

# Gita Vani 2007



यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārho dhanurdharaḥ |  
tatra śrīrvijayo bhūtidhruvā nītimatirmama ||

Wherever there is Lord Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Partha, the wielder of bow,  
there is prosperity, victory, happiness and morality, this is my conviction.

śrīmad bhagavad gītā (18.78)

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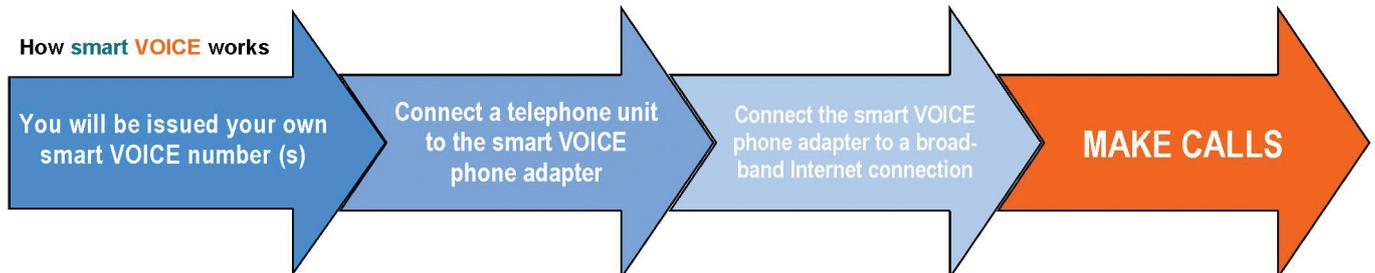


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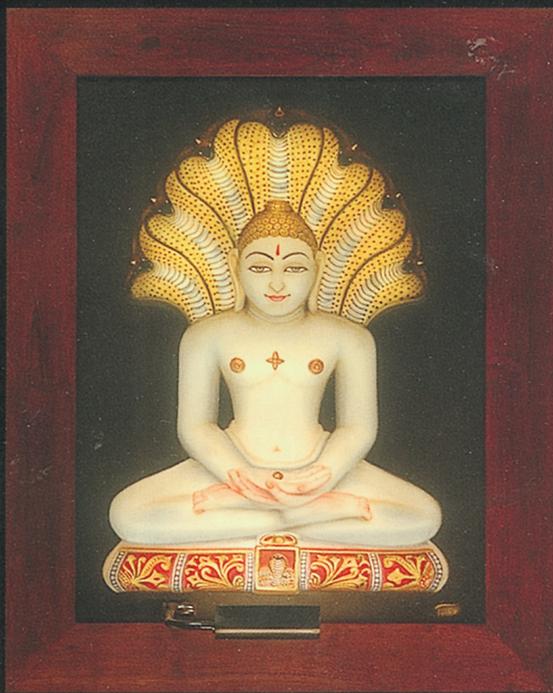
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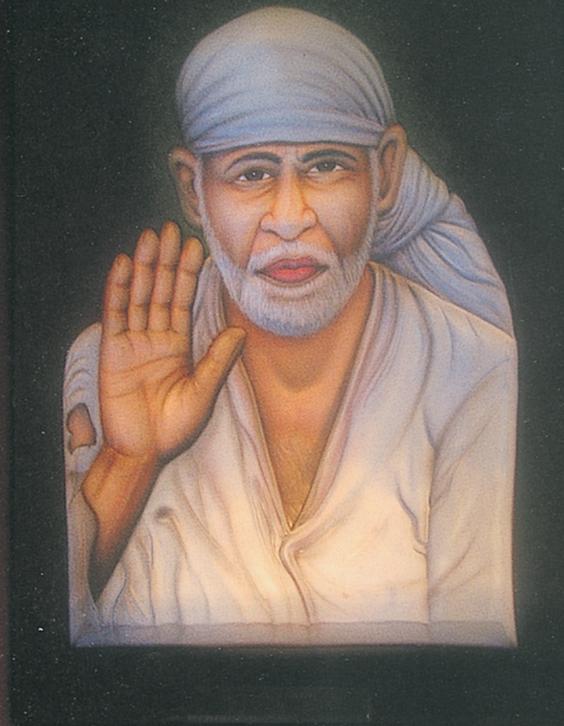


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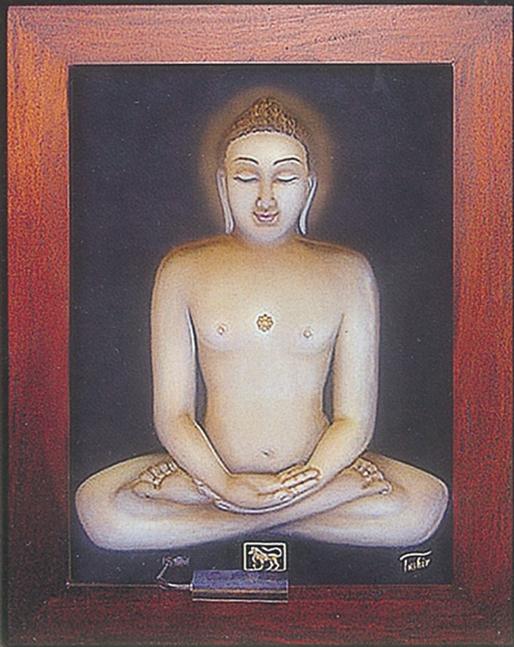
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**GITA JAYANTI 2007**

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Gita Vani 2007 is a souvenir  
publication of the Gita Jayanti  
2007

Gita Jayanti 2007 is  
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with other Hindu temples and  
associations of Singapore under the  
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The Bhagavad Gita or the song celestial is one of the great scriptures of fundamental importance to the Hindus due to various factors: the revelatory nature of the discourse, its unusual setting in the midst of a giant battlefield between dharma and adharma, the divine nature of the Teacher who is none other than the Poornavataram – Lord Krishna himself, the clarion call for action without yielding to despondency, empathy with the moral and psychological pathos of Arjuna, the synthesis of various forms of Yoga and the unmistakably mystical direct perception of reality it points to. The great acharyas of the various philosophical schools (darsanas) like Adi Sankara, Madhva, Ramanuja, Vallabha etc have taken the Prasthanas Thrayi (Upanishads, Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita) as the fundamental scriptural authorities and have interpreted them in the light of their own viewpoints, creating the celebrated bhashyas or the commentaries.

