

The Bhagavad Gita (Complete)

The Bhagavad Gita

Satya Bhashyam. (Satya's Explanation) by Satya Sarada Kandula

Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita gives the essence of all the Upanishads. It was taught by Sri Krishna to Arjuna on a battlefield. Arjuna was a warrior prince, a hero, who was beset by all manner of doubts when he had to fight his own cousins for his rights.

Krishna told Arjuna to do his duty and where his duty lay as a warrior when on the battle field. He taught him the true nature of the soul, the universe and God. He taught him the right way of action.

The Bhagavad Gita is important to all Hindus, irrespective of their professions. It tells us what to do when we are in a dilemma and how to do it.

Invocation

There is but one science (scripture), the song of the son of Devaki, one God, the son of Devaki, one mantra - his names and only one duty, that is service to Him.

I pray for the grace of the ultimately blissful, the husband of Lakshmi, which makes a mute person an orator and a lame person race up a mountain.

Namo Krishna, Namō Krishna, Namō Krishna Namō Namah.

Dedication

I am dedicating this effort to my son and my student Gautham, who trusts me to tell him what is true, without distortions and in the true spirit of things. He believes in my ability to do this and believes that others will benefit from this effort as well.

Benefits of Reading the Gita

There is a book called *Prarthana Tarangini*, which gives the benefits of reading the different chapters of the Gita. I tried it. It works but in a different way from what you might expect.

The benefits of reading different chapters, according to the *Prarthana Tharingini* (prayer book) are as follows:

- Chapter 2: Karya Siddhi: Success in work
- Chapter 3: Easy Delivery of a baby
- Chapter 4: Good Children
- Chapter 5: Success of good deeds
- Chapter 6: All good things
- Chapter 7: Good marriage of child
- Chapter 8: Removal of sorrow
- Chapter 9: Removal of disease
- Chapter 10: Removal of poverty
- Chapter 11: Driving away ghosts
- Chapter 12: Increasing devotion
- Chapter 13: Self Realisation
- Chapter 14: Removal of family conflicts
- Chapter 16: Removal of ill-fame, insults and suspicion
- Chapter 17: Eliminating problems brought on by planetary problems
- Chapter 18: Removal of mental problems and sadness.

The benefits of reading the Gita, according to the Gita itself, are:

Freedom from fear and sorrow

Attaining Visnu Padam (the state of Vishnu, the omnipresent preserver.)

When done together with *Pranayama* (breath-control exercises), sins of even past births are cleared.

It destroys *Samsaramala*, the dirt/waste that sticks to one by living in the world.

There is no re-birth for the reader.

Chapter 1 — Arjuna Vishada Yoga (Arjuna's sorrow)

The **Bhagavad Gita** means "The Song of God." The whole Gita is written in the form of a conversation. First, Sanjaya, the charioteer of the blind king Dhritarashtra, described to him, how the armies were arrayed on both sides of the battlefield. On one side were Dhritarashtra's sons, their armies and allies. On the opposite side were his nephews, Arjuna among them, and their armies and allies. There were powerful warriors arrayed on both sides. There were the tumultuous sounds of conches, drums, and trumpets. Many philosophers say that the king's blindness is symbolic of the blind partiality that he showed towards his children against his nephews.

Sri Krishna is called ParthaSarathi because he was Arjuna's Charioteer in the Mahabharata war. Partha is one of Arjuna's many names. Again, philosophers say that Krishna being Arjuna's charioteer is symbolic: a true devotee gives the reins of his life to God.

Arjuna asked Krishna to drive his chariot to the place between the two armies, so he could have a better view and make better plans for combat. But when Krishna drove him there, what Arjuna saw were his kinsmen. And he was overcome by compassion. He trembled and lost the will to fight, his mind threw up many reasons for quitting the battlefield. He asked Krishna what good would come of sovereignty at the price of dead kinsmen? He said that killing kinsmen was sinful and would lead to loss of family, tradition, and social order. He said that death and defeat were preferable to victory at such a price and threw down his Gandiva bow and arrows, his mind overcome with grief.

What Arjuna had is a Dharma Sandeham — a doubt about which was more correct. It is right to fight for your rights. It is right to protect your kin. But these two were in conflict. Should he fight and kill his much loved and respected Teacher and Grandfather and others who were siding against his brother and himself in the conflict? It is easier to choose between right and wrong. It is harder to decide between two right things. Philosophers tell us that the battlefield in the Gita represents our own mind with its opposing ideas, conflicts, values and desires. Gandhiji read the Gita over and over again to clear his thoughts and purify his mind.

Chapter 2 — Sankhya Yoga (Sankhya means number)

In Chapter Two of the *Gita*, Krishna teaches Arjuna the Sankhya philosophy and how to achieve Yoga (union with God) through this philosophy. Sometimes this is also referred to as *Gnyana Yoga* or *Knowledge Yoga*.

The Sankhya philosophy is the forerunner of Buddhism and Jainism. It also strongly influenced the Advaita (Monistic) Philosophy preached by Sankaracharya and practiced by a large number of Hindus.

Kapila (also considered an avatar of Visnu) is considered the father of the Sankhya philosophy. According to this, when people realize the true nature of things, they become detached from worldly-material things and become free from sorrow. In Sankhya philosophy there are a finite number of attributes to everything in the universe and hence the name.

For more detail on Sankhya philosophy, see <http://www.hinduism.co.za/sankhya.htm#Sankhya%20Philosophy>

Excerpted from *The Mahabharata* (Santi Parva, Section CCCII, Unabridged, translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli):

Krishna spoke to Arjuna who was overcome by pity and grief. He chided Arjuna on his unmanliness and weakness that would certainly lead to ill-fame. Arjuna asked Krishna to guide him out of his paralyzing dilemma and to tell him what was good for him. Arjuna was feeling bad that his relatives were going to die and that he was going to be the one who killed them. So Krishna revealed to Arjuna, the Sankhya Yoga.

The Atma (self) can never be killed.

The self is eternal and indestructible.

It 'wears' bodies the same way that a man may wear clothes. The body takes birth, grows up, grows old and dies. The self was never non-existent and will never cease to be. The learned grieve neither for the dead nor the living, because they know this truth. The real will never cease to exist. The real cannot be destroyed. The self cannot be cut, burnt, moistened or dried. The self is real, unmanifest and all pervading.

Therefore, Krishna told Arjuna, fight, for you can kill nothing.

The unreal does not exist.

All sensations, whether pleasant or painful, are transient and are a result of the senses interacting with nature. The wise recognize that sensations are transient and do not unduly bother about them.

Here, it is implied that if something can be destroyed: for e.g. the body, then it is not real, it is illusory. 'Mithya' means illusion. 'Maya' is another word for it. Sankaracharya said this world as presented to us by our senses as illusory and knowing this will take you to Brahma Padam. (The state of Brahma, the creator.)

There is no need to worry about death, dying or killing.

The self has no death. Yet, *if you insist on thinking that it dies, then know that it will be born again*. All beings are unmanifest (without attributes) to begin with, then they are manifest (with form and other attributes) and then they go back to being unmanifest. *So why worry about death?*

Do your duty.

The duty of a warrior is to fight in a battle. Dying in a righteous battle is the greatest good fortune for a warrior. Such a death leads to heaven. So why worry about dying or killing? Not fighting will mean you have failed in your duty and you will incur ill-fame. That is worse than death for an honorable man. Others will think that you have retreated out of fear. If you die in battle you will go to heaven, if you win you will enjoy the earth. So fight. Treat pleasure and pain, victory and defeat, gain and loss alike. Then fight, and you will not incur sin.

This is the interesting theme of the Bhagavad Gita. Where Sankaracharya says that the world is illusory, asks you to renounce the world and *chant Krishna's name* (Bhaja Govindam), Krishna Himself, asks you to renounce the results, pay no attention to your sensations and then *do your duty*.

Do your duty with the right attitude.

What is the right attitude? This verse is the most famous verse in the Bhagavad Gita and is said to summarize its essence: You have the right only to work, never to its result. Do not be one whose motive is the results of action. Never be attached to inaction.

Do your duty, (Karthavyam), with the right attitude.

Perform your actions, in a state of Yoga, having given up attachment and being the same in success or in the lack of it. Take refuge in the intellect. Stay always in Reality, regardless of your material well being.

What is Yoga? Yoga is said to be Sameness (Equanimity). Yoga is skill in work.

Literally, Yoga means uniting. It can be uniting of the self with God, of the mind with the soul, or the body with mind and soul. It is derived from the verb root: Yuj or Yoke. When you are totally absorbed in your work or activity, your body and mind are united with your self and with God.

