge (ādhyātmika-jñāna-grantha)

As a book of secular knowledge (bhautika-jñāna-grantha)

As a book of guidance and unfoldment (mārga-darśaka-grantha)

Special Features of the Gītā

The reader can identify with Arjuna, the seeker, in the book

This is knowledge given in the battlefield of life

This is a unique, divine dialogue to which the reader is exposed

This dialogue is transformation technology in action

This teaching empowers us to face problems effectively

Facing Life

The Role of the Gītā in our Life

Face life
Build our life
The Place of the Gītā in the Hindu Scriptures
Śruti
Smṛti
Purāṇa
Itihāsa
Understanding the Gītā
Characteristics of a Good Student
Background of the Mahābhārata War
The Mahābhārata War Within
Bitter or Better
Learning the Gītā



2. Arjuna-viṣāda-yoga

1.1 The Critical Moment

1.2 Arjuna's Condition

Thinking

Holistic Vision

1.3 Arjuna's Surrender

1.4 Śreyas – Absolute Good

At the physical level

At the mental level

At the intellectual level

At the spiritual level

1.5 Dharma Discourse by Arjuna

War causes destruction of family

Destruction of the family causes destruction of family cultures and values

Destruction of family cultures increases unrighteousness

Increase in unrighteousness causes impurity in women

Impurity in women causes admixture of castes

Course Content

Failure to offer 'food (piṇḍa) and water'
Fall in family values destroys the community
Destruction of family values brings hell
Misplaced Thoughts

1.6 The Gītā's Message



3. Sāṅkhya-yoga (Part I)

2.1 Arjuna's Problem

2.2 Universal Problem and its Solution

2.3 The Essence of the Gītā's Teachings

2.4 Knowledge Perspective: Jñāna-yoga

2.4.1 Who is the Being for Whom we Grieve?

The Pure Being (Ātman)

The Transmigrating Being (Jīvātmā)

Basis of Belief in Rebirth

Scriptural Authority or Śruti-pramāṇa

Logic or Yukti

Fallacy of effect without a cause – akṛta-abhyāgama-doṣa

Fallacy of cause not producing an effect – kṛta-vipranāśa-doṣa

Experience or Anubhūti

The Body (Dehātmā) the inevitable?

2.4.2 Who is It That Grieves?

Fortitude

2.5 Dharma Perspective

2.6 Worldly Perspective

2.7 Material Perspective

2.8 Practical Perspective



4. Sāṅkhya-yoga (Part II)

2.9 Karma-yoga

You alone have a choice in action

Your choice is only in action, never in the result

Do not get attached to inaction

Do not get attached to results

Your right is only to act

Most are qualified only for action

Motivation Underlying Action

Rights and Duties

2.10 Some Special Features of Karma-yoga: The Win–Win Attitude

2.11 ‘Do your Duty’ and ‘Serve All’

Secret of Large Profits

2.12 Dexterity in Action is Yoga – Yogaḥ Karmasu Kauśalam

2.13 Equanimity is Yoga – Samatvaṁ Yoga Ucyate

2.14 The Goal of Human Life

2.15 A Realised Person

Eloquent Silence and Silent Eloquence

2.16 Some Characteristics of the Realised Master (Sthita-prajña)

2.16.1 Ātma-tuṣṭiḥ – Contentment in Self

2.16.2 Niṣkāmatā – Desirelessness

2.16.3 Anāsaktiḥ – Total Dispassion

2.16.4 Indriya-saṁyama – Mastery over the Senses

2.17 Suppression and Sublimation

2.18 The Ladder of Fall

Brooding causes attachment (dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgaḥ teṣūpajāyate)

Attachment gives rise to desire (saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmāḥ)

Desires cause agitation and anger (kāmāt krodho’bhijāyate)

Anger causes delusion (krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ)

Delusion makes us forget our past knowledge (sammohāt smṛti-vibhramāḥ)

When past knowledge is forgotten, the intellect is destroyed (smṛti-bhramāśād buddhi-nāśaḥ)

Course Content

A destroyed intellect destroys the individual (buddhināśāt praṇaśyati)

Beat, Kill, or Drink!

2.19 Preventing our Fall

2.20 Being Peaceful

Ego – ahaṅkāra

My-ness – mamatā

Desire – kāmanā

Craving – spr̥hā



5 Chapter 3, Karma-yoga (Part I)

3.1 The Glory of Questioning

3.1.1 What is a Question?

3.1.2 Types of Questions

3.1.3 Universal Questions

3.1.4 Why me?

3.1.5 My Choice: Jñāna-yoga or Karma-yoga?

3.2 Action, Inaction, Actionlessness

3.2.1 Genesis of Action

3.2.2 Action and Inaction

3.2.3 Actionlessness

3.3 Not Doing is your Undoing

3.3.1 Daydreaming

3.4 What is Right Action?

3.5 Characteristics of Duties

Duties come unasked

Ignorance is no excuse

Duties are thankless

Duties have no special rewards

Duties and responsibilities increase with age and stature

3.6 What is the Right Attitude?

Dedicated to the Higher

3.6.1 Attitude of Dedication

Receiving Tips!

3.6.2 Attitude of Cheerful Acceptance

3.6.3 Attitude of Obedience

3.6.4 Attitude of Gratitude

Bhūta-yajña

Deva-yajña

Pitṛ-yajña

Nṛ-yajña

Ṛṣi-yajña

3.6.5 Attitude of Continuous Giving

Party in Vaiṣṇava

3.6.6 Attitude of Giving and Giving Up

3.6.7 Attitude of Detachment



6. Karma-yoga (Part II)

3.7 Characteristics of a Realised Master – Full and Filled Life

We will gain something by doing them

We will lose something by not doing them

We are dependent or attached to the action, thing, being, or result

3.8 Are You an Ideal?

When to Advise?

3.9 The Greatest Ideal

As the supreme Truth

As the Lord

As an Incarnation

As a great Person

3.10 Universal Question: How should a Leader Guide Others?

Be clear about the goal – the welfare of all (loka-saṅgraha)

Be established in the path – karma-yoga

Do not unsettle others

Course Content

Mingle with others

Empower

3.11 Characteristics of a Realised Master – Death of the Doer

The Witness

3.12 Secret of Success

Law of Conservation

Secret of Dedication

3.13 Universal Questions

3.13.1 Why do People Do what they Do?

3.13.2 What is Nature and How is it Formed?

3.13.3 Can we Change our Nature?

Can You Kick a HABIT?

3.14 Arjuna's Universal Question: Why do People Commit Sins?

3.14.1 What is Sin and Merit (pāpa and puṇya)?

3.14.2 The Enemy Within

3.14.3 Know the Enemy

3.14.4 Deal with the Enemy



7. *Jñāna-karma-sannyāsa-yoga (Part I)*

4.1 The Glory of Spiritual Knowledge

Spiritual Knowledge is Eternal

Spiritual Knowledge is Universal

Spiritual Knowledge is Time-tested

The First Guru

Great Lineage

4.2 Divine Birth (Divya-janma)

4.3 Incarnation (Avatāra)

4.3.1 What is an Incarnation?

4.3.2 Is Incarnation Possible?

4.3.3 Why does He Incarnate

4.3.4 What is Dharma and Adharma?

Integration of the individual

Integration in the family, community, nation, and world

4.3.5 What does God do when He Incarnates

Protects the Good

Destroys the Bad

Establishes Dharma

4.3.6 Why should we Worship His Incarnations? Why not the Lord Himself?

4.3.7 How can the Incarnations of the Past Help us in the Present?

4.3.8 Which is the Best Form to Worship

4.3.9 The Ephemeral versus the Lasting

4.3.10 Divine Actions (Divya-karma)

4.4 The Caste System (Varṇa-vyavasthā)

4.4.1 Basis of Categorisation

Guṇa categorisation

Brāhmaṇa

Kṣatriya

Vaiśya

Śūdra

4.4.2 Karma Categorisation

Brāhmaṇa

Kṣatriya

Vaiśya

Śūdra

4.4.3 Relation between Guṇa and Karma

4.4.4 The Common Dharma

4.4.5 Is Varṇa Based on Birth?

4.4.6 Who Created the Varṇa System?

4.4.7 Misuse of the Varṇa System

4.5 To Do or Not to Do



8. *Jñāna-karma-sannyāsa-yoga (Part II)*

4.6 Characteristics of a Realised Master

4.6.1 Intelligent Action

Action and inaction

Action-less Self and instruments of action

Competition (spardhā), jealousy, (īrṣā) and envy (matsara)

4.6.2 Brahma-karma

4.7 Practice Makes One Perfect

4.7.1 Spiritual Practices

Daiva-yajña

Brahma-yajña

Indriya-yajña

Samyama-yajña

Dravya-yajña

Tapo-yajña

Yoga-yajña

Svādhyāya-yajña

Jñāna-yajña

Vrata-yajña

Prāṇāyāma-yajña

Āhāra-yajña

Yajña-prasāda

4.7.2 Best Practice: The Glory of Self-knowledge

4.8 Guru: The Direct Means to Self-knowledge

4.8.1 Falling Prostrate (Praṇipāta)

4.8.2 Serving the Guru (Sevā)

4.8.3 Asking Questions (Paripraśna)

4.8.4 Faith (Śraddhā)

4.8.5 Readiness to Act (Tatpara)

4.8.6 Self-control (Samyatendriya)

4.9 The Roadblocks to Self-knowledge

- 4.9.1 The Ignorant (Ajñā)
- 4.9.2 The Faithless (Aśraddhadhāna)
- 4.9.3 The One who Doubts (Saiśayātmā)
- 4.10 Clarion Call of the Lord



9. *Karma-sannyāsa-yoga*

- 5.1 Arjuna's Question: To Do or Not to Do
 - 5.1.1 Arjuna's Questions Translated into Commonly Asked Questions
- 5.2 For You, for the Majority, Doing is Better!
 - 5.2.1 Choosing between Opposites
 - 5.2.2 Opposite Paths, Common Goal
 - 5.2.3 Common Questions Answered
- 5.3 The Two Levels of Renunciation of Actions
 - 5.3.1 The Preparatory Level
 - 5.3.2 The Highest Level
- 5.4 Karma Yoga Revised
 - What did you Gain?
- 5.4.1 The Karma Bridge
 - Passive Sentence Construction
- 5.5 The Nature of the Self with Respect to Action
 - 5.5.1 The Nature of Things
- 5.6 The Characteristics of the Realised Master
 - 5.6.1 Neither Doing nor Prompting
 - 5.6.2 Holistic Vision
 - 5.6.3 Blemishless (Flawless) Vision
 - 5.6.4 Vision of Oneness
 - 5.6.5 World Conquerors
- 5.7 Happiness versus Pleasure
 - Passion and Realisation
- 5.8 Towards World Conquest
 - 5.8.1 Desire and Anger

- 5.8.2 Desire and Anger Management
 - Alertness
- 5.8.3 Result
- 5.9 A Peace Message



10. *Dhyāna Yoga (Part I)*

- 6.1 Meditation – Style or Lifestyle?
- 6.2 The Role and Glory of Karma-yoga Re-emphasised
- 6.3 The Universal Message of Gītā
 - 6.3.1 ‘Raise Yourself by Yourself. Do not Allow Yourself to Fall’
 - 6.3.2 How can we Rise in Life?
 - 6.3.3 Mind - Friend or Enemy?
- 6.4 Meditation (Dhyāna) and its Practice (Dhyāna-abhyāsa)
- 6.5 Who is the Meditator (Dhyātā)?
- 6.6 The Object of Meditation (Dhyeya)
- 6.7 The Purpose of Meditation
- 6.8 Lifestyle Conducive to Meditation or Tips for Happy Living
 - Appropriate Food (Yukta-āhāra)
 - Appropriate Sleep (Yukta-svapna-avabodha)
 - Appropriate Entertainment (Yukta-vihāra)
 - Appropriate Work (Yukta-ceṣṭā)
- 6.9 Meditation – The External Preparation
 - Place (Deśa)
 - Alone (Ekākī)
 - Uncluttered (Aparigraha)
 - Seat (Āsana)
 - Posture (Āsana)
 - Sense Organs
- 6.10 Meditation – The Inner Preparation
 - No Expectation (Nirāśī)
 - No Hoarding (Aparigraha)