We in Singapore too celebrate the birth of this seminal work at the Gita Jayanti, held annually as a joint effort by the various Hindu temples and associations, in a yajnic spirit, for the last 10 years. Over the years, the event has grown in size and dimension to what it is today. This commemorative volume, Gita Vani, also is a humble contribution to the wider intellectual discourse around the Gita and topics that are of fundamental relevance to Gita. Several of the authors in this issue have re-interpreted the wisdom of the Gita, applying them to topics as current and a wide ranging as science, management, food habits etc.

These show our rational responsibility to integrate the present to the past as well as the future, to live in time as well as eternity. It needs transforming the day to day to life to touch and feel the Eternal and become one with nature, as Rilke says "the deep parts of my life pour onward, as if the river shores were opening out. It seems that things are more like me now, That I can see farther into paintings. I feel closer to what language can't reach. With my senses, as with birds, I climb into the windy heaven, out of the oak, in the ponds broken off from the sky my falling sinks, as if standing on fishes". Gita needs to penetrate our very being.

As Rumi prays, in his inimitable language of passion,

Give me ecstasy, give me naked wonder, O my Creator!  
Give birth to the Beloved in me, and let this lover die.  
Let a thousand wrangling desires become one Love.

Beyond its philosophical and metaphysical import, Gita ultimately shows a mystical path to the pathless land of Truth. The passion of Rumi, the wisdom of Sankara, the sweetness of Vallabha all inspire the spiritual aspirants in the quest in search of Truth. We humbly hope that the various aspects of Gita Jayanti, including the Gita Havan, the Gita Forum, various competitions for children, the cultural events and this Gita Vani all become our offerings to the Lord, who accepts with avidity even the smallest trifles of devotion and deep love.

|| Hari Om Tat Sat ||

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# M E S S A G E

Dear Friends,

*I am delighted to know that "Gita Jayanti" has been celebrated every year for the past 10 years by all the Hindu organizations and temples in Singapore. All these institutions, apart from actively participating in Gita chanting and Havan, take the responsibility to chair the event on a rotation basis.*



*Bhagavad Gita is a very important scripture of the Hindu religion. It is said that Gita reconciles many facets and schools of Hindu philosophy, including those of orthodox Vedic origin and the parallel ascetic and Yogic traditions. It comprises of Vedic, Upanishadic, and Yogic philosophies.*

*Mahatma Gandhi described Gita as "the universal mother". He said: "When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies - and my life has been full of external tragedies - and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavad Gita."*

*I wish "Gita Jayanti 2007" every success.*

**Hri Kumar**

MP for Toa Payoh Bishan GRC

# JAI SHREE KRISHNA & JAI SHREE GURUDEV

## GITA MAHATMYA GLORY OF THE GITA

Gita shastram idam punyam yah pateth prayatah puman  
Vishnoh padam avapnoti bhaya-shokadi varjitah

He who studies this Gita scripture with humility is freed from fear and misery and attains the feet of Lord Vishnu.

Gita adhyaana-shilasya pranayama-paraasya cha  
Naiva santi he paapani purva janme kritani cha

That person who is in the habit of reading the Gita and who is also devoted to practicing pranayama (breathing exercises) is not touched by sins, even those done in his previous birth.

Mala nirmochanam pumsam jala snanam dine dine  
Sakrid gitambhaasi snanam samsara mala nashanam

Human beings must bathe in water every day to get rid of the dirt (of the body), but bathing in the water of the Gita once is enough to get rid of the dirt of this samsara (cycle of birth and death).

Gita sugita kartavya kim anyaih shastra vistaraih  
Ya svyam padama nabhaayasa mukha padmad vinih srita

Gita which has come out of the lotus-like face of the Lord (He who has the lotus in His navel) and which is so melodious, should be studied. There is no need to study any other scriptures in detail.

Bharat amrita sarvasam vishnor vaktrad vini sritam  
Gita gangodakam pitva punar janma na vidyate

After drinking the water of the Gita which is the nectar of the entire Bharata (the epic Mahabharata) and which has come out of the mouth of Vishnu, there is no more birth (in this world).

Sarvo panishado gavo dogdha gopala nandanah  
Partho vatsah sudhir bhokta dugdham gita amritam mahat

All the Upanishads are the cows, the one who milks the cows is Krishna, Arjuna (Partha) is the calf. People of purified intellect are the enjoyers; the milk is the great nectar of the Gita.

Ekam shastram devaki putra geet eko devo devaki putra eva  
Eko mantra stasya namani yani karmapyekam tasya devasya seva

There is only one spiritual science, which is the song (Gita) of the son of Devaki. There is only one God and that is Krishna, the son of Devaki. There is only one mantra, and that is His name. There is only one karma; action, which is His service; service to Lord Krishna.