When you have the right attitude, you will be resolute. Then your effort will not be wasted. People motivated by results are miserable. Their body may be engaged in activity but their mind is focused on the results and they are 'divided' not 'united'. Those who are focused on results, cannot do a good job because their mind is not where they are. They are not absorbed in their activity.

When you have the right attitude, the associated Karma will not stick to you.

Every action has its consequences. The consequences of one's actions are called "Karma". Typically, good karma is *Punyam* and leads to benefits; bad karma is *papam* and it leads to hardship. When unpredictable bad things happen, Hindus attribute it to their bad karma, either from this life or from a previous life. Pious Hindus like to earn Punyam by doing good deeds and wash off their Papam through charity, penance, rituals and prayer. Sometimes it is hard to decide what is a good deed and what is a bad deed. *The thought of Karma can paralyze pious people into inaction or remove their motivation to work. Krishna taught that if you do your duty, established in Yoga, not motivated by results, then Karma will not stick to you.*

The part of the Vedas, called the Karmakanda (section on Karma), teach how to conduct your life and worship, in such a way that you have health, wealth, prosperity and all manner of material comforts on earth and then go onto a blissful life in heaven. Only the Vedanta and Upanishads discuss philosophy. The Vedas deal with the manifest universe. The manifest universe can be described by the three Gunas (qualities).

The Sankhyas turn away from material pleasures and from the Karmakanda of the Vedas. They believe that intellect and knowledge are higher than karma. Krishna said that Karma is far inferior to BuddhiYoga. (Union with God through the intellect).

The Gita says that one should be above the three Gunas and free from dualities like good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant. People whose intellect is carried away by matters related to experiencing luxury - Bhoga, and wealth do not attain Samadhi. Samadhi is a state of togetherness with the beginning, the First, ie with God. The wise give up the fruits of their actions and become free of the bondages of life. They reach the state of 'Anamayam' (Non-illusory? Free from evil?)

When you are free from illusion then you will know the difference between what you hear and what you ought to hear. When your agitated mind is still and in Samadhi, you will get rid of Karma and attain Yoga.

The characteristics of a Sthitha Pragnya (One of stable consciousness)

Arjuna then asked Krishna to describe one of stable consciousness (Sthitha Pragnya) and one who is in Samadhi. Sri Krishna then said that a steady man is one who delights in his Self and who has given up all desires of the mind. His mind is not agitated in sorrow and he is untouched by comforts. He is free from attachment, anger and fear. He has no liking for anything and is neither happy nor sad on getting good or bad things. He withdraws his

senses from the sense objects (matter), as a turtle into its shell. The sense objects fall off from such a withdrawn person but not the liking for them. Even that liking for them falls off when he realizes that supreme being. The senses draw even the mind of a wise person even though he tries to overcome them. He who controls his senses and sits meditating on Krishna, is a person of steady wisdom.

A person develops attachment to sense-objects that he thinks about. From attachment springs desire and from desire springs anger. Delusion springs from anger and from delusion, confusion of memory. That leads to the destruction of intelligence and from that person is destroyed.

A self-controlled person can move amidst sense objects free from attachment and aversion. He attains serenity. This results in the destruction of his misery. He becomes steady soon.

An uncontrolled person has neither knowledge, nor meditation, nor peace nor happiness. His mind follows his senses. Therefore a man of controlled senses is steady. That which is night to other is day to him and that which is day to others is night to him who sees.

Even as an ocean is unchanging though all rivers enter it, a man who is unaffected by the sense-objects that enter him attains peace. He who is detached from the sense objects, devoid of the idea of ownership and is free from egoism attains peace.

This is the Brahmi State. One who attains this is not deluded and if he remains in this state at death he attains Brahma Nirvanam.

Note: Brahma (the great) is the creator of the Universe. His Maya (illusion) is the physics of this universe. If you are not deluded by Brahma Maya, you can attain Brahma Padam or the state of Brahma. Vishnu Maya is greater than Brahma Maya. Krishna is an Avatar (or descent) of Vishnu and capable of Vishnu Maya. Therefore, the miracles of Krishna.

Chapter 3 — Karma Yoga (Union through Action)

Arjuna asked Krishna why he must perform the terrible action of killing people if intellect is superior to action. Then Krishna explained Karma Yoga, the way by which one can act and yet become a Yogi. Sankhya Yoga, the way of knowledge, is for the intellectuals, and Karma Yoga, the way of action, is for the Yogis.

Action is inevitable.

No one is inactive even for a minute. Nature makes everyone act. Renunciation does not make one successful. Inactivity does not make a person still. A hypocrite (Mithyachara : follower of illusion) externally renounces activity and internally meditates on sense-objects. A person who regulates his senses and is mentally in Karma Yoga excels.

Do your prescribed duties, Karma is superior to Akarma (meaning not Karma; inaction). Through Akarma even the maintenance of your body is impossible.

Do your actions for Yajnya.

(Yajnya is often translated as sacrifice, but the word Yaj means to worship. Material and immaterial offerings for the Devas were a part of the prescribed Vedic practice. That is how the word Yajnya came to be frequently translated as sacrifice in English. I will use the word 'worship' in my translation. – Satya)

Devas are functionaries of nature like Wind, Sun and others. They have definite duties and definite powers. Yagnyas make them function properly. Generally, offerings made to the Devas, through the sacred sacrificial fires are borne by the Fire to the others.

(The Devas are a part of the manifest universe. In many legends, they assume human form, communicate with humans and grant desires. Generally, they are worshipped as they are seen: e.g., sun, clouds, snakes, rain, trees etc. – Satya)

The Devas (gods) are beings that exist by the offerings made to them and they in turn look after the people who make the offerings. It is sinful to cook for yourself and to eat without offering to the gods. Rains are from yajnya, food is from rain and beings are from food. To live neglecting the natural cycle is to live in vain.

Since this world is bound by all Karma that is not done for Yajnya, you should do all your actions for Yajnya. The all-pervading Brahma, who is born of Akshara (the indestructible), exists in yajnya. Karma originates in Brahma.

A person who delights only in his self has no duties to perform. As he has nothing to gain by action or inaction, he does not have to approach or depend on anyone for attaining his purpose. Perform disinterested action — this will lead to the highest. This is how Janaka and others attained perfection.

(King Janaka, Sita's father was a Raja Yogi. He performed all the kingly duties and lived in kingly comfort, with his mind absorbed in Reality and detached from material things. – Satya)

Work to set the right example.

People follow great men and accept their standards. The effect you have on others is a reason for you to act. Though I have no duty and there is nothing yet for me to attain, I am still engaged in action. If I were not vigilantly active, people would follow my example. If I cease to work the worlds would be destroyed.

The ignorant perform action with attachment. The wise should perform action in a detached way for the world order. The wise should not unsettle the faith of the ignorant.

Work is done by the Gunas (qualities of nature).

A fool deluded by ego considers himself the actor. It is really nature that acts. Knowing this, a wise person becomes detached.

Lose your fever and fight, without hope or ownership, with your consciousness resting on your self, having renounced all your actions in me. Those who always practice this conscientiously are freed from Karma. Even a wise man follows his nature as all beings do. Where is the point of restraint from action? Do not come under the sway of attachment and aversion to sense objects, they are impediments in your way.

Do your own dharma.

It is better to do your own duty, however badly, than another's duty, however perfectly. Death in one's own dharma is better than another's dharma.

(Dharma means a lot more to a Hindu than merely duty. It also means what is right. It has shades of religion, code of conduct, ethics, and justice. There are many legends of people who followed their own dharma or duty so steadfastly that even God waited on them. – Satya)

What prompts a man to sin.

Arjuna asked Krishna what drives a man to sin.

Krishna said that desire and anger born out of the Rajas guna cause a man to sin.

(There are three gunas or qualities of nature: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva is a pure state associated with goodness, truth, purity, and Reality. Rajas is an active state associated with passion, desire, energy, and ego. Tamas is a dark state associated with inactivity, laziness, and ignorance. – Satya)

Like smoke covers a fire, Rajas in the form of desire covers knowledge of the self. It is an enemy of the wise. It preoccupies the senses, the mind, and the intellect and deludes the human being. So control your senses and destroy this enemy, which destroys realization and knowledge.

The senses are superior to matter and the mind to the senses; the intellect to the mind and the He (the self) is superior to the mind. Knowing that self that is superior to the intellect, control yourself by your self and destroy desire which will lead you to sin.

Thus ends the third chapter of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

Chapter 4: Gnyana Karma Sanyasa Yoga (Union through Knowledge, Action & Renunciation)

Krishna told Arjuna that he taught this Yoga to Vivaswat, which is the name of our present Sun.

(The Hindu calendar spreads eternally across billions of years. I will explain this later, perhaps in the second part of this course. There were many Suns before ours. – Satya)

Krishna taught Vivaswat, Vivaswat taught Manu, and Manu taught Ikshvaku who was Rama's ancestor.