- Calm Mind (Praśāntātmā)
 - Fearless (Vigatabhī)
 - Renounce other Identities (Brahmacāri-vrata)
 - God-minded (Mat-citta)
 - Supreme Respect (Mat-para)
 - Regularity (Satatam)
 - Determination (Niścaya)
 - Enthusiasm (Anirviṇṇacetas)
- 6.11 Resolutions to be Taken at the Practice of Meditation



11. *Dhyāna-yoga (Part II)*

- 6.12 How to Meditate?
 - 6.12.1 Withdrawing the Mind
 - When called from outside
 - When prompted from within
 - 6.12.2 Absorption in the Self
- 6.13 Self-realisation
- 6.14 The Role of the Intellect in Realisation
- 6.15 Obstacles in Meditation
 - 6.15.1 Laya (Sleep)
 - 6.15.2 Vikṣepa (Agitations)
- 6.16 One more Definition of Meditation
 - Viyoga is yoga – separation is union
 - Saṁyoga-viyoga is yoga – dissociation from the lower is association with the higher (yoga)
 - Duḥkha-saṁyoga-viyoga is yoga – dissociation from union with sorrow is union with God
- 6.17 The Result of Meditation
 - 6.17.1 Supreme Peace (Paramāṁ Śāntim)
 - 6.17.2 Total Satisfaction
 - 6.17.3 Eternal Bliss

- 6.17.4 Infinite Gain
- 6.17.5 Unperturbed State
- 6.18 Vision of a Realised Master
- 6.19 Characteristics of a Realised Master
 - 6.19.1 Circumstances
 - 6.19.2 Inert Objects
 - Right Evaluation
 - Right Importance
 - Human Beings
- 6.20 Universal Question: Can the Mind be Controlled?
 - Cañcalam – extremely restless
 - Pramāthi – turbulent
 - Balavat – very strong
 - Dṛḍham – unyielding
 - Nigrahaṃ suduṣkaram – uncontrollable
- 6.21 Mind the Mind
- 6.22 Causes for Mind’s Restlessness
 - Identification
 - Justification
 - Condemnation
 - Escapism
- 6.23 Remedy for Mind’s Restlessness
- 6.24 FAQ - Why do Good People Suffer?
- 6.25 A Meditator’s Anxiety



12. *Jñāna-vijñāna-yoga (Part I)*

- 7.1 The Art of Listening
- 7.2 Finding Knowledge and Wisdom
 - Ourselves (jīva)
 - The world (jagat)
 - The nature of God (Īśvara)

7.3 The Rarest of Rare

7.3.1 Why are the Majority not Interested in Scriptural Knowledge?

7.3.2 Why do Some Rare Ones Seek God or Spiritual Knowledge?

7.3.3 Why does the Rare One Alone Attain God?

Blessed are We

7.4 The Cause of Creation

7.5 God in Creation

7.5.1 God is Great

7.5.2 Divine Might and Desire

7.6 Bondage and Liberation

7.6.1 God's Great Power – Māyā

7.6.2 God – the Saviour

He Commands His Māyā

7.6.3 Knowledge – the Dispeller



13. Jñāna-vijñāna-yoga (Part II)

7.7 The Devotees of God

Ārta

Arthārthī

Jijñāsu

Jñānī

7.7.1 Ārta and Arthārthī are Devotees too

7.7.2 Can a Realised Master be Called a Devotee?

7.8 Lifetime's Award

7.8.1 How Long does it Take to Know God?

7.8.2 Divine Vision – The Award

7.9 Worshipping Finite Gods

7.10 Considering God Finite

7.11 God's Great Māyā

7.12 Can God ever be Known?

7.13 Concluding Connection



14. Akṣara-brahma-yoga

- 8.1 What is Brahman?
- 8.2 What is Adhyātma?
- 8.3 What is Karma?
- 8.4 What are Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña?
- 8.5 Karma Theory
- 8.6 Rebirth Theory
- 8.7 Death-time Experience
- 8.8 Remembering God All the Time
- 8.9 Final Meditation
 - 8.9.1 Path of Knowledge
 - 8.9.2 Path of Haṭha-yoga
 - 8.9.3 The Path of Devotion
- 8.10 The Realms of Experience
 - Earthly Realm
 - Heavenly Realm
- 8.11 Creation – Dissolution Cycle
- 8.12 Permanent Abode (Paramaṁ Dhāma)
- 8.13 Types of Liberation
 - Jīvan-mukti – Liberation whilst Living
 - Videha-mukti – Liberation after Death
 - Krama-mukti – Sequential Liberation
- 8.14 The Heavenly Routes
- 8.15 Management Tips from the Gītā
 - Vedas – Books of Knowledge
 - Tapas – Austerities
 - Yajña – Rituals
 - Dāna – Charity
- 8.16 Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Reminder



15 Rājavidyā-rājaguhya-yoga (Part I)

9.1 The Glory of Self-knowledge

Rāja-vidyā

Rāja-guhyam

Pratyakṣa-avagamam

Dharmyam

Susukhaṁ kartum

Avyayam

9.2 God and Creation – The Relation-less Relationship

9.3 God and the Creation–Dissolution Cycle

Nitya-sṛṣṭi-pralaya – Daily Creation – Dissolution

Naimittika-sṛṣṭi-pralaya – Partial or Occasional Creation – Dissolution

Prākṛta-sṛṣṭi-pralaya – Total Creation and Dissolution

Ātyantika-pralaya – Final Dissolution

9.3.1 Who actually creates the world?

9.4 How does God Create the World?

9.5 Not Knowing God

9.5.1 Symptoms of Delusion

Moghāsā – Living in False Hopes

Mogha-karma – Doing Wasteful Activity

Mogha-jñāna – Useless Knowledge

Vicetas – Wrong Thinking

9.6 Knowing God

9.7 How do the Good Worship God?

9.7.1 Kīrtana

9.7.2 Namaskāra – Prostrations

9.7.3 Jñāna-yajña

9.8 Attitudes of Worship

Ekatvena

Pr̥thaktvena

Bahudhā Viśvato Mukham

9.9 God is All

Where No One Is!

Divine Photographer



16. *Rājavidyā-rājaguhya-yoga (Part II)*

9.10 Return Ticket to Heaven

9.11 Living in Bliss

Not for God!

My Contract with God

He Takes Care

Being Connected to Him

9.12 Worshipping the Finite

Where Lies True Satisfaction?

9.13 Worshipping the Infinite

9.14 Is God Partial?

9.15 Can I Improve? Am I Qualified to Know God?

9.16 Uniqueness of the Path of Devotion

9.16.1 Resolving Confusion

9.17 Management Tips from *Gītā*

9.18 Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Concluding Assurance



17. *Vibhūti-yoga*

10.1 The Teacher–Student Relationship

10.2 Vibhūti and Yoga

10.3 Divine Tour of Creation – Vibhūti-yoga

10.4 Śrī Kṛṣṇa – The Divine Tour Guide

10.5 Devotees – The Blessed Tourists

10.6 Arjuna – The Blessed Tourist

10.7 Special Divine Tour of Creation

10.7.1 Some Glories from Nature

- The Brilliant and the Soothing – Sun and Moon
- The Shoreless Ocean
- The Shaded Grandeur – Aśvattha
- The Snow-capped Spectacle – Himalayas
- 10.7.2 Some Glories from the Vedas and Purāṇas
 - The Celestial Royalty – Indra
 - The Divine General – Skanda
 - The Infallible Arsenal – Vajra
 - The Musical Scripture – Sāma-veda
 - The Famous Metrical Gāyatrī
- 10.7.3 Some Glorious Incarnations
 - The Long-strided Vāmana
 - Attraction and Love Incarnate, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
- 10.7.4 Some Glories as Devotees and Sages
 - The Audacious Astrologer – Bhṛgu
 - The Celestial Missionary – Nārada
 - The Incomparable Hero – Arjuna
 - The Omniscient Sage – Vyāsa
- 10.7.5 Some Glories Experienced by Man
 - Most Precious Life
 - The Incredible Mind
 - The Fruitful Discussion – Vāda
 - The Ultimate Knowledge – Adhyātma-vidyā
 - Timeless Time
 - The Easiest Spiritual Practice – Japa
 - The Feminine Beauties
 - Everlasting fame and wealth – Kīrti and Śrī
 - Gracious speech – Vāk
 - Lasting memory – Smṛti
 - Meaningful retention – Medhā
 - Indefatigable patience – Dhṛti
 - Forever forgiving – Kṣamā

- The Superhuman Effort – Vyavasāya
- The Punishing Stick – Daṇḍa
- The First Alphabet ‘A’
- The Fascinating Gamble – Dyūta
- The Winning Strategy – Nīti
- 10.8 The Concluding Words of the Divine Tour Guide



18. *Viśvarūpa-darśana-yoga*

- 11.1 Bird’s Eye View
- 11.2 Arjuna’s Special Request
- 11.3 Divine Vision
 - 11.3.1 What is Divine Vision?
 - 11.3.2 Who else had this Divine Vision?
- 11.4 Divine Cosmic Vision
- 11.5 Wonderstruck Arjuna
- 11.6 Some Features of the Divine Cosmic Vision
 - Radiance
 - Countless
 - Beginningless and Endless
 - Immeasurable
 - Holistic
- 11.7 The Fear-struck Arjuna
 - 11.7.1 Arjuna’s Question
- 11.8 Lessons of Life from the Death-show
 - Prayer
 - The Lord Loves His Squirrels
- 11.9 The Reverence-struck Arjuna
 - Arjuna’s Prayer
 - All is as it should be
 - The great, no wonder, salute Thee
 - Again and again I prostrate to Thee

For all mistakes, do forgive me
You are the One and Only for the world and me
Your auspicious (four-handed) form, now I wish to see

11.10 The Priceless Vision

11.11 Love Begets Love



19. *Bhakti-yoga (Part I)*

12.1 Subject Matter of the Chapter

12.2 Arjuna's Universal Question

12.3 Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Answer

12.4 The Altar of Devotion

12.4.1 Nirguṇa Brahman – Attributeless Reality

12.4.2 Saṅguṇa Brahman – God with Attributes

Īśvara – the Lord of the Universe

Virāṭ – the Cosmic Form

Avatāra – Incarnations

12.5 What is Devotion?

All Absorbing Love for God – (Mayi Āveśya Manaḥ)

Total Steadfastness (Nitya-yukta)

Unflinching Faith (Parayā Śraddhayā)

Faith and Love

12.6 Nirguṇa-upāsanā – Meditation on the Attribute-less God

12.7 Nature of Self

12.8 Saṅguṇa and Nirguṇa-upāsanā

Strong Detachment

12.9 How does God Uplift His Devotees?

12.10 The Crux of the Teaching



20. *Bhakti-yoga (Part II)*

12.11 Means of Devotion

Course Content

- Practice makes Perfect
- Doing without Doing
 - Your Ego
- Enjoying without Worrying
 - Renouncing Attachment to Results
- 12.12 Practising and Renouncing – the Right Way
 - Mechanical Practice
 - Practice with Understanding
 - Understanding and Meditating
 - Meditating and Renouncing
 - Meditate Without Worry
 - Renunciation and Devotion
 - Love and Sacrifice
- 12.13 Some Characteristics of a Perfect Devotee
 - 12.13.1 Loving, not Hating (Adveṣṭā Sarvabhūtānām)
 - 12.13.2 Friendly and Kind (Maitraḥ, Karuṇaḥ)
 - All His Friend
 - 12.13.3 Revelling in the Welfare of All (Sarvabhūtahite Ratāḥ)
 - 12.13.4 Forgiving (Kṣamī)
 - Loving and Forgiving
 - I am No One to Forgive
 - Forgetting and Forgiving
 - Punishment and Forgiveness
 - Strength of Forgiveness
 - 12.13.5 Unagitated and Unagitating (Na Udvijate Lokāḥ, Lokān Na Udvijate)
 - So Be It
 - 12.13.6 Pure and Purifying (Śuci)
 - 12.13.7 Fulfilled and Content (Santuṣṭaḥ Satatam, Santuṣṭo Yena Kenacit)
- 12.14 Practical Reasons for Cultivating a Devotee’s Characteristics
- 12.15 God’s Special Devotees



21. Kṣetra-kṣetrajñā-vibhāga-yoga (Part I)

13.1 The Context and Subject

13.2 The Knower and the Known

13.2.1 Differences between the Knower and the Known

13.2.2 The Known as Kṣetra

13.2.3 God as Knower

13.3 Who am I?

13.3.1 Exploring the Field (kṣetra)

13.3.2 Exploring the Kṣetrajñā

13.4 Knowing, yet not Realising the Knower

13.5 Understanding Values

13.6 Some Essential Values

13.6.1 No Arrogance, No Ego, No Pretence (Amānitvam, Anahaṅkāra, Adambhitvam)

Amānitvam – No Arrogance

Zero

Are you the Owner or Container?