# M E S S A G E

*I am happy to learn that Gita Jayanti is being celebrated in Singapore for a 10th year in a row. It is heartening to know that this annual event which commemorates the birthday of Bhagavad Gita is jointly organized by various social, cultural & religious organizations of Singapore.*



*Bhagavad Gita belongs to a group of great spiritual books. It reveals the purpose and goal of human existence and contains message of life. It calls upon an individual to dedicate body, mind and soul to his duty without worrying about the results. As for the importance of teachings of Gita, Lokmanya Tilak once said, "The Gita was preached as a preparatory lesson for living worldly life with an eye to Release, Nirvana. My last prayer to everyone, therefore, is that one should not fail to thoroughly understand this ancient science of worldly life as early as possible in one's life".*

*I commend Singapore Telugu Samajam & all other supporting associations/organizations for the efforts in spreading the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita in Singapore through Gita Jayanti 2007 Celebrations. I wish them success in their endeavour.*

**Rajesh K. Sachdeva**  
Deputy High Commissioner  
High Commission of India

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# M E S S A G E

*Gita Jayanti celebrates its tenth year in 2007. During this period - thanks to the selfless efforts of the numerous individuals who have committed themselves to organize the Gita celebrations and spread the spiritual truths contained in the Gita - the allure of this sacred text has grown. Their efforts are meant to make the Gita a way of life and have, no doubt, helped many of us apply the teachings of the Gita to our everyday experiences.*



*Organizing the Gita Jayanthi celebrations also provides a good opportunity for community co-operation. This annual celebration gives Hindu organizations an opportunity to come together for a common cause. Not surprisingly the number of participants at the celebrations is increasing and likewise the number of organizations coming forward to support this event. The Hindu Endowments Board has been a proud supporter of Gita Jayanthi since its inception in 1997. We will continue to support Gita Jayanthi and help with growing the event.*

*I would take this opportunity to thank, in particular, the Singapore Telugu Samajam, the lead organizer of this year's event for their dedicated leadership and for the new ideas that they have introduced. Thanks are, of course, also due to all co-organizers of Gita Jayanthi 2007 for their continued support.*

*May the teachings of the Gita guide us as we usher in the New Year and may we be ever inspired by its message of truth.*

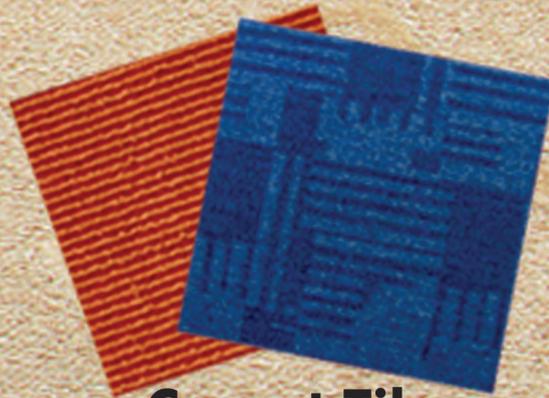
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# M E S S A G E

*It is indeed heartening to know that this year would be the 10th anniversary of the Gita Jayanthi celebrations in Singapore. It is a unique event not only for celebrating and reinforcing the divine message of the Gita, but also for bringing together a number of Hindu organisations for a common purpose.*



*It is not only our duty to live our lives by the eternal virtues and principles enshrined in the Gita but also ensure that these are cherished and understood by our younger and future generations. The diversity of mankind, and yet the common origin, purpose, and divinity in all of us, comes clear in the message of the Gita.*

*This unifying thought should be deeply embedded in all, ensuring mutual respect, understanding and tolerance amongst all the different peoples. It would enable us to appreciate the true meaning of the phrase, "unity in diversity".*

*Let the message of the Gita be a constant source of strength as we perform our duties and move ahead positively in search of peace and happiness for ourselves and our fellow men.*

*I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Singapore Telugu Samajam in leading this years organisation of the Gita Jayanti.*

**Rajan Krishnan**

Chairman, Hindu Advisory Board

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# M E S S A G E

*Shrimad Bhagavad Gita is one of the holiest scriptures of Hindus. It refers to the dialogue between Lord Krishna and his beloved friend and devotee Arjuna. It all happened several centuries ago in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The anniversary of the day on which Gita was narrated (Mokshada Ekadasi day) is referred as Gita Jayanti day and its celebrations are carried out worldwide. Gita reveals that one can reach God through knowledge, action, devotion, and meditation. It also calls upon individuals to carry on with their worldly duties and leave the outcome to God.*



*Hindus in Singapore have been celebrating Gita Jayanti for the last 10 years. Gita Jayanti 2007 is the 10<sup>th</sup> in the series. It can be said that the Gita Jayanti celebration in Singapore has come off the age. When it was started in 1997, it was considered as one time event but today it has become a major event in the Singapore Hindu Calendar. It has brought almost all Hindus under one roof irrespective of language they speak. Every Hindu in Singapore invariably wishes to participate in this event and receive Divine Blessings. It is no exaggeration to say that this is one event that unites all Hindus, Indian Associations, and Hindu Temples in Singapore. The very fact that various Indian organizations and Hindu bodies are coming forward year after year to take lead in organizing this event bears testimony to the success of this annual celebration.*

*Gita Jayanti 2007 is being organized jointly by the Singapore Telugu Samajam (STS) and several Hindu Temples and Organizations of Singapore under the auspices of Hindu Endowments Board. STS is honored to have the privilege of taking the lead role in organising this holy event.*

*In addition to the main event Gita Havan/Homam on 4th Februray 2007, several related events including Gita Forum, Gita Shivir, Gita chanting competitions, essay competitions, oratorical competitions, Gita parayan, and cultural programme are the highlights of the celebrations. People from all walks of life are enthusiastically participating in all these events. The effort put in during past 9 months by many Hindu organizations in Singapore in shaping up these events is highly commendable.*

*The success of Gita Jayanti 2007 lies in the experience and expertise shared by all previous organizers including Sri Lakshminarayan Temple, the immediate past organizer. Sri Lakshminarayana Temple has also provided its office for the Gita Jayanti 2007 Organizing Committee to meet regularly for which we are grateful. Further, this being self-supporting event, donations in cash and kind, and sponsorships in the form of advertisements in our Souvenir are vital for the financial sustainability of this event. Hence, a big "Thank You" to all those who contributed their might for this holy cause.*