(Manava, the word for "man" in Sanskrit is derived from Manu. – Satya)

This surprised Arjuna. He said that all those people pre-dated Krishna and Arjuna and he asked Krishna how this was possible. Krishna then said that both of them had been through innumerable births and that while he, Krishna remembered, Arjuna had forgotten.

(In Hindu philosophy, the soul or self casts off bodies between births but carries with it the consequences of its actions in prior lives. These consequences are its karma. Only highly evolved souls can remember their past births and the past lives of others. – Satya)

Krishna descends to preserve Dharma.

Avatar means descent. It is frequently translated as incarnation.

What follows are oft quoted verses of the Gita.

"Though I am birthless, changeless and the lord of all beings, I enter nature and come into being through my own Maya (illusory power). Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and a rise in unrighteousness, then, O Bharata, I create myself. To save the good and to destroy the wrong- doers and to establish Dharma I come into being again and again."

Krishna's Dharma is to preserve the right social and universal order. Your Dharma might be to raise a child, to paint, to fight for your country, or serve humanity. This is another interesting theme in the Gita. Krishna teaches

us how to act in such a way that no Karma will stick to us and we can escape the cycle of birth and death. And yet he descends again and again to re-establish Dharma. Vivekananda said that he would take a million births if he could serve his motherland. To be "with" Krishna people want to escape the net of worldly ties, to be "like" Krishna, would be to be born as often as necessary for Dharma.

The way to attain Krishna.

"Whoever knows my divine birth and action, that knower is not reborn after he leaves this body, he attains me. Many who are have crossed attachment, fear and anger who have approached me, with me in mind, who are purified by the penance of knowledge, have reached my state of being. In whatever way people worship me, I accept them in that way, for all ways they follow are mine."

(I think it is this statement that allows Hindus total religious and spiritual freedom evidenced by the incredible diversity seen in India. Krishna will accept your faith, your way of reaching him, whatever that may be. It is faith that matters and faith that works. – Satya)

Two choices: fruit of action, freedom from Karma.

People who want the fruit of their action worship the Devathas (functionaries of nature). In this world of men the fruit of action comes quickly. For freedom from Karma, your actions must be free from desire and attachment, contented with what chance brings, free from jealousy, unperturbed in success and failure and do your work as a yagnya with your mind established in knowledge.

See God in everything.

"The ladle is Brahman (The Great), the oblation is Brahman, it is offered by Brahman in the fire which is Brahman. Brahman alone he attains who sees Brahman in action."

Different seekers offer various things to God: material objects, renunciation of pleasures, breath control, austere vows and study of scriptures. They are purified by such Yagnyas. Not even this world is attainable by those who do not do yagnyas., let alone the next.

All the yagnyas prescribed in Vedas are born of action. Knowing that will set you free. All action is bounded by knowledge. The yagnya of knowledge is superior to the yagnya of materials. Acquire that knowledge from the wise through respectful service and enquiry. Then you will be no more deluded. You will see all creatures in yourself and then in Krishna.

Knowledge is purifying.

There is nothing purer than knowledge (gnyanam means "knowing") in this world. It will burn your papam (sin) and your karma.

Sraddha is a word that encompasses many things. Faith, care, great and complete attention to whatever you are doing. Almost absorption. Sraddha leads to gnyana; gnyana leads to Santhi (peace). Ignorance (Agnya) and doubt destroy peace.

Therefore destroy the doubt in your heart that is born of ignorance of the self, with the sword of knowledge, take to Yoga and rise! Oh Bharata!

(Bharata is the name of Arjuna, all Indians and India. India is a name given to our land by foreigners. - Satya)

Chapter 5 — Sannyasa Yoga

Sannyasa is frequently translated as renunciation. But to me it means *Sat + Nyasa*. Keeping in the *Sat* (Reality or Good). It brings to mind the American colloquialism "keeping it real." The only point here would be, which is real? The transient sensations that your senses perceive, or the absolute unchanging reality that is called *Tat*. (*Tat* literally means "that"). To stay in that Reality which is beyond your sense requires you to forsake many of the pleasures that your senses bring to you. Perhaps that is why *Sannyasa* is translated as renunciation.

Arjuna was still confused about whether it was better to renounce action or to act. Then Krishna explained that the performance of selfless action (Karma Yoga) was superior to renunciation of action. (Karma *Sannyasa*). The important thing is to be free from the duality of desire and aversion.

Only the ignorant think that the way of the Sankhyas and the way of the Yogis are different. Practicing even one thoroughly you can attain the fruits of both. They are in essence the same.

Sannyasa is difficult for non-Yogis to attain. Yogis can attain Brahman very quickly. A pure souled Yogi, who has won over himself, whose self has become the Self of all is untouched even though he is doing something. The knowers of Truth, know that they are not doing anything even as they sleep, think, see or hear. They know that senses stay in the sense objects.

A sense object is an interesting concept. It is a sensation or a perception that exists when your senses interact with your environment. Your sensations, perceptions, and interpretations are bound or limited by your sensory

organs, your intellect, and your previous learning. Physical objects which you sense are not even an accurate representation of the material, changing world around you — let alone of the Unchanging, Absolute reality that they cannot even attempt to perceive. — *Satya*

Dedicate your actions to the Brahman.

Then you will be untouched by Karma. Then your actions will serve to purify your mind. You will attain the highest peace and stay free.

It is Nature That Acts.

The Creator has neither created for us doership nor union with the fruits of our action.

The Ruler neither accepts the sin nor virtue of anyone.

Beings are deluded because their knowledge is covered by ignorance. If you destroy your ignorance with knowledge, then your knowledge will shine like the sun.

This is also an interesting idea. It is that all beings have *Gnyana* or knowledge within them. This knowledge is covered by ignorance as smoke might cover up a fire. Knowledge is and has always been in you. — *Satya*

Total Absorption in That will purify you and prevent a non return to this world.

Look equally upon all beings. Then you will have conquered the here and hereafter. Stay absorbed in the Brahman and remain unswayed by dualities like pleasure and pain. Detachment from sense-objects will lead to bliss in yourself. Pleasures born of sense-objects lead to misery... they always end. But if you can withstand the urges of desire and anger before you leave your body, you will be happy. He whose happiness is within, whose rejoicing is within, whose light is within, that Yogi, established in Brahman, merges with Brahman.

Another interesting idea: to merge with the Great, you have to go into yourself — *Satya*

Meditate Thus.

Shut out the sense-objects, concentrate on the point between your eyebrows and then regulate your breathing. Restrain your mind and be free from anger, desire, fear. Set *Moksha* (freedom or liberation) as your highest goal. Then you will be forever free.

Know Me (Krishna), the enjoyer of all sacrifices and ascetism, the great Lord of all the worlds, the well-wisher of all beings and attain peace.

Chapter 6 — Dhyana Yoga

Dhyana means contemplation.

Krishna said that one who works without desiring the fruit of his action is both a Sannyasi and a Yogi. Not someone who does nothing at all. To become a Yogi, one needs to act. After one has attained Yoga (union) with "That," then one practices *S'ama* (restraint, peace, inaction).

This is another important idea and often repeated in the Bhagavad Gita. You must act. There is no place at all for laziness or irresponsibility or for shirking your duty. You must do it. Whatever your duty is. Once you do your duty, remembering that *you* are not the doer, and you do not hanker after the results, you are purified. (Playing the game is important — not winning or losing.) Once you remember that it is the Lord who causes everything to happen and once you identify with or unite with God, then you are in Yoga. You are barely aware of what you are doing. You are skilled in your work, at peace and at ease. Now it makes no difference whether you actively do things or not.

S'iva is often called *S'ankara* — the one who causes *S'ama* or peace. *S'iva* sits out the entire creation and sustenance in meditation and does "nothing" for the most part. Yet he gets into the fray, when called upon, and finally at the end, he is responsible for the dissolution. *S'iva* is the ultimate Yogi and the ultimate Sannyasi. He keeps nothing and is everything. — *Satya*

The Self can be your friend or enemy.

Only the Self can be a friend or an enemy. You must raise yourself through your Self. The Self is the friend of the self-controlled and adversary of the unregulated. The self-regulated one is serene, whether insulted or honored. To him a clod of earth has the same value as a lump of gold. He treats saints and sinners alike. He is satisfied by knowledge. He is a Yogi.

How the Yogi should meditate.

A yogi should become a recluse, control his mind and body, and should prepare to meditate in solitude. He should sit on a firm seat of cloth, skin, and *Kus'a* grass of moderate height, in a clean place and practice Yoga for self-purification. Holding his body, head and neck straight, not moving, looking steadily only at the tip of the nose, tranquil, fearless and content, he should sit completely absorbed on Krishna and on attaining Krishna. Such a Yogi will attain the ultimate peace that is in Krishna.