Pride Versus Humility

Anahaṅkāra – No Ego

Adambhitvam – No Pretence

Pretending for How Long!

13.6.2 All Acceptance

13.6.3 Looking Critically at Life

13.6.4 Detachment, No Over-attachment

His Prasāda

13.6.5 Interested in Solitude and Disinterested in Company of Extrovert People

13.6.6 Consistent Enrichment

An Ounce of Practice

13.7 Life without Values



22. *Kṣetra-kṣetrajñā-vibhāga-yoga (Part II)*

- 13.8 Realising the Knower (Kṣetrajñā or Jñeya)
 - 13.8.1 Realising the Knower One Becomes Birthless
 - 13.8.2 Beyond Sat and Asat
 - 13.8.3 Creation Proves the Creator
 - Proving God
 - 13.8.4 Uninvolved Nourisher
 - 13.8.5 Both Inside and Outside
 - 13.8.6 Both Near and Far
 - 13.8.7 Illumines All
 - 13.8.8 Realising the Oneness
- 13.9 Bondage and Transmigration
- 13.10 The Liberating Knowledge
- 13.11 Divine Grace at Work
- 13.12 The Means of Realisation
 - 13.12.1 Determination and Meditation
 - 13.12.2 Discrimination and Faith
 - 13.12.3 Dedication and Devotion
- 13.13 The Relation Between the Knower and the Known
- 13.14 The One-in-all Vision
 - What is liberation?
- 13.15 The Self-destructive Vision



23. *Guṇa-traya-vibhāga-yoga*

- 14.1 Subject: Mind Management
- 14.2 Result: Perfection (parām siddhim)
- 14.3 The First Step: Know the Mind
- 14.4 Prakṛti and Creation
- 14.5 The Tri-coloured World
 - 14.5.1 Three Qualities of Prakṛti
 - Sattva-guṇa

Rajo-guṇa

Tamo-guṇa

14.5.2 The Working of the Mind

The Veiling Power (Āvaraṇa-śakti)

The Projecting Power (Vikṣepa-śakti)

The Discriminating Power (Viveka-śakti)

14.5.3 The Tri-coloured Bondage

Sāttvika

Rājasika

Tāmasika

14.5.4 The Tri-coloured Senses

Sāttvika

Rājasika

Tāmasika

14.5.5 The Tri-coloured Lifestyles

Sāttvika

Rājasika

Tāmasika

14.5.6 The Tri-coloured Awareness

Sāttvika

Rājasika

Tāmasika

14.5.7 The Tri-coloured Results Hereafter

Sāttvika

Rājasika

Tāmasika

14.6 The Second Step: Tuning the Mind

14.6.1 By Being Intellectually Alert

14.6.2 By Analysis

14.6.3 By an All-round Sattva Diet

14.6.4 By Observing Others

14.6.5 Sequentially Conquering the Guṇas

- 14.6.6 By Spiritual Practices
- 14.7 The Third Step: Transcending the Mind
 - Thou Art the Witness
- 14.8 Result: Living in Perfection beyond the Mind
- 14.9 Some Characteristics of a Realised Master (Guṇātīta-lakṣaṇa)
 - 14.9.1 Beyond Internal Moods
 - 14.9.2 Beyond External Moods
 - 14.9.3 Seated in Perfection (Svastha)
- 14.10 Alternate Means – Loving the Lord of All Minds



24. *Puruṣottama-yoga*

- 15.1 The Subject: The Content of the Entire Gītā Summarised
- 15.2 The All-in-one Tree
 - 15.2.1 The Roots Above³
 - 15.2.2 The Branches Below
 - 15.2.3 The Innumerable Leaves
 - 15.2.4 The Upcoming Buds
 - 15.2.5 Teeming with Life
 - 15.2.6 The Adventitious Roots
 - 15.2.7 The Ever-changing, Strange Tree
 - 15.2.8 Axing the Tree
 - 15.2.9 Route to the Roots
- 15.3 Who Sees the Roots?
 - 15.3.1 Free to Attain Freedom
 - 15.3.2 Right Direction
- 15.4 Who is God?
- 15.5 His Supreme Abode
- 15.6 Me and my God
 - 15.6.1 Part–whole Relationship
 - My Closest Relations
 - 15.6.2 Lasting Relationships

15.7 Journey through Lives

15.8 Traveling Tips

Minimise possessions

Travel light

Pack the best

Help fellow travellers

Enjoy the journey

Learn from the journey

Learn about the journey

15.9 The Glorious Sights on the Journey of Life

15.9.1 The Enlightening Glories

15.9.2 The Supporting Glories

15.9.3 The Glory Within

The Famous Food Verse

15.9.4 The Closest Glory

15.9.5 The Glorious Mind

15.9.6 The Glorious Known, Means of Knowing, and Knower

15.10 The Supreme Being (Puruṣottama)

Sanskrit grammar and Self-knowledge

15.11 The Characteristics of a Realised Master

15.11.1 Highest Intelligence (Buddhimān)

15.11.2 Total Fulfilment (Kṛtakṛtyatā)

15.12 The Complete Scripture



25. *Daivāsura-sampad-vibhāga-yoga*

16.1 The Divine Disposition

16.2 Some Divine Virtues

16.2.1 Fearlessness (Abhaya)

16.2.2 Non-injury (Ahimsā)

16.2.3 Truthfulness (Satyam)

- 16.2.4 Absence of Backbiting (Apaśunam)
- 16.2.5 Non-covetousness (Alolupatvam)
- 16.2.6 Gentleness (Mārdavam)
- 16.2.7 Modesty (Hrī)
- 16.2.8 Stillness and Steadiness (Acāpalam)
- 16.2.9 Glow (Tejas)
- 16.3 The Demonic Disposition
 - The Decisive Factor
- 16.4 The Fate of the Divine and the Evil
 - 16.4.1 Heaven and Hell
- 16.5 The In-between Disposition
- 16.6 Bondage and Liberation
- 16.7 Gateways to Hell
- 16.8 Overcoming Desire-Anger-Greed
 - 16.8.1 The Path of Knowledge (Jñāna-yoga)
 - 16.8.2 The Path of Devotion (Bhakti-yoga)
 - 16.8.3 The Path of Action (Karma-yoga)
 - 16.8.4 The Path of Meditation (Dhyāna-yoga)
- 16.9 The Scriptures – The Mind Management Tool



26. Śraddhā-traya-vibhāga-yoga

- 17.1 Universal Question of Arjuna
- 17.2 Inherent Universal Faith
 - Why is It So?
 - Think!
- 17.3 The Three Faiths
- 17.4 The Tri-colored Ideals
- 17.5 Food for Thought
 - Sāttvika
 - Rājasika
 - Tāmasika

- 17.6 Management Tips from Gītā
 - 17.6.1 The Right Yantra (Medium or Instrument)
 - 17.6.2 The Right Tantra (Methodology)
 - 17.6.3 The Right Mantra (Vision)
 - Motivation
- 17.7 Prime Activities for All
 - Yajña
 - Tapas
 - Dāna
- 17.8 Yajña – The Three Worships
 - 17.8.1 Sāttvika
 - 17.8.2 Rājasika
 - 17.8.3 Tāmasika
- 17.9 Tapas – Austerity
- 17.10 Tapas – The Three Types
 - 17.10.1 Sāttvika
 - Physical
 - Verbal
 - Mental
 - 17.10.2 Rājasika
 - 17.10.3 Tāmasika
- 17.11 Dāna – Giving for Good
 - The Great Renunciation
- 17.12 Dāna – The Three Types
 - 17.12.1 Sāttvika
 - Kanyā-dāna in Hindu Tradition
 - Respecting the Receiver
 - Dāna-vīra Karṇa
 - Can I Help You?
 - 17.12.2 Rājasika
 - 17.12.3 Tāmasika

- 17.13 The Ultimate Fulfiller
- 17.14 Faithless and Fruitless
 - The Power of Faith



27. *Mokṣa-sannyāsa-yoga (Part I)*

- 18.1 The Summarising Finale
- 18.2 Universal Question of Arjuna
- 18.3 Tyāga and Sannyāsa
 - Niyata-karma
 - Niṣiddha-karma
 - Kāmya-karma
 - Prāyaścitta-karma
 - Upāsanā
- 18.4 Life and Yajña, Dāna, and Tapas
 - Ādhidaivika
 - Ādhibhautika
 - Ādhyātmika
- 18.5 Threefold Tyāga
 - 18.5.1 Sāttvika
 - 18.5.2 Rājasika
 - 18.5.3 Tāmasika
 - 18.5.4 The Essence of Tyāga
- 18.6 Understanding Results
- 18.7 Understanding Actions
 - 18.7.1 The Mechanism of Action
 - Adhiṣṭhāna
 - Kartā
 - Karaṇa
 - Ceṣṭā
 - Daiva

Non-doer and Non-enjoyer

18.7.2 The Prompter of Actions

The knowledge of the object of pleasure (jñānam)

The object itself (jñeyam)

Memory or impression of past enjoyment (parijñātā)

18.7.3 The Success Factors



28. Mokṣa-sannyāsa-yoga (Part II)

18.8 The Success Factor – Vision of Life (Jñāna or Dṛṣṭi)

18.8.1 Sāttvika

18.8.2 Rājasika

18.8.3 Tāmasika

18.9 The Success Factor – Undertakings (Karma)

18.9.1 Sāttvika

18.9.2 Rājasika

18.9.3 Tāmasika

Acting without Thinking

According to Stature

18.10 The Success Factor – Attitude of the Doer (Kartā)

18.10.1 Sāttvika

Tatpara

Anahamvādī

Equiposed

Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

18.10.2 Rājasika

18.10.3 Tāmasika

18.11 The Success Factor – Intellect (Buddhi)

18.11.1 Sāttvika

18.11.2 Rājasika

18.11.3 Tāmasika

Wrong Conclusion

Course Content

- 18.12 The Success Factor – Fortitude (Dhṛti)
 - 18.12.1 Sāttvika
 - 18.12.2 Rājasika
 - 18.12.3 Tāmasika
- 18.13 The Success – Happy Ending (Sukha)
 - 18.13.1 Sāttvika
 - 18.13.2 Rājasika
 - 18.13.3 Tāmasika