*The Organizing Committee consisting of several sub-committees have worked day and night to realize their dream of organizing this holy event. It is this committee that deserves special acknowledgement and appreciation. Hindu Endowments Board has given its full support for which we are grateful.*

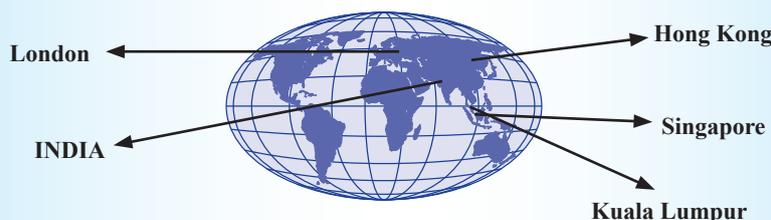
*May Lord Krishna continue to shower His Devine Grace on all of us, and bless us with good health, knowledge and wisdom!*

Dr. B.V.R. Chowdari  
President, Singapore Telugu Samajam &  
Chairman, Organizing Committee, Gita Jayanti 2007

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# M E S S A G E

*On this auspicious occasion, as we celebrate Gita Jayanti, allow me to convey my heartiest felicitations to all Singaporeans.*

*As we take on the new and varied challenges that confront us in this Millennium, it is essential that we continue to recognize the relevance of religion and the paramount role it plays in the promotion of peace, love and harmony. In a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious country like Singapore, these attributes can never be over-emphasized, and every effort must be made to constantly enhance and uphold them.*



*The Bhagawad Gita is more than a holy scripture for Hindus. It is the indispensable guide that helps us navigate through the trials and tribulations of contemporary life. Reading the Gita and imbibing the lessons conveyed through its verses, would undoubtedly assist a Hindu, in guiding himself/herself in the right direction. Not doing so would only be akin to being adrift and running a life with very little significance.*

*It is critical that the values and morals handed down by our forefathers are not lost but passed on with great care and reverence, from one generation to the next. Through its messages and related stories, the Gita not only teaches us these values and morals but also acts as the ideal channel through which we can pass these onto our children and their successors. This is the only way through which we can be assured that the teachings and values of Hinduism will prevail, thereby sustaining a world of tranquility and harmony.*

*I would like to personally thank each and every member of the organising committee for their selfless efforts and total dedication towards the community and ensuring that Gita Jayanti 2007 is a memorable event.*

**Kirpa Ram Sharma**  
President, Arya Samaj, Singapore

*With Best Compliments from*

*Lakshmi Om  
Prakash Gupta  
&  
Family*

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**VASUDEVA SUTAM DEVAM  
KANSA CHANURA MARDANAM  
DEVAKI PARAMANANDAM  
KRISHNAM VANDE JAGAD GURUM**

# M E S S A G E S

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VAASUDEVAYA

*Through the study of the Bhagavad Gita, one learns essential life skills to LIVE life by treading the path of righteousness and virtue. The words of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, as found in the Bhagavad Gita, though spoken nearly six thousand years ago, continues to be relevant in current times. Bhagavan Sri Krishna, Himself being Action personified, had this message for human kind - THINK, CONTEMPLATE, ANALYSE AND ACT.*



*Gita Jayanti marks the birthday of the Bhagavad Gita. We are pleased to see that, with each passing year, more and more Hindu organizations in Singapore are coming together to celebrate this memorable day in honour of Bhagavan Sri Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita. An increase in awareness in Singapore about the messages of the Holy Gita is discernible, thanks to the Gita Jayanti celebrations in Singapore, which is in its tenth year of celebrations. With the joint effort of Singapore Hindu Organisations being sustained, and the blessings of Sri Krishna, we are confident that this awareness will soar to greater heights:*

*“If You are with me Lord, Who can be against me?  
And if I am with You, How can a difficult day come upon me?  
There is no difficulty, no danger, no problem,  
which You and I cannot handle together.” (Dada JP Vaswani)*

In Him,

**Sundari Suppiah**

President, Krishna Our Guide (GJ 1997 Lead Organisation)

*Gita Jayanti (Geeta Jayanthi) is the annual commemoration of the birth of the sacred Hindu scripture, the “Bhagavad Gita” also known as “Holy Gita”. Gita contains important lessons on knowledge, wisdom, yoga and philosophy. It embodies essential ingredients of life that appeals to all, irrespective of locality, race, age or religion. It is said to be the universal gospel of truth and action.*



*About six thousand years ago, Sri Krishna, the God incarnate, presented Gita to us through Arjuna, the Pandava prince on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. That marvelous essence of knowledge and wisdom is the message of the Gita. This brilliant spark continues to shine through many millennia, and illuminates humanity through its onward march to perfection. Gita shows the way to rise above the world of egoism and duality. It demonstrates with precision the path to acquire eternal bliss, justice and knowledge. It teaches the essentials of one’s duty in society leading us to the much-needed path of perfection. Gita tells us in no uncertain terms that it is one’s duty to uphold righteousness, without too much focus on personal loss, gains, or reward.*

*The very successful annual Gita Jayanti celebration in Singapore by all the Hindu Organisations and temples as well as the Non-Hindu well-wishers is the embodiment of true cultural renaissance and augers well for inter racial and inter religious harmony and understanding.*