Yoga requires moderation.

Neither too much sleep and food, nor too little of it: and moderation in all actions. Total absorption in the Self – no desire for anything other than the Truth or Reality. Indifference to pain. Total Conviction and No depression. One should withdraw by degrees. To such a Yogi whose Rajas (passion for action) has subsided, comes the supreme bliss of Brahman. Such a person sees the Brahman everywhere, the Self in all beings, and all beings in the Self. He who sees Krishna everywhere and all things in Krishna does not lose sight of Krishna, nor Krishna of him. That person who worships Krishna residing in all beings the same, becomes a Yogi, and whatever he does he lives in Krishna.

Arjuna then asked Krishna a question: *Since the mind is essentially restless, how can it attain this equanimity? What happens to a person who has faith, but has a wandering mind?*

Krishna then explained that practice can bring a restless mind under control. But should someone with faith be unable to concentrate, he will still never come to harm. Such a person will attain the worlds of the righteous and after spending many years there, he will be born again in the house of the pure and righteous, or into a family of Yogis. Such a birth is indeed rare. There he comes in contact with knowledge acquired in a previous birth and tries harder than before. Even a person who is merely interested in Yoga transcends the Vedas. Some Yogis attain the Supreme Goal over several births.

The Yogi is greater than ascetics, sages, and men of action. Therefore be a Yogi. And of all Yogis, those who are absorbed in Krishna are the highest.

Chapter 7 — Gnyana Vignyana Yoga

Gnya means to know. *Gnyana* means that which is known or knowledge. *Vignyana* is distinct or specialized knowledge. In modern Sanskrit and Indian languages, Vignyana is used to refer to scientific knowledge. *Siddhi* means achievement. *Sadhana* is practice, the way to attainment. In this context, all practice, achievement, knowledge, and specialized knowledge relate to spirituality. – *Satya*

Krishna said that of a thousand but one works to attain Siddhis. Even of those who try and know the nature of "That," only a few know Krishna.

(In common parlance in our present day, *Siddhis* refer to special powers, such as reading minds, walking on water, telepathy etc. I don't think that was what Krishna was talking about. – *Satya*)

The word *Prakruthi* is frequently translated as Nature. The verb root *Kru* means "to do." It is the root from which the word *Karma* derives. *Kruthi* means that which is done. *Samskruthi* is that which is done well; it also means culture and, interestingly, is the name of the language we presently know as Sanskrit. The prefix *Pra* means towards. *Prabhat* is towards light or morning. To me, *Prakruthi* sounds like "towards action" or "towards work or creation." It is Nature that acts. - *Satya*

Krishna said that Prakruthi is divided into eight categories: Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Sky, Mind, Intellect, and *Ahankara*.

Ahankara literally is the feeling that I (aham) am the doer (kara). It is translated into English as ego or pride; but in my view, those are inexact translations. – *Satya*

Krishna said that was the lower Prakuthi. He asked Arjuna to know His ultimate nature – the living beings that carry the world. All beings originate from these two, but Krishna is the creator of the world and also its destroyer.

There is another interesting word here and that is *Pralaya*, often translated as destruction. Interestingly, *Laya* is beat or rhythm in music. The *layavastha* or state of *laya* is one of absorption whether in music, dance, or spirituality. *Pralaya* is towards that absorption, complete mergence, or unity. Again, in the beginning of the universe was only energy that slowly turned to matter. And at the end of the Universe, that matter will slowly turn back into energy. This is what physics teaches us. Krishna causes the transition both ways. This is an important point to remember. Later on, we'll tie it together with other clues that Krishna gives us about himself. – *Satya*

Krishna said that there is nothing higher than himself. He is the essence of everything. The Om of the Vedas, the manliness in men, the scent of the earth, the brightness in fire, the luster of the sun, the austerity of ascetics, the intellect of the intellectuals, the brilliance of the brilliant, and the life of the living. He is that desire of all beings which is not opposed to Dharma.

Know that the states of the Gunas — Sat, Rajas, and Tamas — are in Krishna, but he is not in them. The world is fascinated by the Gunas and does not know Krishna. His divine illusion is hard to overcome; only those who approach him can cross this illusion. Fools and wretches do not turn to Krishna, they are overcome by *Maya* (illusion) and follow the *Asura Bhava*. (non-divine ideology).

Four kinds of people worship Krishna: the troubled, the curious (*Jignyasu*), the desirous (*Kami*), and the knowers (*Gnyani*). Of these, Krishna loves best the knower who is continually engaged in devotion to Krishna and who loves Krishna best.

At the end of several births, the man of knowledge comes to Krishna, knowing that *Vasudeva* (the son of the lord of Vasus - Krishna) is everything. Such a great soul is very hard to find.

Those whose knowledge is destroyed by desire approach other deities observing applicable rites. Krishna strengthens the faith of the devotees towards the form of their choice. And he grants their wishes through that faith alone. But in the end, the devotees of other deities go to them and, the devotees of Krishna go to Krishna. Krishna knows the past, present and future of all beings, but they know him not.

Those know Krishna who can see beyond duality and desire the immutable reality, take refuge in him, and attain him.

Chapter 8 — Akshara Brahma Yoga

Akshara is that which cannot be broken. One of the meanings of Akshara is a letter of the alphabet. In this context it is frequently translated as the syllable *Om* or *Aum*. *Brahma* is that which is great.

Arjuna asked Krishna a lot of "what is" questions. What is Brahma, what is Adhyatma, Adhibhuta, Adhiyagnya, and who is Adhidaiva? How is Krishna known at the time of death by the self-restrained?

Bhagvan answered: *Bhaaga* means part. *Bhagya* is luck and *Sowbhagya* is good luck. *Bhagyavan* is one who is lucky: who has a part. *Bhagvan* is the one who deals out the parts. *Bhagvan* is God, the giver. It is also a term used out of respect for the elderly and learned.

Krishna said that *Akhara*, the indestructible, is the ultimate Brahman. Its own state is the *Adhyatma* – the first or best soul. The state of *Kshara*, (which can be destroyed) is *Adhibhuta*. The *Purusha* or Divine Being is *Adhidaiva* and Krishna is the *Adhiyagnya*. *Purusha* is commonly used to mean man, and in prayer it is used to mean God. In that context, *Purusha* is The Man. But Krishna is the first or best *Yagnya* or worship that is in all beings, the spirit or essence of all things.

To attain Krishna's state, a person must remember Krishna at the end of his time. A person takes that state or body after leaving this body that he is thinking about when he leaves this one. So make a habit of thinking about Krishna all the time. Practice constantly. At the time of death, meditate on the point in between your eyebrows on the Divine Being to attain him. Control your senses, focus on your heart, hold your breath, repeat the syllable *Om*, which is Brahma, and think of Krishna, to attain the highest goal.

Upon attaining Krishna, one will no longer suffer the miseries of birth. All the worlds, including *Brahmaloka* (the creator's world) are subject to births. Only the state of Krishna is free from rebirth.

Brhama's day lasts for a 1000 yugas. (More about the Hindu calendar later on in this course).

"From the Unmanifest, all manifested beings are born at the advent of Brahma's day, and at the approach of his night, they get merged again in the Unmanifest."

Krishna's supreme state is that unmanifest state or being which is beyond the unmanifest state from which all things come forth and go back into. Devotion is the way.

(Once you reach Krishna's state, you are out of this sandbox which Brahma uses for his creation. – *Satya*)

There are auspicious times and ways for departing this world which are suitable for attaining Krishna. These are Fire, Light, Day, the bright half of the month (*Sukla paksha*) and the six months of Sun's Northern Course (*Uttarayana*), running approximately from January 14 to June 14. Many Hindus of earlier generations would fervently fast and hope to "travel" or pass on those special days. Smoke, darkness, night, the dark half of the month (*Krishna Paksha*), and the Sun's southern course (*Dakshinayana*) take you to moon and bring you back to this world in another birth.

Yogis, who are undeluded, know the two paths and choose the bright path on to Krishna and give up the dark path to return, transcending all the "good" and virtuous in this world.

There are many Hindu traditions which train you from birth in the values and habits that lead to state of Krishna.

Welcome to the second half of this two-part course on the sacred Hindu scripture known as the *Bhagavad Gita*. Here we will pick up the course where we left off in Part 1. This first lesson will discuss Chapters 9 and 10 of the *Bhagavad Gita*. But first, let's briefly review what we've learned up to this point:

Recap:

Who or what is Krishna?

There is nothing higher than Krishna. He is the essence of everything. The Om of the Vedas, the manliness in men, the scent of the earth, the brightness in fire, the luster of the sun, the austerity of ascetics, the intellect of the intellectuals, the brilliance of the brilliant, and the life of the living. He is that desire of all beings which is not opposed to Dharma.