29. Mokṣa-sannyāsa-yoga (Part III)

- 18.14 The Caste System (Varṇa-vyavasthā) Revisited
 - 18.14.1 The Birth Factor (Janma)
 - 18.14.2 The Head Factor
- 18.15 The Success Formula
 - 18.15.1 The Attitude Factor in Success
 - 18.15.2 The Aptitude Factor in Success
 - Sāttvika
 - Rājasika
 - Tāmasika
- 18.16 The Secret of Large Profits
- 18.17 Reaching Perfection through Imperfection
- 18.18 The State of Perfection
- 18.19 Meditation Revised
- 18.20 The Ego Factor
- 18.21 The Nature Factor
 - Nature Dictates!
- 18.22 The Grace Factor
- 18.23 The Choice Factor

30. Mokṣa-sannyāsa-yoga (Part IV)

- 18.24 The Final Teaching

Bhagavad-gītā Course

18.24.1 Surrender in Jñāna-yoga – Know God, the Self

18.24.2 Surrender in Bhakti-yoga – Love God, the Ultimate Truth

18.24.3 Surrender in Karma-yoga – Serve God

Message of Gītā

18.25 Statutory Warning

18.26 The Secret and the Sacred Gītā

18.27 Benefits of Gītā – Phala-śruti

Listen to the Gītā

Read the Gītā

Chant the Gītā

Study the Gītā

Write the Gītā

Enact the Gītā

Distribute the Gītā

Teach the Gītā

Gītāi at Jail

Gītā and Chinmaya Mission

18.28 Arjuna's Realisation

18.28.1 Delusion and Grief

18.28.2 Self-knowledge (Ātma-jñāna and Ātma-smṛti)

18.28.3 Surrender

18.29 The Special Correspondent's Realisation

18.30 The Special Correspondent's Comment

Lasting Prosperity (Dhruvā Śrī)

Total Victory (Dhruva-vijayah)

Abiding Laws (Dhruvā Nītiḥ)

Ever-shining Glory (Dhruvā Bhūtiḥ)

Mama Dharma





BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology



Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chininfo.org Web: www.chininfo.org

cf

GLOSSARY



A

abhaya – fearless

abheda-dṛṣṭi – vision of oneness or non-duality

abhimāna – pride

abhoktā – non-enjoyer

abhyāsa-yoga – yoga of constant practice

abhyudaya – prosperity

acāpala – absence of fickleness

acintya – that which cannot be thought of

adambhitva – devoid of pretence

adharma – unrighteousness

adhibhūta – the world of elements which constitutes Lord's perishable nature

adhidaiva – literally pertaining to the deities. This term is used to indicate the special faculty that presides over the instruments of knowledge and action in living creatures.

adhiṣṭhāna – the substratum

adhiyajña – the Self, which is the one vital factor and principle of life that dominates the entire field of knowledge and action

adhyātma-cetas – mind that is spiritually inclined

adhyātma-vidyā – science of the Self

advaita-vedānta – philosophy of non-dualism

agni – fire, can also mean Fire Deity

agni-devatā – Fire Deity

ahimsā – non-injury, harmlessness, non violence towards all in thought, word, and deed

airāvata – celestial elephant

ajñāna – ignorance

akṣara – imperishable

akṣara-abhyāsa – initiation of a child to read and write

akṣara-mālā – garland of letters, alphabet

akṣara-puruṣa – the imperishable entity, the reflection of Consciousness, the Lord or the Paramātmā as the experiencer. From the individual standpoint it is the jīvātmā.

akṣauhiṇī – battalion

alpa-dṛṣṭi – narrow-mindedness, limited vision

amānitva – humility

amṛta – immortality, ambrosia, nectar of immortality

anabhiṣvaṅga – excessive affection

anahaṅkāra – absence of egoism

ananya-bhakti – complete and constant devotion, usually for the Lord

ananyatā – without the sense of otherness or separateness

anasūyā – ‘asūyā’ is finding faults even when a person has good qualities.

Not doing so is ‘anasūyā’.

anirdeśya – that which cannot be described or indicated

anirvīṇa – undespairing

aniṣṭha-phala – undesirable fruit of action

antaraṅga-sādhana – advanced spiritual practice

anukampā – compassion

anumāna-pramāṇa – inference as a means of knowledge

anumanṭṛ – the permitter

anumita – inferred

anupādeya – that which cannot be taken up

apaiśuna – unmalicious tongue

- aparā-prakṛti* – matter, lower nature
aparigraha – devoid of possessions
aparokṣa – direct
apauruṣeya – that which is not authored either by God or man
apohana – ability to forget
arpaṇa – offering
arpaṇa-buddhi – worshipful attitude
arthārthī – the seeker of wealth
asīpada – literally it means the verb 'is'. It is the third term of the sacred Vedic statement (mahāvākya) "Tat tvam asi – That thou art." In this context, it connotes the unity of the witness with Brahman, the ultimate Reality.
asthira – unsteady
asuras – those in whom tāmasika qualities are predominant
asvatha – literally means 'unwell'. Also means, not rooted in the Self and being identified with the body, mind, intellect.
asāśvata – impermanent, ephemeral, transient
aśraddhadāna – one who lacks faith
aśvamedha-yajña – horse-sacrifice of the Vaidika times
aśvattha – holy fig tree
aṣṭadhā-prakṛti – eightfold nature
avatāra – incarnation of the Lord
avatāra-rahasya – the mystery of Lord's incarnation
avidyā – ignorance
avikampa-yoga – unwavering yoga, which actually means that the seeker remains ever unshaken and abiding in the Self
avyabhicāriṇī – unwavering, steady
avyakta – unmanifest
avyakta-vāsanā – inherent tendencies which are unmanifest
avyaya – imperishable
avyaya-bīja – imperishable seed

ayukta – one whose mind is disintegrated
ācāra – codes of conduct
ādhibhautika – pertaining to things, beings, and situations around us
ādhidaiivika – pertaining to the devatās (cosmic forces)
ādi-guru – first teacher, the Lord
ādhyātmika – pertaining to our body, mind, and intellect
ājya – clarified butter that is offered in the fire ritual
ānanda – happiness, bliss
ārjava – straightforwardness
ārta – the distressed one
āsana – body postures. The third of the eight limbs of the yoga system.
āstika – believer in the Vedas or God
āścarya – wonder
ātman – the true Self, the unconditioned pure Consciousness
ātma-jñāna – knowledge of the pure Self
ātma-smṛti – remembrance of one’s own true nature
ātyantika-pralaya – final dissolution
ātyantikam sukha – infinite bliss, ultimate happiness
āvaraṇa-śakti – the veiling power

B

bhakta – devotee of the Lord
bhakti – devotion
bhakti-yoga – path of devotion
bhartr – supporter, nourisher
bhāṣya – commentary
bhāva-bheda – difference in attitude
bhāva-samādhi – divine absorption
bheda – means difference, division, dualism, breaking. It is one of the four (sāma, dāna, bheda, daṇḍa) means of success against an enemy. In this context, it means sowing dissension.

- bhedā-dṛṣṭi*** – considering the world as different from the supreme Reality
- bhogāsakti*** – attachment to enjoyment of fruits of action
- bhogin*** – one who revels in sense pleasures
- Bhṛgu*** – one of the seven sages
- bhūta-bhāvana*** – Creator of beings
- bhūteśa*** – Lord of all beings
- brahma-abhyāsa*** – diligent practise of the thought: “I am Brahman”
- brahmācāri-vrata*** – vow of brahmacharya. Brahmacharya literally means celibacy, or more generally control over the senses. The deeper implication is to engage our mind in the contemplation of the Self, the Supreme Reality. This helps us in withdrawing the mind from external pursuits.
- Brahman*** – supreme Truth, infinite Reality
- brahma-loka*** – the abode of Lord Brahmā, the Creator
- brahma-saṁsparśa*** – direct contact with Brahman
- Brahma-sūtras*** – aphorisms composed by Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa. It is a book of analysis which resolves the apparent contradictions found in the Upaniṣads. The other names of the text are *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Śārīraka-sūtra* and *Bādarāyaṇa-sūtra*.
- Brahma-vidyā*** – the knowledge of Brahman. Shows the essential oneness of the supreme Reality and the individual Self
- brahmākāra-vṛtti*** – literally means thought (vṛtti) that has taken the form (ākāra) of Brahman; also called akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti. Both these terms stand for the firm thought ‘I am Brahman’, which puts an end to ignorance.
- brahmānanda*** – pure bliss of Brahman
- brāhmaṇa*** – one of the four classes into which people are divided in the Hindu society. They are also the class where the intellect and knowledge prevail, such as the teacher, professor and so on.
- buddhi*** – intellect

C

caitanya – Consciousness

candra-loka – world of the moon

candra-vaṁśa – Lunar dynasty

cañcala – fickle, restless

ceṣṭā – functions of the five organs of action

cetanā – the very life sentiency that differentiates a living being and an inert object

cidābhāsa – reflected Consciousness

cintana – to think about

citta-samādhāna – absorption of mind

D

daiva – the presiding deities or the phenomenal forces; can also mean fate or destiny.

daivī – divine

daivī-prakṛti – divine virtues

daivī-sampatti – literally means divine wealth. It also connotes divine virtues that are a pre-requisite for fuller self-unfoldment.

dakṣiṇā – reward given at the end of the rituals to the priest who performs them or to the teacher who instructs a student

dakṣiṇāyana – the southern path of the Sun – mid-July to mid-January

dambha – hypocrisy

dāna – charity

dānava – demonic beings

dānavīra – a highly charitable person

daṇḍa – stick, punishment

daridra-nārāyaṇa – a needy person who is considered to be a form of the Lord Himself

darśana – vision. The term also indicates the schools of Indian philosophy.

dayā – compassion

dehātma – one who is identified with the body

Glossary

deśa – place

deva-ṛṇa – debt we owe to gods

devarṣis – celestial sages

devatās – the gods; phenomenal forces

deva – denizens of heaven

dhana-suddhi – purity of wealth

dharma – essential nature of an object. This term is also used in the context of righteousness and nobility.

dharma-grantha – religious text

dharmya – that which is in accordance with righteousness

dhāma – abode of the Lord

dhātṛ – the dispenser of fruits of action

dhāraṇā – holding the mind steady on one object of concentration

dhṛti – fortitude, patience

dhruva – eternal

dhruvā-bhūti – everlasting glory

dhruvā-nīti – abiding laws

dhruvā-śrī – everlasting prosperity

dhruva-vijaya – everlasting victory

dhyāna – contemplation. Also termed nididhyāsana. This is the continuous flow of a single thought towards the Supreme, dissociated from thoughts of other objects like the body.

dhyāna-yogin – one who practices meditation

dhyātā – meditator

dhyeya – object of meditation

ḍḍham – unyielding

dīrgha-sūtrī – procrastinator

divya-karma – divine action

dr̥ṣṭi – vision

duḥkha – sorrow

duḥkhālaya – abode of sorrows

durāgraha – excessive insistence

dvandva – pairs of opposites

dvandvātīta – beyond duality or pairs of opposites

dveṣa – dislike

dhyāna-abhyāsa – practice of meditation

E

ekākī – alone, not depending on anything or anyone

G

gata-saṅga – free of attachments

gati – destination

gauṇa-karma-sannyāsa – preparatory renunciation

gauṇa-kartṛ – secondary doer

gāyatrī – famous poetical metre of the Vedas; one of the famous mantras found in the Vedas

gopī – literally cow-herd girl. More commonly referred to denote the cow-herd girls of Vrindavan who were renowned for their unconditional love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

grahaṇa – perception of objects; to accept, hold onto, or take

guṇa – literally translated as quality. In the context of Vedānta – it can be more precisely translated as characteristic constituents of māyā. There are three guṇas – sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Guṇātīta – The Man of Realisation who has transcended the three guṇas – sattva, rajas, and tamas.

guru – spiritual master, teacher

guru-śiṣya-paramparā – teacher-taught lineage

guṇātīta-lakṣaṇa – characteristics of a Realised Person (one who has transcended the three guṇas)

H

haṭha-yogin – one who practices haṭha-yoga – a path of yoga known for its rigorous discipline

havis – oblations

Hiraṇyagarbha – The supreme Consciousness identified with the mind-intellect cosmic subtle body. Sūtrātmā, Prajāpati, Prāṇa, and Brahmā are synonyms of this term.