**Dr V P Nair** MD, FRCP, FAMS, FACC

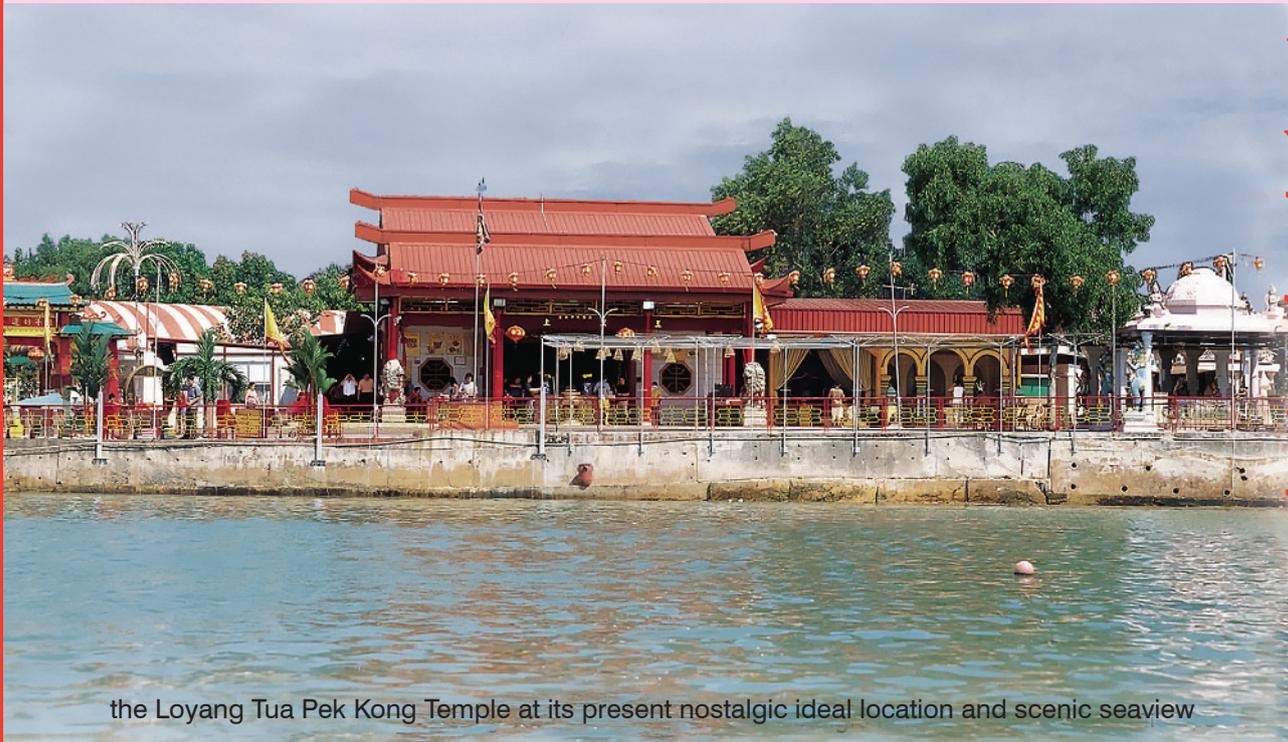
President, Hindu Centre, Singapore (GJ 1999 Joint Lead Organisation)

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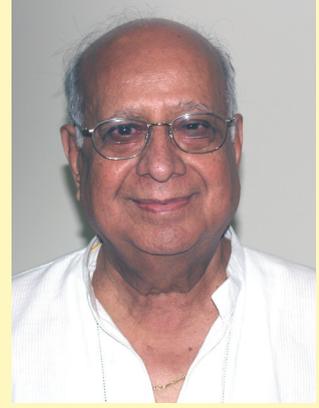
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# M E S S A G E S

*Jai Shri Krishna!*

*I'm very pleased to see Gita Jayanti improving vastly each year & am especially gratified to note that many orgs have committed to lead GJ in future years, namely, Kannada Sangha, Maharashtra Mandal, Sri Ruthra Kaliyamman Temple, Sri Krishnan Temple, Gujarati Society, Marwari Mitra Mandal and few others who are in discussion stage.*

*With blessings of Almighty, I am confident that leadership of GJ will be booked up till 2020 & shall name the orgs by next year. Wishing the Gita Jayanti 2007 all the very best,*



**Hari Ram Dayani**

Vice President, Geeta Ashram, GJ 1999 Joint Lead Organization

*Hari Om!*

*It is a great privilege for Chinmaya Seva Centre to be a part of the Gita Jayanti Celebrations.*

*Of the many spiritual masters of India in the Twentieth Century, HH Swami Chinmayananda has the distinction of having made the study of the Bhagavad Gita accessible. The philosophy contains the basic and eternal truths underlying all religions which is our heritage.*

*The atmosphere at the celebrations is charged with spiritual aura and this yajna offers all of us the opportunity for selfless service. We thank all those who with meticulous planning and management are involved in this large scale gathering.*

*A community or nation is constructed of its members and its strength and happiness depend not only upon material wealth and environmental influences but on the texture and composition of the individuals concerned. World perfection can come about only through individual perfection and this is what is being achieved by this auspicious gathering.*

In His Service

**Chandru Bharwani**

(President, Chinmaya Seva Centre, GJ 2000 Lead Organization)



*With Best Compliments from*



मृत्युः सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।  
कीर्तिः श्रीर्वाक् च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥  
mṛtyuḥ sarvaharaścāhamudbhavaśca bhaviṣyatām ।  
kīrtiḥ śrīrvāk ca nārīṇāṃ smṛtirmedhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā ॥

I am the all-destroying death, and also the origin of future beings.  
Among the women, I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intellect,  
resolve, and forgiveness. (10.34)

*Prabha Rao & Family*

# M E S S A G E S

*Amriteswari Society lead the organization of the Gita Jayanti in 2002. We are privileged and happy to be part of the propagation of one of the most important spiritual texts - the Bhagavd Gita.*