"From the Unmanifest, all manifested beings are born at the advent of Brahma's day, and at the approach of his night, they get merged again in the Unmanifest." Krishna's supreme state is that unmanifest state or being which

is beyond the unmanifest state from which all things come forth and go back into. Devotion is the way to Krishna. Krishna is the *Adhiyagnya*, the first or best *Yagnya* or worship that is in all beings, the spirit or essence of all things.

What does Krishna do?

Krishna strengthens the faith of devotees towards the form of their choice; and he grants their wishes through that faith alone. Krishna does not recognize the vice and virtue of individuals. "In whatever way people worship me, I accept them in that way, for all ways they follow are mine." Krishna descends to preserve Dharma.

What is real?

Your indestructible Self is Real. What a normal person perceives as reality is merely the consequence of their senses interacting with nature. These perceptions are illusory as well as transient. The wise do not set too much store by them.

What should you do?

Your duty.

You should do your Dharma with detachment, knowing that the real doer is Krishna and that Krishna owns the consequences and results of all actions. Work to set the right example. It is better to do your own duty, however badly, than another's duty, however perfectly. See God in everything. Only the Self can be a friend or an enemy. You must raise yourself through your Self. Yoga requires moderation.

Dharma is an important and interesting word. *Dhru* means to bear, *Dhara* or *Dharthi* refer to the earth which bears us all. That which is to be borne, or carried is your Dharma, that which is to be done is Karma. Inaction is *Akarma*, wrong action is *Adharma*. For example, charity or sharing is Dharma, stealing is Adharma. Truthfulness is Dharma, lying is Adharma.

How do you know that you are progressing?

You know that you are progressing, when you are above the dualities such as pleasure and pain, liking and aversion.

No one is inactive even for a minute. Nature makes everyone act. Work is done by the *Gunas* (qualities of nature). There are three gunas: *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Sattva* is a pure state associated with goodness, truth, purity, and Reality. *Rajas* is an active state associated with passion, desire, energy, and ego. *Tamas* is a dark state associated with inactivity, laziness, and ignorance.

Chapter 9: RajaVidya RajaGuhya Yoga

Raja means king. *Vidya* is knowledge, and *Guhya* means secret. So this Yoga talks about Royal Knowledge and Royal Secret.

This chapter does not discuss Sannyasa, Sankhya, Karma or Dhyana Yogas. It talks about Krishna and about devotion to Krishna. Attaining union with God through devotion to God is called *Bhakthi Yoga*.

Those whose supreme goal is Krishna, attain him through devotion and absorption. Their caste, gender, or virtues are of no consequence. Even a wicked person devoted to Krishna will soon become virtuous and attain eternal peace. There is no one that is hateful to Krishna. Krishna is in his devotees as they are in him.

Krishna says in one verse that everything is in him, but he is not in everything. In another verse, he says that he is in his devotees. Krishna looks after the Yoga and *Kshema* (Well Being) of devotees who worship him with austerity, praise and humility, either as a single form or a multiple form.

Krishna will keep sending disbelievers back into this world. The followers of the Vedas pray Krishna for heaven and attain it for a duration that depends on their virtue. Then they must return to the earth again.

< xml="true" ns="urn:schemas-microsoft-com:vml" prefix="v" namespace="">It is important to note that there is no talk of Hell in the *Gita*. Disbelievers belong to this world and come back to it. Devotees, seekers and knowers attain Krishna and are not sent back to this world.

Krishna will accept anything offered to him with devotion, whether a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water. Whatever we do, eat, give, perform, or sacrifice, we should offer unto Krishna. Then we will be free from vice and virtue, and through Sannyasa Yoga, we will attain Krishna.

Everyone attains what they are devoted to. Those devoted to the Devas attain the Devas and those devoted to Krishna, attain Krishna. Worshippers of all gods are worshippers of Krishna alone. All prayers go to Krishna. (A famous verse [not from the *Gita*] says that as rain water flows to the ocean, salutations to all Gods go toward Krishna.)

Krishna is everything and controls everything. He is immortality and he is death. He is the manifest and the

unmanifest. He is the Yajnya, the fire, the offering. The goal, the witness, the support, the friend, the father, the mother, the Om, the Vedas.

Know Krishna as the Creator, the creation and the destroyer and have Him as your supreme goal. Fix your mind on him and worship him and then you will attain Him.

Chapter 10: Vibhuti Yoga (Grand or Divine or Special Yoga)

Bhu means "to be." *Bhoomi* is the earth, *Bhuta* means being. *Vibhuti* would be a Special or Great Being. Vibhuti is penetrating, pervading, powerful, plentiful or prosperity.

In this chapter, Krishna tells us about himself so that we may understand him. He is the spirit of all things. He is the silence of secrets and the knowledge of the wise. Krishna is the prowess of the powerful. He is effort. He is victory.

Whatever is glorious is born of Krishna's splendor. Among the seasons, he is spring; among the metres he is Gayathri. He is the foremost among all classes of things.

Krishna is death, he is life, and he is prosperity. In women, he is fame, prosperity, speech, memory, fortitude, intelligence, and forgiveness. Of the Vedas, he is Sama; of the Rudras he is Sankara; of the Adityas he is Vishnu. Krishna is the Self that resides in all creatures. He is the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings. He is Time.

What is Krishna not? Krishna is everything. Everything comes from Krishna. Krishna is all encompassing.

Meditating on his divine glory is one way of attaining Krishna. Krishna's devotees love chanting his name, telling his stories and just talking about him with each other. Out of love for them, Krishna enlightens them and they attain his state.

This is a very joyous chapter to read and I hope you will read the whole of this chapter

Chapter 11: Viswarupa Darsana Yoga

Viswarupa Darsana Yoga is the Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form.

Arjuna thanked Krishna for all that He had taught him and then said, "Oh Lord of Yogis, if you think it possible, please show me your unchanging or eternal form."

Krishna's universal form cannot be seen by ordinary eyes. So Krishna gave Arjuna divine vision. Arjuna was blessed and overwhelmed by the vision of Krishna's divine form. Then he asked Krishna to take away the divine vision so that he could see the delightful and enchanting human form of Krishna.

What follows is a description of Krishna's universal form, which cannot be seen by Vedas, by penance, by charity, or by worship. It can only be seen, known and entered only by devotion to Krishna. Only a person (or being) who works for Krishna, is detached, has no enmity with any creature, and has Krishna for the supreme goal can attain to Krishna.

What is Krishna's universal form like?

It has hundreds and thousands of colors and shapes. All the divine beings can be seen in it. The entire universe can be seen in it. Whatever you like to see can be seen in it.

It has many mouths and eyes and wondrous sights; many divine ornaments and weapons. It has many divine garlands and clothes, and divine perfumes. It is infinite and has faces on every side. It has the brilliance of a thousand suns. All the heavenly sages and the Creator – Brahma can be seen in it. It has many hands, teeth, tusks and bellies. Its beginning, middle and end cannot be seen. Arjuna could see a crown, a mace and a disc, a mass of brilliant, blinding light.

Krishna is the imperishable, the supreme, the unchanging, that which should be known, the final resting place of the universe, the preserver of the eternal Dharma, the primeval being.

The space between the earth and the heavens and all the quarters are pervaded by Krishna. This wonderful, terrible form of Krishna is frightening.

Arjuna saw hosts of divine beings enter Krishna worshipping him, some out of fear. And other perfect souls and sages sing his praise in peace. Arjuna felt awe-struck and afraid. He saw all his kinsmen and warriors of both sides rush into Krishna's many mouths and getting destroyed, even as the world filled with radiance.

Then Arjuna asked Krishna who he, of this ferocious form, really was because he wished to comprehend him.

Krishna said:

"I am Time, the destroyer of people. All these warriors will be destroyed, even without you, by me. Oh Arjuna, by me alone all these people have already been killed, you are but an instrument."

He urged Arjuna, to rise and fight and destroy the enemy side, for his victory was already assured.

Then Arjuna praised Krishna again as the infinite being, greater than all, imperishable, the manifest, the unmanifest and beyond the manifest and unmanifest, the primeval God, the repository of the universe, the knower, the knowable, the highest abode, all the Gods, the Creator and the great grand-sire. He saluted Him as that which pervades everything and is everything.

He begged forgiveness for anything he might have said or done out of ignorance or affection while treating Krishna as his friend and praised him again as the world's father and teacher and the greatest. Then he begged Krishna to return to his charming form because he found the Universal form very agitating.

And Krishna showed himself to Arjuna again as his friend and cousin and charioteer, the delightful form, that millions of people love and adore.