I

idantayā – experienced as ‘this’, which can be objectified

Indra – king of heaven

iṣṭa-dhyāna – meditation on the form, name, and quality of the personal God

iṣṭa-phala – desired fruit of action

itihāsa – epic. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are the two famous epics.

Īśvara – God

iṣṭa-rūpa-darśana – vision of personal God

J

jagat – world

jagat-pati – Lord of the Universe

jalpa – argument to prove oneself right

japa – repetition of a mantra or the name of the Lord

jijñāsu – seeker of knowledge

jitātman – one who has conquered his mind

jīva-bhāva – notion or sense of being a limited individual

jīvan-mukta – the person liberated even while living

jīvan-mukti – final Liberation

jīvātman – the limited individual, the bound Self, reflection of Pure Consciousness

jñāna – knowledge

jñāna-hetu – cause of knowledge

jñāna-mudrā – meditation posture

jñāna-yoga – path of knowledge

jñānin – man of knowledge or wisdom

Jñāneśvarī – commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā by Sant Jñāneśvar of Maharashtra, India

jñeya – that which is to be known

jvalanātmaka-vṛtti – those thoughts (vṛtti) which burn within, like hatred, jealousy and so on.

jyoti – light

K

kali – The fourth age of the world consisting of 432,000 years characterised by strife and unrighteousness.

kalpa – A day of Brahmā or 1000 yugas being a period of 432 million years and measuring the duration of the world.

kanyā-dāna – giving away the daughter in marriage

karaṇa – instrument

karma – action

karma-adhyakṣa – he who presides over all actions

karma-āsakti – attachment to action

karma-phala-dātā – bestower of fruits of action

karma-sannyāsa – renunciation of action

karma-śakti – power of action

karma-yoga – path of action

kartavya – duty

kartṛ – the individual who performs action

kartṛ-bhāva – the notion of doership

kathā – literally means story, the stories of the Lord

kavi – seer, poet

kāma – desire

kāmya-karma – selfish, desire-oriented action

Glossary

kīrtana – singing the Lord’s glory

kīrti – fame, glory of the Lord

krama-mukti – sequential liberation

kṛṣṇa-pakṣa – dark fortnight of the waning moon

kṛtakṛtyatā – total fulfilment

kṛti-hetu – cause of action

kratu – fire ritual, worship

kṣamā – forgiveness

kṣānti – forgiveness

kṣara-puruṣa – the perishing entity, the Lord as the world of matter

kṣatriya – one of the four classes of the society. They are the ruling class – manager, administrator, politicians and so on.

kṣaya – decay, loss, destruction

kṣetra – field of matter

kṣetrajña – subject which enjoys the activities of the instruments of perception and the world perceived by them. He is the knower of the field of action.

kuladharmā – family culture and values

kulakṣaya – destruction of family

kumbhaka – one of the steps of prāṇāyāma. It is holding the breath without inhalation or exhalation

kuśa – a particular kind of grass that does not become damp

kūṭastha – the unchangeable

L

laya – sleep, dissolution, quietening, absorption

līlā – sport of the Lord

loka-saṅgraha – to lead and guide society on the right path

M

mahā-moha – great delusion

- mahā-pralaya* – the great dissolution
mahat-brahma – prakṛti, also cosmic mind
mahat-tattva – total mind
mahā-yuga – It consists of the four yugas – Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. It works out to a total of 4,320,000 years.
malina-sattva – impure sattva, sattva-guṇa with traces of rajas and tamas
manana – deep reflection
manas – mind
manaḥ-sthiti – state of the mind
mano-ratha – day dream
mantra – holy Sanskrit text, a sacred formula used in japa (or the Lord’s name)
mantra-draṣṭṛ – seers, literally those who see the mantras
mānasika-japa – mental repetition of the name of the Lord
mānasika-pūjā – mental worship of the Lord
māhātmya-jñāna – knowledge of the greatness and the glory of the Lord
mārdava – gentleness
māyā – illusion or magic. Used as an appellation for the Lord’s power.
māyā-dāsa – slave of māyā, the jīva (individual)
māyā-pati – Lord of māyā, Ísvara (God)
medhā – intelligence, power to retain the meaning and essence of the subject
miśra-phala – mixed (a combination of desirable and undesirable) fruits of action
mita – appropriate, as much as needed
mitra – friend
mithyācāra – false conduct
mogha-jñāna – knowledge that is of no true purpose
mogha-karma – wasteful activities
moghāśa – false hopes
moha – delusion
mokṣa – liberation
mṛtyu – death

Glossary

mukhya-karma-sannyāsa – highest renunciation

mukhya-kartṛ – primary doer

mukta – liberated person

N

naimittika – due to a particular reason

naimittika-sṛṣṭi-pralaya – partial, occasional creation and dissolution

naiṣkarmya – actionlessness

naiṣkṛtika – one who creates quarrels, disputes and pursues the adversary to destroy him

namaskāra – prostrations to the Lord

navarasa – nine sentiments which form an essential part of poetic literature

nāma-saṅkīrtana – singing the Lord's name

Nārada – name of the renowned celestial seer

nāstika – one who firmly believes that God does not exist or does not believe in the validity of the Vedas

nididhyāsana – contemplation. This is the continuous flow of a single thought directed to Brahman, disassociated from thoughts of other objects.

niragni – one who has given up fire rituals, a renunciate

nirāśī – one who is free of expectations

nirāśraya – free of dependence

nirdoṣa – immaculate

nirguṇa – without attributes

nirguṇa-brahman – attributeless Reality

nirguṇa-upāsaka – one who meditates on the attributeless Reality

nirvaira – one who does not have animosity towards anyone

nirvāṇa – liberation

nirvāṇa-śānti – peace experienced by a Liberated Person

niṣiddha-karma – prohibited action

niṣkāmata – one who has given up desires

niśreyas – the ultimate good, Liberation

nīti – ethics

nitya-karma – daily duties

nitya-sṛṣṭi-pralaya – creation and dissolution that happens daily

nitya-trpta – one who is ever content

nitya-yukta – one who is totally steadfast

nivāsa – the abode

nivṛtti – actionlessness; renunciation

niyama – disciplines such as cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures, and surrender to God. This is the second of the eight limbs of Yoga system.

niyata-karma – daily, obligatory duties as per the injunctions of the scriptures

nṛ-ṛṇa – debt that a householder owes to society

O

om-tat-sat – Om Tat Sat is a sentence of three words and each word denotes an aspect of the supreme Reality. ‘Om’ represents the transcendental and pure Self. ‘Tat’ indicates the changeless substratum, the eternal Truth. ‘Sat’ stands for the principle of Existence.

Ś

śaṅkha – conch

śaraṇa – refuge, resting place, shelter

śarīra – physical body

śāstra – scripture

śāstrārtha – literally means ‘meaning of the scriptures’, discussion upon scriptures

śāstrokta – as explained in the scripture, in accordance to scripture

śiṣya – disciple

śobhana-adhyāsa – illusory notion that some object is nice or beautiful

śrāddha – a ritual meant for expressing gratitude towards ancestors

śreyas – absolute good

śrī – literally means wealth, beauty, and grace. It also means Lakṣmī, Goddess

of Wealth.

śruta – that which is heard

śruti – Vedas (literally, that which is heard)

śruti-pramāṇa – Vedas as the means of knowledge

śuci – cleanliness, purity, beauty, and sacredness

śuddha-sattva – pure sattva; sattva guṇa without traces of rajas or tamas

śukla-pakṣa – bright fortnight of the waxing moon

śuśrūṣā – loving service

śūdra – one of the four classes of the society. Those who serve the society through manual labour.

śūnya – void

Ṣ

ṣoḍaśa-kalā-puruṣa – supreme Reality associated with sixteen facets

ṣoḍaśa-upacāra-pūjā – worship of the Lord in sixteen sequential steps

S

saguṇa – one with attributes

sahaja-karma – actions in accordance with the aptitude one is born with

sama – equanimous

sama-darśana – vision of oneness

samagra-jñāna – complete knowledge

samarpaṇa – offering

samatā – total equipoise

samādhi – absorption of mind in the Supreme

saṁskṛta-puruṣa – highly refined person

saṁśaya – doubts

saṁśayātmā – a doubting person

samuddharaṇam – total upliftment, final release from all bondage

saṁvāda – dialogue

saṁyoga – union

sannyāsin – renunciate

sanātana – ancient

saṅga – attachment

saṅga-varjita – free of attachments

saṅghāta – the entire assemblage of the three bodies - gross, subtle, and causal

saṅkalpa – fanciful thoughts, firm thought

sarpa-yajña – serpent-sacrifice

sarvatraga – all-pervading

sat – Existence, the permanent, that which exists in all the three states of time

– past, present, and future

sat-cit-ānanda – Existence-Consciousness-Bliss

satsaṅga – company of good

satya – truthfulness

satya-vrata – one who always keeps his promise

sādhana – means, spiritual practice

sādhu – good person

sādhutā – goodness, being good even to one who causes harm to us

sākṣin – witness, Consciousness

sākṣātkāra – direct experience (of the Self)

sāma – one of the four means of winning over the enemy. Sāma is good cordial advice, appeasement, conciliation.

sāma-veda – is one of the four Vedas

sāmānya-kṛpā – general grace of the Lord available for all beings

sāṅkhya – knowledge determined through scriptures, one of the six schools of Indian philosophy

sāṅkhya-yoga – path of Self-knowledge determined in the scriptures which is a direct means of Realisation

sāttvika – of or pertaining to sattva which is one the three constituents (guṇas) of māyā. It expresses as knowledge and serenity.

Glossary

sevā – service

siddhi – extraordinary powers

śimhikā – the demoness who had the power to capture anyone flying above by catching hold of its shadow (ref. *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sundara-kāṇḍa)

Skanda – the younger son of Lord Śiva and Pārvati; the general of the heavenly army. Also renowned as Kārtikeya and Muruga.

smaraṇa – remembering, recollection

smṛti – remembrance, memory. Also manual of moral codes of Hindu.

sthāna – place

sthita-prajñā – Man of Wisdom established firmly in the knowledge of the Self

sthiti – firm abidance

subuddhi – right thoughts and right attitudes

sudurācāra – most sinful conduct

suhṛt – well-wisher

sukha-adhyāsa – superimposition of happiness on a given thing

sukhālaya – abode of joy

sukha – joy, happiness

sukha-svarūpa – that which is of the nature of joy

sukha-vṛtti – joy-thought

sūkṣma-viveka – subtle discrimination

surasā – mother of serpents sent by the Gods to test Hanumān as he was crossing the ocean in search of Sītā (ref: *Rāmāyaṇa*, Sundara-kāṇḍa)

sūtra – aphorism (literally string)

sūtra-bhāṣya – commentary on aphorisms

svādhyāya – self-study of scriptures

sva-adhyāyana – self-study; self-introspection

svabhāva – one's nature

svābhāvika – natural

svacchatā – cleanliness

svadharma – one's duty or one's true nature

svarga – heaven

svarga-loka – heaven

T

tapas – austerity

tatpada – literally ‘tat’ means ‘that’ and ‘pada’ means term. It is the first term of the sacred Vedic statement (mahāvākya) “Tat tvam asi – That Thou art”.