*The Gita is an evergreen book, a universal wonder for all kinds of people. It is, to quote Swami Sivananda, "...a marvellous book, profound in thought and sublime in heights of vision. It gives peace and solace to the souls who are afflicted by the three fires of this mortal world viz. afflictions caused by ones own body, those caused by beings around one and those caused by the gods."*



*Mata Amritanandamayi's philosophy of action based on true love and devotion and knowledge is an interpretation and practice of the Gita – in word and in deed. This has been the inspiration and sustaining motivation for the charitable work by members of the Amriteswari Society.*

*We wish the Gita Jayanti event this year all success and hope it will continue to contribute to the positive development of our multi-cultural, multi-social, multi-lingual and multi-religious Society.*

**Rajan Menon**

Chairman, Amriteswari Society (GJ 2002 Lead Organisation)

---

**Sri Satya Sai Organization**  
(Lead Organisation, 2003)



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*Presents*

*Public Lecture By*

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and all the other Hindu scriptures, and by his loving Divine Personality that they honoured him with the special title of 'JAGADGURUTTAM'

(Supreme amongst all Jagadgurus) on 14 January 1957.

Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj reconciles all the apparently opposing views and philosophies in spiritualism and shows a simple, universal path to God-realization and Divine Bliss, which respects all religions.

*The public lecture will be in March 2007. Details will be announced shortly.*

### RADHA MADHAV SATSANG

*Radha Madhav Satsang, a Singapore registered charity, aims to promote a better understanding of the Hindu philosophy and religion through the organisation of spiritual discourses, conducting of devotional meditation and chanting classes .*

*Our meditation, chanting and satsang sessions are held twice a week as follows:*

*Sundays: 10.30 am to 12.30 pm, followed by lunch*

*Wednesdays: 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm*

*Venue For Both Sessions: 47 Cuff Road, off Serangoon Road (near Little India MRT)*

*Please note that there will be no satsang sessions for 7th and 11th of February in view of Swami Mukundananda's talks at Shree Lakshminarayan Temple from 4th to 11th February 2007.*

*For enquires contact*

**Navraj (65) 9796 0596 • Kumar (65) 9665 4260 • Naina (65) 9455 9057**

**Email: [radhamadhavsatsang@gmail.com](mailto:radhamadhavsatsang@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.radhesg.com](http://www.radhesg.com)  
[www.jkp.org](http://www.jkp.org)**

# M E S S A G E S

*HARI OM! Pranams to all devotees!*

*It is a pleasure to learn that a good effort started about 10 years ago, is now a mega event in the Singapore Hindu Calender! Myself had the opportunity to be the part of the organising team, representing Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam right from the initial years and it was a great joy watching the progress achieved year after year. We think it is a great achievement that the event reached far beyond the point of creating Gita Awareness among Hindu families to a stage where details of Bhagavad Gita's message is passed to the Children and Youth in a form that it will be useful for them in life. Though containing the philosophical depth of Gita may be beyond the reach of common man, the point that the extent one can reach itself can make one a good human being makes the whole effort worthwhile.*



*As one of the organising team member and the one who took the lead in 2004, we pray that this event should continue for ever and wish all success to all the future event leaders, Singapore Telugu Samajam in particular and Hindu Endowment Board for playing the pivotal role in making the event happen year after year. Let the future Gita Forums be able to address issues based on current times modern life style with the magical remedies from Srimad Bhagavad Gita, and may the Children and Young be able to get an insight to Gita's messages by preparing themselves for competitions and discussions on wisely chosen topics useful and meaningful to achieve success in life. Wherever there is Krishna and Partha, there will surely be fortune, victory, welfare and immortality!*

*Offering all efforts at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna,*

**Ajayakumar Nair**

President, Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam (GJ 2004 Lead Organisation)

**Sri Aurobindo Society**  
**(Lead Organisation, 2005)**

*With Best Compliments from*

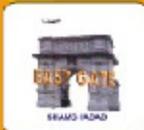


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# M E S S A G E

*"Wishing one and all, a very fulfilling GITA JAYANTI!"*

*As we celebrate this important day, in the new year of 2007, I wish to express my best wishes to all Singaporean. May the Lord's blessings be showered upon them, on this auspicious day and every day, hereafter.*



*The Bhagawad Gita is a reconciliation of many facets and schools of Hindu philosophy. It has stood the test of time, bringing together all thought systems by taking their largely cohesive, common ideologies and backgrounds into the verse of one text. It had always been a seminal text for Hindu priests and yogis in India, and all Hindu sects draw upon the Gita as authoritative. For its religious depth, quintessential philosophy and beauty of verse, the Bhagawad Gita is one of the most compelling and important texts to come out of the Hindu tradition. Indeed, it stands tall among the world's greatest religious and spiritual scriptures.*

*Undoubtedly, the Bhagawad Gita is the most revered and inspiring spiritual book of Hindu religion. The dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, on the battleground of Kurukshetra, contains wisdom of the highest standard and for thousands of years, millions of souls have found solace in the pages of this immortal master-piece.*

*It is indeed a great honor for the Co-Management Committee of the Shree Lakshminarayan Temple, to be bestowed upon, the responsibility of co-organizing 'Gita Jayanti 2007' - the paramount occasion which celebrates the teachings that are projected through this timeless scripture. This temple has played the role of a strong supporting organization, from the very inception of such celebrations, in 1999. Several leading Hindu religious organizations have over the past seven years, worked in an exemplary manner, to develop these celebrations to the scale that we enjoy today. We owe them much for their tireless efforts and achievements. The members of my committee too, having been working hard to ensure that this year's celebrations will continue to built upon the previous years' growth and development. At this juncture, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the members of the organizing committee as well as the numerous volunteers who have spared their invaluable time and effort, to realize the success of this celebration.*

*To support the Gita Jayanti, Shree Lakshminarayan Temple has organised a one week programme on the Bhagawad Gita chapter 7 & 9 from 21/1/2007 to 28/1/2007.*

*In closing, I like to include one of the most quoted and yet ever-relevant verses of the Gita:*

*"No matter what conditions you encounter in life, your right is only to the works and not to the fruits thereof. You should not be impelled to act for selfish reasons, nor should you be attached to inaction."*

*Bhagavad Gita 2.47*

God Bless.