Namo Krishna, namo Krishna, Namo Krishna, Namo Namah.

Chapter 12: Bhakthi Yoga

Bhakthi Yoga is the Yoga of Devotion.

Krishna first taught Arjuna many ways to attain Him.

Sankhya Yoga teaches that there is an indestructible, Universal Soul. Krishna asked Arjuna to do his duty, renounce the fruit of his actions, realize the impermanence of sense-objects, and give up ego and attachment. Sankhya Yoga is the way of the wise, who can reason the Truth and think their way to detachment, simplicity, and lack of ego.

My personal analogy is this: a wave that identifies with the ocean is eternal. A person who identifies with the universe is eternal. It is not I versus the Universe or I and the Universe – it is "I am the Universe."

Karma Yoga teaches that inactivity is impossible, outward renunciation is hypocrisy, that you should delight in your Self and then do your duty and set the right example. It asks the practitioner of Karma Yoga to give up ego by understanding that Krishna is the real doer, and to give up attachment by renouncing the results or fruits of one's actions.

I summarize this to myself as, Do your best and leave the rest to God. Know that God is the doer. Also, don't do someone else's duty.

Gnyana Karma Sanyasa Yoga reinforces some of these earlier concepts and teaches that knowledge of the Truth will purify you and burn away your Karma. Knowledge dispels doubt and increases resolution and leads you to peace and to Yoga.

Sannyasa Yoga reiterates that the thing to be renounced is attachment and ego and the fruit of one's actions, not actions themselves. The knowledgeable know that even though they are engaged in various activities, they are not doing anything. It urges us to treat all beings equally.

Dhyana Yoga teaches that a person who has attained this sublime level of balance and moderation should then meditate on the divine, and it explains how to do this.

So I think that knowledge of the Truth as it is revealed in the *Gita* will lead us to detached egoless duty, which will help us attain balance, self-regulation, and moderation. As we become detached from the mundane world as perceived by our senses, the way we interpret our perceptions and our experiences begins to change. The social order does not suffer because we are still working and doing our duty — but we are now turning towards the divine. In an instant, we have become ready to contemplate on the divine without distraction.

Gnyana Vignyana Yoga teaches us that the Krishna is the essence of everything; that the Gunas are in Him, but He is not in them. It teaches us that the highest reason to seek Krishna is not for gratification or success or for curiosity but out of wisdom. Such people remember Krishna even at the time of death.

Akshara Brahma Yoga teaches us that there is no rebirth for one who attains Krishna, the perfect state; that Krishna is beyond the manifest and the unmanifest (the matter energy sandbox subject to Brahma's Maya [physics] of the creation dissolution cycle.) It teaches that you become that which your mind is absorbed in at the time of death and how and when to die so as to attain Krishna's abode.

In the *Mahabharata*, there is great hero called Bhishma, whose father gave him the advantage of dying at any time of his choice. Bhishma chose to leave his earthly body at such a special time. Interestingly, Bhishma explained the Sankhya Yoga to victorious king Dharmaraja, at the end of the Mahabharata war, as he lay waiting for the auspicious moment to pass on.

Raja Vidya, Raja Guhya Yoga teaches that Krishna is everything and that devotion to Him, and taking refuge in him will take you to the supreme goal, Krishna.

Vibhuti Yoga teaches that Krishna takes care of the welfare and Yoga of his devotees and that everything is in Krishna, he is not in anything, and that He is in his devotees. It teaches that Krishna is the foremost of every class of being and object and that everything excellent or glorious is born of a part of his splendor. It teaches that He is the spirit of everything and that He pervades this universe by an *Amsha* (part) of Himself.

Viswarupa Darsana Yoga describes the terrifying Universal form of Krishna where he reveals himself as Time, the real destroyer of everything and in whom all beings and events can be seen. This form can be seen only by the those totally devoted to Krishna, who have no hatred for any creature, and who have Krishna as the divine goal.

Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Gita teaches Bhakthi Yoga or the way of Devotion.

Arjuna wanted to know who is better: those who worship Krishna in his lovable, manifest form, or those who worship the Unmanifest, imperishable, all-pervading, eternal, indescribable, and Unknowable, devoted to the good of all beings.

Krishna said that both ways work, but devotion towards the Unmanifest is far more difficult for souls embodied in human form.

Krishna redeems those people from this transmigratory experience, who renounce all their actions to Krishna, are attached to Him, and worship through unswerving devotion through Meditation.

For those whose minds waver, practicing Yoga is the way to seek Krishna. If that is too hard do, Karma (action or

rites) for Krishna can be performed. If that is too hard, then take refuge in Krishna, be self-controlled, and renounce the fruit of all action.

Knowledge is superior to rituals, meditation to knowledge and renunciation of the fruit of knowledge is the highest of all, because it leads to peace immediately.

Who is dear to Krishna?

Those who follow this Dharma with faith and with Krishna as their supreme goal are extremely dear to Krishna.

Those who are non-jealous, friendly and compassionate to all beings, not possessive, not agitated by pain and pleasure, content, forgiving, clean, dextrous, unafraid, who troubles the world not, who is untroubled by the world, who is of firm conviction and dedication, who gives up endeavors and neither rejoices, grieves, desires, or dislikes and treats alike friend and foe, honor and dishonor, happiness and sadness, praise and rebuke, he who has no home, is silent and steady in mind, such a person is dear to Krishna.

Chapter 13: Kshetra Kshetragnya Vibhaga Yoga

Kshetra Kshetragnya Vibhaga Yoga is the yoga of differentiating the field from the knower of the field.

If you recall the chapter-by-chapter list of benefits one may derive from reading the Gita given in Lesson One, reading this thirteenth chapter leads to self-realization.

Krishna said,

Oh Arjuna, this body is called the field (Kshetra) and that which is conscious of it is called the knower of the field (Kshetragnya). The Kshetragnya in all bodies is myself. The knowledge of the kshetra and kshetragnya is true knowledge."

Those beings go to the Supreme, who use their *gnyana nethram* (eye of knowledge), to see the difference between the *kshetra* and *kshetragnya*.

If you are familiar with the story of Siva (the good), you will have heard that he has a third eye in the middle of his forehead. He used this third eye to destroy Manmatha (Cupid). He is called Trilochana and this third eye is called *gnyana nethram*. That is the spot that Hindu men and women mark with the *tilakam* — the red dot that all Hindu women and many Brahmin men wear even to the present day). Sages used their *gnyana nethram* to divine the past and the future, if it was necessary to do so. Read the story of the wedding of Siva and Parvathi. It is really nice.

The *Kshetri* (the one who lives in the *Kshetra*) illumines the body as the sun illumines the sky. The *Atma* (the Self) is not contaminated by the body it lives in. The *Atma* is eternal; it is without action and attachment. To attain the Brahman (the great), you have to see all beings as residing in one and everything as spread out from that. It is *Prakruthi* (nature) that acts. One who sees that Nature acts and that the Self does not act is one who sees Reality. He who sees as equal all beings in whom the Lord resides does not inflict injury on the Self and attains the supreme.

Everything that comes into existence is the result of mixing the *kshetra* and the *kshetragnya*.

The five great elements are: *Ahamkara* (Ego : Doership), *Buddhi* (Intellect), *Avyaktham* (unmanifest), the ten senses and one (mind), and the things which the five senses perceive (*indriya gochara*) — desire, aversion, happiness, sorrow, the body, intelligence, and patience. All these describe the *Kshetra* and its attributes.

Gnyana is humility, unostentatiousness, harmlessness, forbearance, uprightness, service to Guru, purity, self-control, steadiness, detachment, lack of *ahamkara*, devotion to Krishna, solitude, devotion to knowledge, and perception of the aim of the knowledge of truth.

Some use meditation to perceive the Self as viewed by one's own self. Some use Sankhya Yoga to do this, others use Karma Yoga. Still others who do not know these ways listen to the *Sruthis* and use this to cross death. *Sru* means "to hear", *Sruthi* means that which is to be heard. *Smru* is "to remember", *Smruthi* is that which is to be remembered. *Smruthis* and *Shruthis* refer to scriptures such as the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* which are to be heard and remembered. Even those who cannot practice gain by devoted hearing.

The Brahman (the Great).

Knowing the supreme Brahman, one attains immortality. It is beginningless, and it is neither *Sat* (existing) nor *Asat* (not existing). It has its hands, feet, eyes, ears, faces, everywhere; it pervades everything in this world. It has no sense organs yet is in the qualities of all sense-organs, it has no *gunas* (qualities, attributes), yet enjoys all the *gunas*. It is detached, yet protects everything.

The Brahman is outside and inside all beings. It is still and moving; it is far and near. It is *sookshma* (small, subtle) and therefore difficult to know.