In this context ‘tat’ (That) connotes the Lord, the infinite Consciousness, the substratum, from which everything emerges, exists, and merges back.

tatpara – one who considers ‘that’ (Lord) alone as the ultimate goal of life; intent on that

tat-parāyaṇa – one who considers ‘that’ (the Lord) as the highest goal

tattva – literally it means the essence, the principle, the non-dual Reality

tāmasika – of or pertaining to tamas. Tamas is one of the three constituents (guṇas) of māyā.

tejas – glow

tīrtha-yātrā – visiting holy places

tr̥pti – contentment

tulasi – the holy basil plant that is held in veneration by Hindus

tvampada – literally ‘tvam’ means you and ‘pada’ means term. It is the second term of the sacred Vedic statement (mahāvākya) “Tat tvam asi – That Thou art”. In this context it connotes Consciousness (witness) at the individual level, apparently limited by the body, mind, intellect adjuncts.

tyāga – abandonment, giving up

U

uccaiśravas – celestial horse

udāna-vāyu – it is one of the five prāṇas (vital-airs) which controls the various physiological functions. Udāna in particular is the ascending vital-air which is responsible for reverse actions like vomiting and whose major function is the ejection of the soul at the time of death. It has its seat in the throat region.

Glossary

udāsīna – one who is neutral, indifferent

udbhavakara – one who creates

upadr̥ṣṭā – the silent spectator

Upaniṣad – the philosophical portion of the Vedas

upāsanā – contemplation as a spiritual practice

upāsanā-gati – the state or worlds gained by those who perform specific contemplations

upāya – means

utkarṣakara – that which brings prosperity

utsāha-vardhaka – one who inspires enthusiasm in others

uttama – highest or best

uttama-puruṣa – *uttama-puruṣa* in Sanskrit denotes the first person of English grammar

uttarāyana – the northern path of the Sun from – mid-Januray to mid-July

V

vaidya – an Āyurvedic doctor

vaikunṭha – abode of Lord Viṣṇu

vairāgya – dispassion

vaiśya – one of the four classes into which people are divided in the Hindu society. They represent the business or trading class.

vaiśya-guṇa – the quality of vaiśyas or business class

vaiśya karma – the duty of the vaiśyas or business class

vajra – thunderbolt, the weapon of Indra, the king of the devas

varṇa-vyavasthā – the caste system. There are altogether four castes – brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and śūdras. The classification is based on one's qualities and actions.

vastra – clothes

vastrālaya – cloth store or a house of garments

Vāmana – one of the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu

- vāda* – discussion, debate, dispute. It can also mean a theory or a doctrine.
- vāsanā* – inherent and habitual tendencies born of the impressions gained from experiences in this life and past ones
- vāyu* – Wind God; wind
- Vedānta* – literally means the end portion of the Vedas. The term is used to denote the philosophy of the Upaniṣads.
- Veda* – Veda is the revealed knowledge that forms the foundation of Hinduism. The term ‘Veda’ usually refers to the four – Ṛg, Yajus, Sāma, and Atharvaṇa – which were compiled and sub-divided by Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa.
- vedāntakṛt* – revealer of scriptures. Also the initiator of the tradition of teachings of scriptures.
- vedya* – that which is to be known
- vibhūti* – divine manifestations
- vibhūti-darśana* – vision of the Lord’s divine manifestations
- vicāra* – sincere enquiry
- vicetas* – those who lack discrimination
- videha-mukti* – final Liberation after giving up the body
- vigatabhī* – without any fear
- vijñāna* – direct or complete knowledge, wisdom
- vikalpa* – alternate, option
- vikarma* – prohibited action
- vikṛta-puruṣa* – highly immoral person
- vikṣepa* – agitations, projections
- vikṣepa-śakti* – the power of projections
- vimatsara* – free of envy
- viparyaya* – false notions
- virāṭ* – the cosmic form of the Lord
- viṣayānanda* – pleasures obtained from objects
- viśeṣa-karma* – special action
- viśiṣṭhādvaita* – qualified non-dualism. It is one of the sub-schools of Vedānta

propounded by Śrī Rāmānujācārya.

vitanda – argument to prove others wrong

viveka – discrimination

viveka-śakti – the power of discrimination

viyoga – separation

Vṛṣṇi – the clan to which Lord Kṛṣṇa belonged

vyavasāya – business, superhuman effort, resolve

Vyāsa – the exemplary sage who compiled the Vedas, composed the great epic Mahābhārata, 18 Purāṇas and a number of other foundational texts of great importance

Y

yajamāna – worshipper, on whose behalf and for whose well-being and prosperity the priest performs the ritual

yajña – ritualistic fire worship. Also worship of the Lord.

yajña-bhāva – worshipful attitude

yajña-buddhi – worshipful attitude

yajña-phala – result of the ritual

yama – control of the inner organs, indicates first of eight limbs of the Yoga system comprising vows of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-receiving of gifts; God of Death

yoga – the term literally means union (with the Lord). It also means path. In this context of the Gītā Chapter 10 yoga is the Lord's creative power.

yoga-śāstra – scripture that gives practical guidance on how to attain the supreme Truth and live fulfilled lives

yogin – one who practices yoga

yuga – The span or age of the world according to the Hindus. The yugas are four – Satya or Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali. The duration of each is 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 364,000 and 432,000 years respectively.

yukta-āhāra – moderation in the intake of food

yukta-ceṣṭā – moderation in exertion

yukta-svapna-avabodha – moderation in sleep and wakefulness

yukta-vihāra – moderation in recreation



BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chinfo.org Web: www.chinfo.org



cf

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ



A 'Gītā' is a song. Songs are most often sung in joy. Yet all joyous songs are not *Gītās*. A *Gītā* is a song of spiritual knowledge – a dialogue between the Guru and the śiṣya (the teacher and the taught), giving lasting joy to all.

Many Gītās

The word 'Gītā' is a common noun. When it is prefixed, it becomes a particular *Gītā*. There are hundreds of *Gītās* – songs that are spiritual dialogues between teachers and students, and composed over the ages by Men of Realisation, saints and thinkers.

Some examples of *Gītās* found in the Hindu scriptures are: the *Vidura-gītā* in the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāma-gītā* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Harīsa-gītā* in the *Bhāgavatam* and *Guru-gītā* and *Śiva-gītā* in the *Skanda-purāṇa* to name just a few. Some *Gītās* like the *Aṣṭāvakra-gītā* and *Avadhūta-gītā* are independent texts. Even in the present times, great men have composed *Gītās*, like the *Ramaṇa-gītā* composed by Ganapati Muni on the teaching of Ramana Maharshi. But most people are not even aware of *Gītās* other than the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is a dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, found in the *Mahābhārata*. Such is its greatness and popularity that the word 'Gītā' has become synonymous with it.

The Bhagavad-gītā – The Universal Book of Guidance

The *Bhagavad-gītā* talks about you and me, and our problems. It answers questions that we often seek answers to: Who am I? How can I be happy? How

do I get rid of anger? How do I remain calm in provocative situations? Why did God create this world? What is the goal of life and how do I achieve it?

It does not talk about topical issues like child labour or women's literacy, which are relevant for a time and a place. It talks about universal issues of life, relevant at all times, places and circumstances, irrespective of a person's gender, caste, creed, colour, religion, nationality, or culture.

The human quest for peace and happiness has not changed from ancient times, despite the radical changes in our lifestyle. Being universal in nature, the *Bhagavad-gītā* applies to all professions and spheres of life. It can become a 'Guide to Business Management', a 'Handbook for Personal Relationships', a 'Secret to Large Profits' or an 'Art of Man-making'.

The *Gītā* shows us three main paths to the Divine: the Path of Action (karma-yoga), the Path of Devotion (bhakti-yoga) and the Path of Knowledge (jñāna-yoga).

The Glory of the Bhagavad-gītā

Bhagavad-gītā, the famous dialogue between Man and God (the brave Pāṇḍava prince, Arjuna and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa), on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra has caught the imagination of countless people through the ages. Atheist, theist, saint, philosopher, scholar, scientist, ruler, and the commoner alike have read, quoted, debated, researched, commented, reflected, meditated, chanted, worshipped or sought solace and guidance from it.

It has been translated into all the major languages of the world. Many have versified it and many more have commented on it in various languages. It is a treasure trove of wisdom. Merely chanting it too gives joy. It has indeed transformed the thinking of millions the world over.

Once, after the war, when the Pāṇḍavas were relaxing, Arjuna asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa to repeat the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The Lord said that a masterpiece cannot be repeated.¹ The *Gītā* had emerged from the Lord while He was in a state of meditation. The Lord Himself declares: "*Gītā me hṛdayam pārtha*

1. What Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke afterwards is called *Anu-gītā*.

– The *Gītā*, O Arjuna is my very heart.” The *Bhagavad-gītā* is thus a unique masterpiece – an all-in-one book of knowledge about life and its problems. The *Bhagavad-gītā*, the nectar of the *Mahābhārata*, is found at almost the centre of the 18 cantos (parvans).² This beautiful *Bhagavad-gītā* necklace of eighteen sections (chapters) strung with 700 pearls of wisdom (verses) was created by the omniscient Veda Vyāsa. It forms chapters 25 to 42 of the sixth canto called Bhīṣma-parvan in the great epic *Mahābhārata*.



The Mahābhārata

The *Mahābhārata* is not only very ancient but also the largest epic in the world. Inspired while in meditation, Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa composed its 10,000,000 verses, of which 100,000 verses are extant and were compiled in the form we call *Mahābhārata*.³ No wonder it is said that what does not exist in the *Mahābhārata* does not exist anywhere – that is, the seed of all things, emotions, and concepts, finds a place in *Mahābhārata*.

Janamejaya, the great-grandson of Arjuna, wished to perform the Sarpa-yajña ritual to avenge the death of his father, Parīkṣit. Sage Vaiśampāyana, to whom he went for advice, narrated the entire *Mahābhārata* to him. The *Mahābhārata* is an ‘Itihāsa’, loosely translated as history (iti-ha-āsa – thus it happened). It centres around the life of the five incomparable Pāṇḍava princes – Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, and hundreds of stories are related in connection with the life of the times. However, it is actually Lord Kṛṣṇa’s story, as He was the very essence of the life of the Pāṇḍavas.

The poem is called *Mahābhārata* because it is great, vast, and deep.⁴ It is also called *Jaya* (literally victory) as it narrates the ‘victory’ of good (Pāṇḍavas) over evil (Kauravas).

2. *madhye mahābhāratam, advaitāmṛta-varṣiṇīm... (Gītā-dhyāna-sloka)*

3. प्रविश्य योगं ज्ञानेन सोऽपश्यत्सर्वमन्ततः ।
praviśya yogam jñānena so’paśyatsarvamantataḥ.

4. महत्त्वाद् भारवत्त्वात् च महाभारतम् उच्यते ।
mahattvād bhāravattvāt ca mahābhāratam ucyate.

The Author and Conceiver

It is inconceivable to the human mind how and how much the omniscient Veda Vyāsa composed. Besides the *Mahābhārata*, the 18 Purāṇas (each with thousands of verses) and *Brahma-sūtras*, he also compiled the four Vedas (each with many thousands of mantras). It is said by sages that all the knowledge in the world is but one fraction of Veda Vyāsa's infinite knowledge.⁵

The Scribe

To write the verses as they came to Veda Vyāsa's mind was a daunting task. Lord Gaṇeśa agreed to be Sage Vyāsa's scribe on the condition that he would only write continuously – were he to stop writing, he would not continue. Veda Vyāsa in turn stipulated that Lord Gaṇeśa should not write anything he did not understand. This proved a happy arrangement for both. Sage Vyāsa interspersed the story with deep philosophic verses, which would make Lord Gaṇeśa pause to assimilate them and he himself would get a break. Indeed, words that come out of the depth of reflection and meditation have eternal value and become masterpieces.