**Shri Ishwar Dass Sharma**

President, Shree Lakshminarayan Temple (GJ 2006 Lead Organisation)

*With Best Compliments from*



# **SRI KRISHNAN TEMPLE**

152 Waterloo Street Singapore 187961

Tel: 6337 7957, 6339 4232 Fax: 6334 2712

Email: [srikrishnatemple@hotmail.com](mailto:srikrishnatemple@hotmail.com)

# *Gita Jayanti Celebrations in Singapore*

## *A Flash Back*

**1997 - Jointly organized by Krishna Our Guide & NUS Hindu Society.** The event was a relatively simple affair marked by the congregational reciting of the Gita in full. Dr. TK Krishnamoorthy of the NUS Law faculty graced the occasion. Event attracted about 200 enthusiastic devotees. Event organisation was led by Sri Tanigan of KOG and supported by Brahmachari Dina Anukampanana Dasa.

**1998 - Led by Hindu Endowments Board.** The framework of the current GJ celebrations was formulated. Gita Jayanti became a joint effort of all Hindu associations and temples and was led by Sri. VR Nathan, Chairman, HEB. Gita recitation sessions at temples, talks by eminent speakers, final event with Ganapathy Homam and mass Havan etc marked the event. Sri Harihar Maharaj, founder of Geeta Ashram (age 102) was the special guest of honour.

**1999 - Jointly organized by Hindu Centre & Gita Ashram.** The basic style remained same as 1998 and helped in reinforcing the system established in 1998. Organizational effort was led by Sri KS Rajah of Hindu Centre. HH Swami Muktikripananda, President of Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore graced the occasion.

**2000 - Led by Chinmaya Seva Centre.** The established framework in the previous two years was further strengthened with the addition of Gita chanting and Essay writing competition. This was initiated by Dr VP Nair, from Chinmaya Seva Centre, which was the lead organization for the year. The addition of competitions for children and youth helped in integrating the younger generation too within the Gita's fold.

**2002 - Led by Amriteswary Society.** The timing of the event was changed from December to January to suit the school holidays and holiday plans of large segments of Indian devotees. The scope of the event was further expanded with

the addition of Gita Forum where scholars and intellectuals gave discourses on various aspects of Gita. This was intended to attract the young professionals and intellectuals. Mr. O. Rajagopal, Union Minister from India graced the occasion. The event was led by Sri Sagar Dharan of Amriteswary Society.

**2003 - Led by Sri Sathya Sai Society.** The structure and style of events remained unchanged and the focus was towards attracting larger sections of Indian devotees. Mr Rasgotra, previous Secretary, Foreign Affairs, Govt. of India was the main speaker for the Gita Forum and special invited guest. The organizational effort was led by Prof. AN Rao of Sri Satya Sai Society.

**2004 - Led by Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam.** The event was further expanded to include full Gita chanting on the actual Gita Jayanti day (Mokshada Ekadasi day). Rest of the event format remained unchanged. Event was held near the Sri Krishan Temple, as Perumal Temple premises was unavailable. Event management was led by Sri Rajan Krishnan of Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam.

**2005 - Led by Sri Aurobindo Society.** The GJ celebrations again expanded the scope and a cultural evening of Music and dance was added to the rest of events. The cultural performance was done by artistes from SIFAS. Prof Nadkarni was the main speaker at the Gita Forum. Event management was led by Smt Prabha Rao of Sri Aurobindo Society.

**2006 - Led by Shree Lakshminarayan Temple.** The new element in this celebration was the introduction of a Gita Shivar series of discourses in Hindi by visiting Swamiji from India. Sri Sradhalu ji from Sri Aurobindo Ashram was the main speaker for Gita Forum. The event organization was led by Sri DD Gupta of Shree Lakshminarayan Temple.

*The evolution of GJ celebrations in Singapore clearly indicate its growing prominence & popularity.*

*With Best Compliments from*

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*Surekha & Mahesh Manikashetti*

*Vidya & Kailash Nath Rai*

# GITA JAYANTI 2007

*Advisers:* V R Nathan, K S Rajah, Dr VK Pillay, Ishwar Dass Sharma, H P Dayani

*Past Chairpersons:* S T Tanigan (KOG, 1997), V R Nathan (HEB 1998), K S Rajah (HC, 1999), Dr. VP Nair (CSC, 2000), Sagar Dharan (AS, 2002), Prof AN Rao (SSS, 2003), Rajan Krishnan (SMHS, 2004), Prabha Rao (SAS, 2005), D D Gupta (LNT, 2006)

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*Vice Chairmen:* V. Satya Murthy (STS), Satish Sharma (LNT), Shivananda KR (KS)

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### **Ticket sales:**

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### **Gita Forum**

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*Editor:* Krishna Kumar M.