It looks as though it is differentiated into beings, and yet it is undivided, undifferentiated. It is that which is Knowable; it is the creator and the destroyer. It is in the heart of all beings, it is knowledge (*gnyanam*), it is knowable (*gnyeyam*), and the destination of knowledge (*gnayanagamyam*). It is beyond darkness, and it is the light for all lights.

Knowing the Brahman, my devotees, attain my Bhaavam.

Bhava is "to be." *Bhaavam* is a thought process, a feeling, a perception. So when a devotee of Krishna knows Brahman, as explained above, I think he thinks as Krishna does.

Prakruthi and *Purusha*. (Nature and Man, Self, or Cosmic Being)

Prakruthi is nature. *Purusha* can mean man; *Paurava* means citizen, *Purohit* means priest or someone who is good for man. *Parama purusha* means supreme man. *Purushottama* means the best among men (Krishna).

Purusha also means the Cosmic Being. It also means the Self that resides on us. So it is the context that helps us understand what is being talked about.

Prakruthi and *Purusha* are beginningless. All the diversity and the *gunas* (*Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*) are born of *Prakruthi*.

Prakruthi is the cause of *Karya* (work), *Karana* (reason or purpose), and *Karthruthva* (Doership). It is the cause of the experience of happiness and misery.

The *Purusha* resides in *Prakruthi*, as a result of his birth in the womb of *Sat* and *Asat*, due to its attachment to the *gunas*. Therefore the *Purusha* experiences the *gunas* born of *Prakruthi*.

In this body, the great *Purusha* is also called the onlooker, the permitter, the *Bhartha* (meaning one who bears or nourishes), the enjoyer, the supreme soul, and *Maheswara* (Great Lord).

One who knows this is never born again.

Chapter 14: Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga

Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga is the yoga of dividing the three *gunas*.

Sages who have this knowledge are not reborn, even at the time of creation, nor are they destroyed at the time of dissolution.

The great universe is the womb in which Krishna places the seed of all creation. The three *gunas* of *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* bind the immutable resident of the body.

Sattva is pure and therefore luminous and free from illusion. It binds us in two ways — through attachment to knowledge and attachment to happiness.

Rajas is passion by nature. It is the source of desire and attachment. It binds the embodied person through attachment to *Karma* (action).

Tamas is born of ignorance. It deludes all the embodied. It binds the embodied one through sleep, laziness, and difficult or dangerous situations.

Any one of these *gunas* can dominate over the other two.

If the light of knowledge radiates from a person, from all his senses, then we know that *Sattva* predominates. Conversely, greed, enterprise, activity, restlessness, and desire indicate the dominance of *Rajas*. Dullness, inactivity, danger and delusion indicate the dominance of *Tamas*.

If a soul meets *Pralaya* (translated here as death or dissolution) at a time when *Sattva* dominates, that soul attains the pure worlds inhabited by the knowers of the highest. If at that time *Rajas* dominates, it is born in the families of those attached to work. If *Tamas* dominates, then it is born in the womb of the foolish.

An interesting thought here . . . if you can categorize your parents and family, then you have a fair idea of which *guna* dominated you when you died last time. There is no reason to blame others for the conditions of your birth. However, many social reformers in India denounce this idea. They think that people will use it as an excuse not to help others or themselves. But that is not the point of the *Gita* at all — it tells us that you must do your duty, be kind to all creatures, and treat them equally. Where *Vivekananda* and *Gandhiji* picked action, service, truth, non-violence and devotion to their country and God, there are those who used the concept of *gunas* and *karma* to absolve themselves of any duty or accountability to their fellow beings and others who denounce the *Gita* and the *Karma Siddhanta* for this.

The result of good action is to said to be *Sattvika* and pure. The result of *Rajasik* action is pain; the result of *Tamasik* action is ignorance. (So if the result of your action gives you pain, that can give you a clue that your action was *Rajasik* born out of attachment to work and results.)

While *Sattva* leads to knowledge, *Rajas* leads to greed and *Tamas* to delusion. The *Satvik* go upwards, the *Rajasik* stay in the middle, and the *Tamasik* go downward.

But when a *Seer* sees that there are no doers other than the *gunas* and knows what is beyond the *Gunas*, then he attains the *Krishna Bhaava*.

One who has transcended the *gunas* which were the reason the *Purusha* took this body in the first place, attains immortality free of birth, death, old age, and misery.

Characteristics of one who has transcended the *Gunas* (*Gunaatheetha*):

One who neither desires nor resents it when light, activity and delusion arise or cease

One who is not disturbed by gunas, knowing that it is only gunas which function, who is steady and unwavering, who is the same in happiness and sorrow, who values a clod of earth and lump of gold equally, who equates praise and blame, who treats friend and foe alike, who does not start up any new endeavors. Such a person is called a *Gunatheetha*.

One who serves Krishna through Bhakthi Yoga, transcends the Gunas and becomes worthy of the state of Brahman, since Krishna is the embodiment of Brahman, of immutable immortality, of Dharma, and of absolute bliss.

Chapter 15: Purushottama Yoga

Purushottama Yoga is the Yoga of Best Among Men.

The first few verses of this chapter talk about an Ashwattha tree. I regret to say that I have not understood this part properly: so I don't want to risk explaining it. Please use the translations provided by others on this point.

There is a strong school of thought which says that there are many interpolations in the version of the Bhagavad Gita as exists today. Several scholars have done a critical analysis and come up with versions in which there is no self-contradiction. I have tried to follow as closely as I can to the text and not edit out anything. Analysis is left to you.

Seek refuge in the primordial Purusha, from whom all this is generated. Without pride, delusion, overcoming attachment and overcoming duality, ever spiritual, out of desire like pleasure and pain; the Wise go to the highest state of Krishna which is not illumined by the sun, moon, or fire.

A part of me puts into nature the six senses, and the power of mind. When the Lord (Master) Iswara acquires a body, it takes those six as the wind carries scents in the breeze. Iswara enjoys all sense objects and rules over all senses and the mind.

People with the *Gnyana Nethram* (eye of knowledge) see him. The deluded do not see him entering, living in, or leaving the body. Yogis who try can see It in themselves. Wrongdoers will not see him even if they try.

The light of the sun and the moon are Krishna's. He supports beings as energy, having entered the earth, and as the moon, he nourishes the plants and herbs. He is the digestive fire in all beings and is in their heart. Knowledge, memory, and the loss thereof come from Krishna. Krishna alone is to be known through the *Vedas*, he originates the Vedantic tradition; he is the knower of the *Vedas*.

The *kshara* purusha is the destructible purusha. The *akshara* purusha is the indestructible purusha. The *Uttama* purusha or *Purushottama* (best among purushas) is different again, he is also called the *paramatma* (supreme soul).

This Lord who bears the three worlds by entering them is beyond the *kshara* and *akshara* purushas. That is why he is called the *Purushottama*.

Oh Bharata, know this secret science told by me, be wise, and do what is to be done. The undeluded know Krishna as the *Purushottama*, and they worship him in all ways.

Chapter 16: Devasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga

Devasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga is the Yoga of the differentiation of the wealth (attributes) of the Devas and the Asuras.

In an earlier lesson, I explained who the Devas are. The Asuras are their step-brothers. There was much rivalry between them and many wars between them occurred. The Devas are essentially the good guys (with some exceptions), and the Asuras are the bad guys (with some exceptions) — from a human perspective — because the Devas (like the Sun) are good to humans and the Asuras (such as Kamsa) tried to kill the baby Krishna.

Hindus strive to be like the Devas and not like the Asuras.

This sixteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* describes the attributes of the Devas and Asuras.

Attributes of the Devas, which lead to Liberation:

Fearlessness, courage, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge, charity, self-control, worship, sacrifice, study of the *Vedas*, austerity, uprightness, non-injury, truthfulness, tranquility, freedom from slander, kindness, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, no fickleness, forgiveness, fortitude, absence of hatred and conceit.

Attributes of the Asuras, which lead to bondage:

Ostentation (even in worship), arrogance, self-conceit, anger, rudeness, ignorance, bad conduct, absence of truth, inability to know what should be done and what is not to be done, atheistic, diminished intellect, fierce deeds, born to contribute to the destruction of the world, hypocritical, proud, arrogant, impure, deluded, insatiable, lustful, angry, always strive to accumulate vast wealth by unsavory means, beset with immense cares ending with death, elevates sensual pleasure to the highest.

The Asuras think this is all: I am great, I am rich noble, I did this, I got this, I am successful, powerful. They hate

Krishna who resides in their bodies and in those of others. They sink further and further. Individuals with these attributes are sent into the Asuras.

Lust, anger, and greed are gates to the lower worlds and are destructive to the Self. He who is free from these practices what is good for him and attains the supreme goal.