What is the Gītā?

The *Bhagavad-gītā* can be considered as both Upaniṣad as well as Yoga-śāstra: **(1) *Gītā as Upaniṣad***: The Upaniṣads expound the knowledge about the absolute Truth and our essential oneness with it. This wonderful knowledge is termed Brahma-vidyā. Since Brahma-vidyā is the main theme of the *Gītā* too, each of its chapters is also called an Upaniṣad.

(2) *Gītā as Yoga-śāstra*: *Gītā* is called a Yoga-śāstra because it gives us practical guidance on how to attain the Truth and live fulfilled lives. The word śāstra has two meanings: (a) a scripture that teaches us what is good for us⁶ (b) a science that talks about a subject in its totality.

5. *vyāsa-ucchiṣṭam jagat sarvām.*

6. *śāsti, hitam upadiśati iti śāstram.*

Works dealing with material sciences are not scriptures, and all scriptures are not sciences. However, *Gītā* is both a scripture and a science. It gives us systematic knowledge about life in its entirety and guides us on how to live the life that we have been given.

‘Yoga’ means to unite with the Higher. Each chapter is named a particular yoga – a means to unite with the Higher. For example, Arjuna’s grief became a trigger for his transformation; hence the first chapter is called *Arjuna-viṣāda-yoga*, or *The Path of Arjuna’s Grief*.



People have looked upon the *Gītā* in different ways:

(1) As a religious book (dharma-grantha): For the majority of Hindus and others, the *Gītā* is the most popular Hindu scripture. It is worshipped as a religious book. Most Hindus know that it is a book of spiritual knowledge given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna during the Mahābhārata war. Many Hindus read it regularly as part of their daily religious ritual (pārāyaṇa), but the majority are unaware of its content and depth.

(2) As an authoritative source of knowledge (pramāṇa-grantha): Great spiritual teachers (Ācāryas) from ancient times, like Śaṅkarācārya and Rāmānujācārya, have looked upon the *Gītā* as a book of authority that authenticates their school of thought, Advaita-vedānta and Viśiṣṭādvaita respectively. The great freedom fighter Lokamanya Tilak wrote a commentary on the *Gītā* called *Gītā-rahasya* whilst imprisoned by the British, wherein he establishes that the essence of the *Gītā* is in right action.

(3) As a book of spiritual knowledge (ādhyātmika-jñāna-grantha): Great saints like Sant Jñāneśvar have spoken and written about the *Gītā* in order to teach its knowledge and educate the masses. Their commentaries, like the *Jñāneśvarī*, written in the vernacular, are still read by thousands. Some of the readers of the vernacular versions may never have read the original *Gītā* in Sanskrit. Vinoba Bhave was another freedom fighter who, whilst in

prison, gave talks on the *Gītā* to the inmates; these were later compiled as the famous *Gītāyī*.

(4) *As a book of secular knowledge (bhautika-jñāna-grantha)*: Scientists, social reformers, psychologists and many more have found truths regarding their respective subjects in the words of the *Gītā*. The famous German scientist, Oppenheimer, is said to have quoted the *Gītā* describing what he witnessed as the first nuclear test.⁷ Elaborate research has been done, and is being done, by many such individuals.

(5) *As a book of guidance and unfoldment (mārga-darśaka-grantha)*: The knowledge of the *Gītā* has been a source of guidance and solace to the famous and the ordinary alike. Mahatma Gandhi said, “Whenever there is a personal or national problem that I face, I turn to the *Gītā* for guidance and it has never failed me.” Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda also talked of it as an Art of Man-making and a Manual of Self-unfoldment.

In this Bhagavad-gītā Course, we shall deal with it as a Book of Guidance and Unfoldment.



Special Features of the Gītā

The *Gītā*, as has been mentioned already, is a practical tome of doing. It, therefore, carries some special features that will help the seeker. We list a few below.

(1) *The reader can identify with Arjuna, the seeker, in the book*: Students of the Upaniṣads of yore were highly qualified spiritual seekers. They had examined life, understood the futility of worldly pursuits, and sought only spiritual knowledge from their Gurus. Thus the knowledge of the Upaniṣad was for the specialised, trained classes. In contrast, Arjuna, the student in the *Gītā*, was an

7. दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता । यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥

divi sūryasahasrasya bhavedyugapadutthitā, yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syādbhāstasasya mahātmanaḥ. (11.12)

If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out at once in the sky, that would be like the splendour of that mighty Being.

ambitious man of action in the midst of worldly problems. He got elated and dejected, felt honoured and insulted, got angry and frustrated, and became confused and confounded as he went through life. The knowledge in the *Gītā* is, therefore, for the ordinary masses who can identify with the struggles faced by the hero of the *Mahābhārata*.

(2) *This is knowledge given in the battlefield of life:* Knowledge of the Upaniṣads as given in the seminaries or hermitages of Masters, on river banks or in deep forests or on Himalayan heights, away from the din of worldly life and pursuits.

Arjuna, on the other hand, was on the battlefield of life – in the midst of the cannons of war, in an environment of stress and tension, amongst people who were selfish, evil and competitive, in situations with life and death consequence, undertaking action that might lead him to success or failure. We can thus identify even with the setting, the battlefield, where the *Gītā* was expounded, because problems need to be solved as and when they occur. It is thus a practical guidance for the day-to-day problems we face.

(3) *This is a unique, divine dialogue to which the reader is exposed:* *Gītā* is a divine song, sung by the Lord Himself.⁸ When faced with an impossible situation where all worldly solutions seem inadequate, we turn to the Lord for divine intervention. The ever compassionate Lord listens to our sincere prayer and guides us in life. Also, whenever a sincere seeker questions life, the Lord appears as a Guru to guide him. Thus, the *Gītā* is a unique dialogue between man and God – a seeker and his Master. It is divine knowledge given by Divinity Incarnate.

(4) *This dialogue is transformation technology in action:* Only situations come to our lives, never problems. It is we, when we feel physically, psychologically, or outwardly ill-equipped to deal with them, who call difficult situations ‘problems’. When we are capable of facing them, they are not problems. Therefore, it is our inadequacy that causes problems, not the situation.

8. या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिसृता ।
yā svayaṁ padmanābhasya mukhapadmādviniśṛtā.

(5) This teaching empowers us to face problems effectively: Faced with what we term 'problems', people respond in the following ways: **(i) Escape:** Our natural and instinctive reaction is to escape from problems. 'If I can avoid it, why not?' Arjuna wanted to run away from the battlefield rather than kill his beloved and revered ones. The cat feels that the whole world (threat) disappears when it closes its eyes! However, situations only worsen when we run away from them. Our non-acceptance only increases our fear. Getting drunk makes the world temporarily rosy, but a hangover added to the existing problem makes things seem worse the next day! **(ii) Change:** Since we feel that the situation causes the problem, we waste all our energy in trying to change the situation. But the situation itself keeps changing and we find ourselves constantly preoccupied with finding new solutions, all the time feeling inadequate, desperate and tense – as though we were pushed into a pool but not knowing how to swim, ever keep struggling to keep our head above water. **(iii) Suffer:** Go through the problem cursing and complaining. We blame our fate, God, the world – anyone we possibly can – for the suffering caused to us. Arjuna laments why he, the favourite of his elders, was fated to kill them. Such an attitude only intensifies the suffering, whereas the problem remains unresolved. Those who complain constantly about the heat outside sustain the heat within!

None of these are effective means to face problems. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* we find that Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not allow Arjuna to escape or complain.⁹ He did not change the situation (paristhiti) even though as Lord of the Universe, He could have. Since the problem was created by the mind, Śrī Kṛṣṇa guided Arjuna with the right vision and attitude which transformed his thinking (manaḥ-sthiti). He could now see the situation clearly without tension, reaction and fear, and could take the right action. He performed his duty, and successfully faced the challenge before him. He fought the battle of life and won it. The

9. क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते । क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तवोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥

klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitattvayyupapadyate, kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyaṁ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa. (2.3)

picture of Arjuna before the teaching (Chapter 1) and after (Chapter 18) is a classic example of inner transformation – from confusion to illumination, ignorance to knowledge, and inaction and dejection to right vision and action.



Facing Life

We should always analyse the situations that come into our lives objectively, impartially, and from all angles so that we can take the right decisions and action. Whenever we have to face a particularly difficult situation, take an important decision, or perform an action which has life and death consequences we should review the situation before taking action.

When Arjuna came to the battlefield, he was calm and confident. He was already aware of formation of battle-lines on both sides. He was clear about the line of action. Yet he decided to review the situation. This was good. He even chose the right position from where he could see both sides clearly.¹⁰

However, when the enormity of the war and its consequences struck him, when the actual moment of truth came, he lost his impartiality and objectivity. How to regain one's ability to confront life's tough moments is one of the central teachings of the *Gītā*.

The Role of the Gītā in our Life

In this world, we are required to do two things:

(1) *Face life*: Challenges and problems come to all of us in different forms, each day, throughout our lives. Very often we have no choice in what life presents to us. Some of them are predictable, while some situations strike us out of the blue, for example, an accidental death in the family. We generally face all that comes with all the knowledge, strength, and resources at our disposal yet we often find that our resources are inadequate. We find ourselves totally helpless, confused, nervous, bogged down, or overwhelmed and confronting

10. सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ।

senayorubhayormadhye rathan sthāpaya me'cyuta. (1.21)

situations becomes exhausting, weakening, depressing, and agitating. What we need is the right knowledge and attitude to face life with dignity and poise.

(2) *Build our life:* Life is not just about facing situations or managing what we get. We must also build our life, that is, live it in a meaningful, joyful and successful manner. However, a beautiful and inspiring life can only be founded on the bedrock of a complete vision and the right treasury of values. We should also learn how to 'build with the stones that others throw at us'.

The *Gītā* provides us with the knowledge, attitude, vision, and values needed to build and live a successful and fulfilled life even as we face situations gracefully and joyfully.



The Place of the Gītā in the Hindu Scriptures

There is a plethora of scriptures available in Hindu Dharma. The basic ones, however, are:

(1) *Śruti:* Śrutis are the four Vedas (*R̥k, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva*), considered the fundamental source of all Hindu thought. All scriptures in line with them are considered authentic. This knowledge was realised as mantras by sages (ṛṣis) while in meditation and is, therefore, considered non-human (apauruṣeya). Since the Vedas primarily expound the eternal ultimate Truth (tattva-pradhāna), they are considered eternal (sanātana). And since this knowledge is passed down from teacher to taught, it is called Śruti or heard knowledge.

(2) *Smṛti:* Based on their experiences and Realisation of the Truth, great sages composed scriptures (vaktā-pradhāna) which not only expound the Truth but also teach us how to live a harmonious life and prepare ourselves for the ultimate Truth (ācāra or dharma-nirūpaṇa). *Manu-smṛti* and *Gītā* are the most famous of the Smṛtis.

(3) *Purāṇa:* This is the knowledge which, though ancient, is ever new and relevant. There are 18 Purāṇas composed by Veda Vyāsa. They illustrate the knowledge of the Śrutis and Smṛtis through stories, examples and dialogues. The

Purāṇas speak of what might be possible (sambhava-pramāṇa) and, therefore, some of the stories seem strange and improbable, just as what seemed fiction a century back is a fact today. The *Bhāgavatam* is one of the most famous Purāṇas. (4) *Itihāsa*: The two famous Itihāsas, *Rāmāyaṇa* composed by Sage Vālmiki and *Mahābhārata* composed by Veda Vyāsa, which are epics, centre around the life of Lord Rāma and the five Pāṇḍavas respectively.

The *Gītā*, although it is part of the *Mahābhārata*, an Itihāsa, is considered a Smṛti as it teaches us how to live a successful life and reach the highest goal. And even though *Gītā* is not the fundamental source of Hindu thought, it is considered by many as ‘the’ Hindu Scripture. Some refer to it as ‘the *Bible* of the Hindus’ and to the *Bible* as ‘the *Gītā* of the Christians’.



Understanding the Gītā

Even a little study of the *Gītā* can benefit us immensely. A thought from it can become a mantra that guides, consoles, or sees us through difficult times. However, a deep study of it, followed by reflection and contemplation, can transform our vision and establish us firmly on the spiritual path.

The words of the *Gītā* should be understood in the right context. If not, its message can be misunderstood. For example some say that the *Gītā* advocates war, ‘fight without fear’ (3.30).¹¹ Some get confused or see an apparent contradiction. For example, ‘I am the creator (of the Varṇa system), yet I am the immutable non-creator’ (4.13).¹² Hence the *Gītā* should be studied under right guidance and in its entirety.

The *Gītā* itself is the best commentary on itself. An idea mentioned in one place is explained or elaborated in another. For example, the entire Chapter 17 is an elaboration of the statement ‘Be ever steadfast in sattva

11. युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ।
yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ. (3.30)

12. तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ।
tasya kartāramapi mām viddhyakartāramavyayam. (4.13)

– the noble quality’ (2.45),¹³ and Chapter 16 elaborates verses 12 and 13 of Chapter 9. Thus cross-referencing, study of and reflection on the *Gītā* itself will give us insight into its knowledge.



Characteristics of a Good Student

Students come with differing qualities and calibre and each brings a uniqueness to their studies; yet it is also true that students who have the right approach and work hard at their chosen studies are already on the path to success. The student on the spiritual path requires a greater degree of respect for their studies, humility, and hard work for this study is not easy. Given below are some of the characteristics of such a student. Good students

- (1) approach the teacher with humility (2.7),¹⁴
- (2) surrender to the teacher (2.7),
- (3) they should present themselves and their problems as they are without either underplaying or exaggerating them (2.7),
- (4) are eager to learn (2.7, 10.18¹⁵),
- (5) love and respect the teacher (10.12,¹⁶ 10.13¹⁷),
- (6) have tremendous faith in the nobility and ability of the teacher (11.4),¹⁸

-
13. नित्यसत्त्वस्थो भव ।
nityasattvastho bhava. (2.45)
 14. कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः । यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥
kārpānyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṁ dharmasammūḍhacetāḥ, yacchreyaḥ syānniścitaṁ brūhi tanme śiṣyaste’haṁ śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam. (2.7)
 15. विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन । भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥
vistareṇātmano yogaṁ vibhūtiṁ ca janārdana, bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptirhi śṛṇvato nāsti me’amṛtam. (10.18)
 16. परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् । पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥
paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān, puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyamādidevamaṁjanam vibhum. (10.12)
 17. आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिनारदस्तथा । असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥
āhustvāmṛṣayaḥ sarve devarṣināradastathā, asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me. (10.13)
 18. मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो । योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥
manyase yadi tacchakyaṁ mayā draṣṭumiti prabho, yogeśvara tato me tvāṁ darśayātmānamavyayam. (11.4)

- (7) want to know what is good and right for them, rather than what is pleasant to hear and the easy way out (2.7, 3.2,¹⁹ 5.1²⁰),
- (8) listen attentively and clarify their doubts by intelligent questioning and reflection (4.4),²¹ and
- (9) follow the teachings and transform their vision and life (18.64).²²



Background of the Mahābhārata War

All Indians know the story of the *Mahābhārata*, and jokingly refer to major family conflicts as a ‘Mahābhārata’. The hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra – the Kauravas – and the five sons of his brother Pāṇḍu – the Pāṇḍavas – were first cousins belonging to the same Kuru clan. Although they were brought up together in one joint family, right from childhood the Kauravas chose to keep their cousins separate and developed feelings of envy and enmity. Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, even plotted to kill the Pāṇḍavas on many occasions. Despite everything that the Kauravas did, the Pāṇḍavas prospered and were loved by all. This further enraged the Kauravas. What started as a family feud took the form of a national war with hundreds of kings and millions of soldiers being involved in direct conflict.

But is the ‘Mahābhārata’ merely a family feud or just a national war? When we examine the life of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, we find that both had their weaknesses. However, the Kauravas, along with their many faults, were also wicked. In spite of their imperfections, the Pāṇḍavas had an inherent goodness. The Kauravas were steadfast in their wickedness and the Pāṇḍavas

19. तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ।
tadekaṁ vada niścītya yena śreyo’hamāpnuyām. (3.2)
20. यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ।
yacchreya etayorekaṁ tanme brūhi suniścītam. (5.1)
21. अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः । कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥
aparaṁ bhavato janma paraṁ janma vīvasvataḥ, kathametadvijānīyāṁ tvamādaū proktavāniti. (4.4)
22. सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः । इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥
sarvaguhyatamaṁ bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ, iṣṭo’si me dṛḍhamiti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam. (18.64)

in their goodness. The showdown was finally between the wickedness exemplified by the Kauravas and the good as seen in the Pāṇḍavas; naturally, the good backed by greatness (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) won despite their weaknesses. In addition to their many atrocities, the Kauravas also usurped the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas by deception, insulted them, and dishonoured their wife in court. Even after the Pāṇḍavas completed their term of exile, their kingdom was not returned to them by the Kauravas as had been agreed. The Pāṇḍavas, on the other hand, did their level best to maintain peace and avoid war. The Kauravas even deceived many kings like Śalya to garner support for their unjust cause. Ultimately, war became inevitable, a matter of principle, a war between a just and an unjust cause. The evil forces in society had to be destroyed to re-establish the rule of righteousness. Hence the *Mahābhārata* war was not just a family feud or national war, but a war between dharma and adharma – between good and evil.

God always supports the righteous. God was on the Pāṇḍavas' side, and that made them invincible. Even though their army was much smaller (seven battalions)²³ compared to the Kaurava army (eleven battalions), with the infinite grace and the power of the Lord and the strength of their goodness, they won the war.

The Mahābhārata War Within

Both noble and ignoble thoughts reside in us. They all live together. Usually, evil thoughts outnumber the good. There is a constant conflict between them for supremacy. Evil thoughts have deceptive ways of tricking the good. But goodness has the steadiness and courage to outlast the evil. However, when there is a crisis, or if evil thoughts are on the warpath and have gathered in force, noble thoughts are then left with no choice but to fight it out. Despite weak moments, when we seek guidance, the Lord in the form of our Guru gives us spiritual knowledge which strengthens our virtues and helps us

23. One battalion, termed 'akṣauhiṇī' is a battle formation that consisted of 21,870 chariots (ratha), 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horse-mounted warriors, and 109,350 infantry. (*Mahābhārata*, Ādi-parvan, 2.15-23).

overcome our negativities, imperfections and limitations, and we regain inner peace and beatitude.



Bitter or Better

Difficult and sorrowful situations and experiences come to all in life. In the process of experiencing them, some people become bitter, some better, some weaker, some stronger. What YOU become depends on YOU, not on the situation.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born blind, Pāṇḍu had leucoderma, and Vidura was born to a maid servant. None of the three brothers, according to the prevalent laws of state, was eligible to the throne of Hastināpura. Pāṇḍu and Vidura had no complaints, whereas Dhṛtarāṣṭra became bitter about his blindness and weaker because of his attachments.

The Pāṇḍavas faced many injustices and difficulties. Twelve years of forest life was tough for the royal princes. Yet all this only made them better and stronger.



Learning the Gītā

Polio shots are taken in infancy to give us immunity all through our lives. The earlier we are empowered to face life, the better off we are. We need to learn, practise, and perfect the art of right living from an early age, not just as we are about to die. Arjuna, it is believed, was sixty years old when he heard the Gītā. He lived for 120 years. He heard the Gītā halfway through his life. A bit late, but at a crucial time for him. Better late than never!

Learn in childhood the verses of the Gītā; in teenage, its word meanings; in youth, its import; and in adulthood – through satsang, study, reflection and practice – to abide in its knowledge.





BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ COURSE

CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Centre for Sanskrit Research and Indology

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682319, Kerala, India.

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729 Email: gitacourse@chinfo.org Web: www.chinfo.org



cf

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

(COVERS LESSON 1, INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ)

Answer without referring to the lesson.

All sections except Q VIII, Reflect, are to be answered at one stretch.



Duration: 3 Hours

Marks: 100

I. Fill in the Blanks.

Marks 5 (5x1)

1. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is found in the epic _____.
2. Since Brahma-vidyā is the main theme of the *Gītā*, each of its chapter is called an _____.
3. _____ is the inspired author and who conceptualized the *Mahābhārata*.
4. The first chapter of *Gītā* is called _____ yoga.
5. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is likened to a beautiful necklace of _____ sections (chapters) strung with 700 pearls of wisdom (verses).

II. Choose the Correct Answer.

Marks 5 (5x1)

1. _____ is the scribe of *Mahābhārata* (Veda Vyāsa, Sañjaya, Lord Gaṇeśa)
2. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is called a _____, as it gives us practical guidance on how to attain the Truth and live fulfilled lives. (Yoga-śāstra, Brahma-vidyā, Itihāsa)
3. _____ is that knowledge that though ancient is ever new and relevant. (bhautika-jñāna-grantha, pramāṇa-grantha, Purāṇa)
4. The word 'Gītā' literally means _____. (advice, song, joy)

5. _____ narrated the entire *Mahābhārata* to Janamejaya, the great-grandson of Arjuna. (Parīkṣit, Sage Vaiśampāyana, Sañjaya)

III. Match the Following.

Marks 5 (5x1)

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. <i>Haṁsa-gītā</i> | - | Bhīṣma-parvan |
| 2. <i>Mahābhārata</i> | - | <i>Skanda-purāṇa</i> |
| 3. Four Vedas | - | great, vast, deep |
| 4. <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> | - | Śruti |
| 5. <i>Guru-gītā</i> | - | <i>Bhāgavatam</i> |

IV. Answer in Brief (two-line answers).

Marks 10 (5x2)

1. Why should the *Bhagavad-gītā* be studied under right guidance and in its entirety?
2. Which three main paths to the Divine does *Gītā* show?
3. On what condition did Lord Gaṇeśa agree to be Sage Vyasa's scribe?
4. Why is *Mahābhārata* also called 'Jaya'?
5. Why is it said that 'what does not exist in *Mahābhārata* does not exist anywhere'?

V. Write Short Notes (small paragraphs of 3-4 lines each). Marks 15 (5x3)

1. Veda Vyāsa's infinite knowledge
2. The *Mahābhārata* war within
3. *Purāṇa*
4. *Bhagavad-gītā* – an authoritative source of knowledge (pramāṇa-grantha)
5. Śruti

VI. Write Short Answers (5-10 lines).

Marks 40 (8x5)

1. What are the characteristics of a good student?
2. Explain the background of the *Mahābhārata* war.
3. Why is the *Mahābhārata* war not just a family feud but a war between dharma (good) and adharma (evil)?
4. Why is it said that 'what YOU become depends upon YOU, not on the situation'?

Questionnaire 1

5. Why is the *Bhagavad-gītā* called 'the universal book of guidance'?
6. What are the different ways in which people respond to problems?
7. Explain the glory of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.
8. Why can an ordinary reader easily identify with Arjuna?

VII. Answer in Detail.

Marks 10 (1x10)

What are the different ways in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* is looked upon?

VIII. Reflect!

Marks 10 (1x10)

Throw light on how the *Bhagavad-gītā* can bring about inner transformation in your life.