He who sets aside the scriptures and acts under the impulse of desire attains neither perfection, nor happiness nor the supreme goal.

The scriptures will tell you right from wrong.

Chapter 17: Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga

Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga is the Yoga of the Separating Three Kinds of Faith.

Arjuna wanted to know about people who set aside the scriptures and yet worship with faith. Krishna said that there are three kinds of faith which are observed by the three kinds of people. Thus, a man is his faith. The satviks worship the Gods. The Rajasik worship Yakshas and Rakshasas. The Tamasik worship spirits and goblins.

Asuric people indulge in self-torture and in austerities not prescribed in the scriptures, thus they torture Krishna residing in them. They are given to ostentation, self-conceit, desire and attachment.

Satvik people like healthy food. The rajasik like tasty food (which can lead to poor health). The Tamasik like impure, stale, artificial food.

The Satvik worship as per the scriptures, for its own sake. The rajasik worship for the fruit and for ostentation. The tamasik worship contrary to the scriptures, with no charity and no faith.

The satviks practice three kinds of austerity and do not desire or pursue the fruit.

Physical: Worship of the Gods, Brahmins, teachers, wise people, purity, straightforwardness, continence, and non-injury.

Verbal: Truth that is non-distressing and beneficial; study of the Vedas.

Mental: Serenity, kindness, silence, self-control, purity of heart.

The rajasiks practice austerity to gain honor and adoration with ostentation. It is transitory and unstable.

Tamasik austerity is out of a foolish notion, done with self-torture and with the goal of ruining others.

Satvik gifts (charity) are dutiful, with no thought of return, to the right person at the right time and place. Rajasik gifts are grudging, with the intent of getting returns or for results. Tamasik gifts are given at the wrong time and place and to the unworthy.

Since *Om Tat Sat* (Om being reality, goodness) represent the Brahman, acts of worship, charity, and austerity, as per the scriptures, must be done saying *Om, Tat* or *Sat*.

Worship, Charity, and Austerity without faith are Asat.

Chapter 18: Moksha Sannyasa Yoga

Moksha Sannyasa Yoga is the Yoga of Liberation and Renunciation.

This is the last chapter of the Gita. Arjuna agreed to do as Krishna advised.

Sanjaya, the charioteer who described the entire battle to Dhritarashtra, talked about the greatness of Krishna, Arjuna, and the Gita.

Krishna said that just hearing the Gita with devotion takes one to the good and pure worlds. Studying it is equal to performing a *gnyana yagnya* (worship by knowledge), and this will please Krishna.

The Lord is in the heart of all beings and through his *maya* (illusion), he whirls all beings with dizzying precision. To attain a state of eternal, supreme, peace, take refuge in that Lord.

To attain Krishna give up all other Dharmas and follow Krishna's alone; be devoted to him in every way. Do not teach this to the undeserving, but teach it to the deserving and you will attain Krishna.

Whether you like it or not, your nature (prakruthi) will compel you to act. It is egoistic to think that you won't fight. If you think of Krishna, you will overcome your difficulties through his grace. Be egoistic, however, and you will be destroyed.

One who does all work, consciously renouncing it to Krishna, taking refuge in Him, attains a lasting state through His grace.

While *Sannyasa* is to give up the actions which fulfill your desires, *tyaga* is to give up the fruit of your action. Purifying actions like *yagnya*, charity and austerity should not be given up; but attachment to them and to the fruit thereof should be given up.

Yagnya (worship), *dana* (giving) and *tapa* (penance) should be performed.

To give up duty from delusion is Tamasika, to give it up because it is a nuisance is Rajasika. These two ways of giving up action don't count as sannyasa. Doing work because it ought to be done, giving up attachment and the fruit thereof is Sattvika.

No being in the flesh can give up all action. But the fruit of action can be relinquished. A satvik relinquisher has no doubts and neither hates disagreeable tasks nor likes agreeable tasks.

Karma only sticks to the non-relinquishers after death.

Any act of body, speech, or mind is caused not by man but by five causes: the seat (place), agent, senses, effort, and God. It is foolish to think that you are the doer.

Your motive matters.

It is satvik to see The One in All, rajasik to see different kinds of beings, and tamasik to think that one single thing is everything.

One who abides in sattvika is detached, unaffected by success and failure, non-egoistic, and endowed with fortitude and enthusiasm.

One who abides in rajasika is desirous of the fruit, greedy, subject to elation and dejection, violent, and unclean.

One who abides in tamasika is procrastinating, sorrowful, arrogant, unsteady, vulgar, and deceptive.

Satvik intellect knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and courage, what is binding, and what is liberating. Rajasik intellect is confused between right and wrong. Tamasik intellect sees wrong as right.

Satvaik tenacity is that by which one regulates the mind, breath and senses. Rajasik tenacity is that by which one holds to duty, pleasure and wealth, desiring fruit. Tamasik tenacity: a stupid person does not give up sleep, fear, grief, depression, and pride.

Satvik happiness is poison at first and nectar at the end, born of the serenity of the understanding that concerns itself with the self. Rajasik happiness is like nectar at the beginning and poison at the end — it arises from a contact between objects and senses. Tamasik happiness: Self delusive at the beginning and the end, arising from laziness and inadvertence.

No one is free from gunas in heaven or on earth. (You have to rise above them).

What follows are four of the most misused verses in the history of India. They refer to the caste system.

Krishna said that he created the four castes, based on Gunas and Karma (actions) and detailed the duties of priests and teachers, of warriors and kings, of merchants, and of workers.

In ancient India you could cross castes according to your Gunas. If you were a Brahmin (priest, student, teacher – one immersed in the study of the Brahman) you had no right to wealth or land or, in fact, to horde grain for the next day. Your students would collect alms and bring them in. In return, you were treated with honor. It was a sin to kill a Brahmin and great fortune to be blessed by one. Brahmins were Satvik – and only satviks could be Brahmins. They would derive their joy from knowledge and contemplation and not from the senses or contacts with sensory objects. A Brahmin could hope to attain Liberation on dying and for respect in life.

A kshatriya ('one of the field', a warrior) was Rajasik. He could enjoy wealth, food, and women but had to fight on a battlefield to defend his country, his people, and his king and he had to die fighting if necessary. A warrior could attain Heaven if he died fighting and could enjoy earth while he lived. He had to venerate the Brahmin and would consult them for spiritual, political, economic, and other advice.

Merchants and Workers could earn and save money and were not required to sacrifice material comfort or risk their lives. But they were duty bound to give charity (grain, clothes, cows) to Brahmins and to pay taxes (grain, cash, clothes, etc.) to the King according to their ability.

The tragedy in India was that castes stopped being determined by Gunas and Karma; instead, birth became the determining factor. People who were not born into the system in any one of these castes were called the "fifth" kind or *panchamas*. They were not treated well (much as poor immigrants are treated in some present-day countries).

People who quote the Gita to justify the caste system to their advantage conveniently ignore that it is the Gunas which determine caste (or "class" which is the meaning of the word *Varnam* in Sanskrit) and not birth. Others use this as a reason to speak against the Gita.

One of the reasons that I wanted to study the Gita for myself is the annoying number of people who quote snippets for their own purposes and completely out of context, day in and day out.

A man attains perfection by doing his duty, and in so doing worshipping Him from whom all activity proceeds and by whom the world was created. One's own duty imperfectly done is better than the duty of another well-performed. Do your *sahajam* (natural) duty, even if it is faulty. All work is faulty in the beginning.

One who is detached from everything, free from desire, who has conquered the self, reaches that ultimate state of

freedom from action. When he is detached and tranquil and alike to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Krishna, knows Him truly and enters Him.

Om Tat Sat!

A daily bath will clean a person externally, but a single bath in the Gita will remove the taint of the entire world (samsara).

There is but one scripture, the song of the son of Devaki, but one God, the son of Devaki, but one mantra, His Name, and but one duty, service to Him.

Namo Krishna, Namō Krishna, Namō Krishna, Namō Namah.

The Gita is like a summary of the various philosophies existing at the time in ancient India 5000-6000 years ago at the end of the Dwapara Yuga.

Krishna is revered as the Jagadguru or teacher of the world, because he summarised all the different philosophies in conversation with Arjuna.

Interestingly the author of the Mahabharatha in which the Bhagavad Gita is found.. is Veda Vyasa or the one who divided (ordered, collated) all the Vedas. His real name was Krishna Dwaipayana. The other name for Draupadi, the heroine of the Mahabharatha is also Krishnaa.

Mahabharatha is an Itihasa or historical epic. However in writing this, Veda Vyasa wanted to explain all the Vedic and Upanishadic truths to people in a story form because ordinary people can understand stories better than philosophic jargon. It is said that everything that is there in the world is in the Mahabharata.