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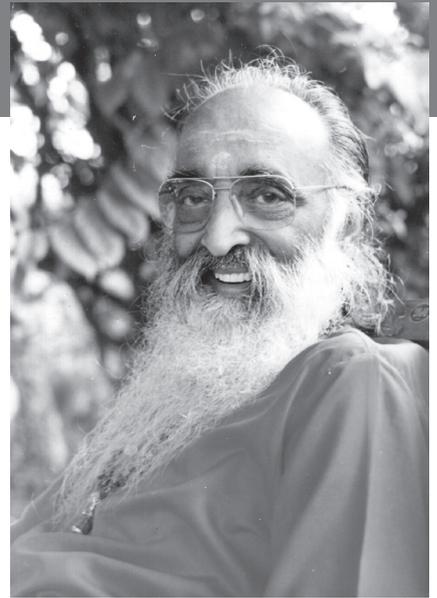
# Satsangh with Swami Chinmayananda – Science of Religion

**Respected Staff Members and  
Dear Friends,**

It is evidently clear from the introduction, that I am not a medical man and therefore you need not expect a technical talk from me. So why should a Swami, a *sannyasi*, come to address students of Science? Is he carrying some secret *chadi-bhootis*, medicines from the Himalayan villages to cure incurable diseases, which *mahatmas* are supposed to have? No. My teacher never taught me medicine and nor are there any roots or leaves in my bundle. If thus you belong to the age of Science and Technology and I belong to another world of investigation and inquiry, where do we meet? You as medical men of tomorrow, and we as seekers of spirituality share a peculiarity that set us apart from others. All other activities in the world are either a science or an art, but

in fields such as ours, not only is knowledge essential but it must be applied according to the demands of the situation, and therefore there is inherent in our professions, the aspect of art.

Both in medicine and spirituality, there is a blending of art and science - as medical men you are scientists, but as individuals you help alleviate the pains and sorrows of others. In order to tend or nurse the sick, you have to 'make contact' with them, which is itself an art, independent of the extent of one's knowledge. However, for effective contact, scientific knowledge is a must. In spiritual life also, a lot of study is required. A seeker who wants to become perfect and learn to serve the society, whether he is Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, must study the *science of religion* for many years. If after all the



*Transcription of speech by  
Swami Chinmayananda to  
Medical College students,  
Manipal, 1967, followed  
by Q/A session with  
audience (edited).*

*(Transcription by Mrs  
Sunanda Shastri, devotee  
from Mangalore who  
recorded the talks)*

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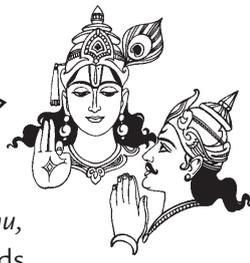
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studying he accumulates only intellectual knowledge, he is qualified to be only a boring philosophy college professor. He cannot *serve* anybody, living a vulgar life of sensuality and passion in the world, devoid of the joyous ecstasies of a perfect multifarious contact with mankind. Similarly also for a doctor to tend to others, it is necessary that he has scientific knowledge plus that 'something more', which makes him a happy individual in the midst of the sorrowful, suffering people around him.

Nowadays, medical colleges are turning out erudite scholars, experts in human anatomy, physiology and in providing medical treatment, but lacking that humane contact. This is reflected in today's scientist, economist, politician and artist, coming out from our institutions - intellectually great and grand no doubt, but with umbrella like heads and shrunken, dried up little hearts. There seems to be no compassion, understanding or tolerance of others; no mutual amicability between individuals and hence communities are so shattered all round the world. The vital technique to harmoniously develop both the head and heart has been scientifically explained and expounded in Vedantic philosophy.

In fact all religions are recommending paths by which unconsciously man learns to spread out both the head and

the heart. Our personalities are made up of both these aspects but when there is an imbalance in the relative proportions, the individual becomes an ugly caricature of the human species! On close observation, we find that certain people are more emotional than intellectual - a simple villager versus a shrewd town dweller for instance, but a man who is all heart can be equally dangerous and a menace to society. The individual with a balanced personality is an effective entity in the world outside - his emotions are controlled and regulated by the intellect, which itself is honeyed by the love and tenderness of the heart. This is especially crucial in a doctor, since he can no doubt serve the world in his professional capacity, but if he is not emotionally fit, he can bring more sorrows to the society. If there is proper attunement of the inner personality the doctor can mitigate much of the sorrows of the poor man and becomes instrumental in bringing more solace and comfort to the society.

These techniques have been propounded in what is ordinarily called as religion, but unfortunately we are not given the chance to learn religion as a science either in the universities, or in our homes, temples, churches or mosques. What we receive in these places are sermons. The Hindu *pundit*, Christian *padre*,

Muslim *maulwi*, Sikh *sadhu*, or Buddhist *bhikshu* stands authoritatively at his respective pulpit and commands, 'O Man, thou shalt do, thou shalt not do these things'. But if he is questioned *why* he should not do this or that, there is utter silence from the platform! No explanation is forthcoming. Anyone daring to question further is thrown out of the church, temple or mosque.

The reasoning behind this is that for the unintelligent and uneducated masses, whose intellect has not developed the subtlety or maturity to question, detailed explanations are not necessary. What they require is mere instruction and guidance and so that approach is adopted. However, this is inappropriate for the modern graduate who is taught from childhood to develop individual ideas and logical, sequential thinking. He revolts against statements like "Thou shalt believe there is a God...and the God created the world", until finally science is voted in and religion is voted out.

This is the breach or the cleavage that the modern world - not only India - has arrived at. Westerners are searching Eastern philosophy and vice versa. All are frantically searching and rushing, dissatisfied with what they have, not knowing where the Truth lies. It is like two parties trying to communicate



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in two different languages, having to eventually part. Similarly, when the *pandit* talks to us, the children of modern science, we cannot understand; when we talk, the *pandit* cannot understand, and so we part company.

A figurative representation of this helps us to remember and retain these ideas. It is like an elderly married couple, and old man and old lady, lovingly walking hand in hand down the avenue of time. From the beginning of human existence as a society on the surface of this planet, this couple came walking, hand in hand. The State or the people (the old man), and Religion (the old lady), facing the ups and downs since the 1<sup>st</sup> century (of society). Then somewhere near the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (advent of science), came a sprightly young tribal girl, juvenile, sweet, jumping and frisking about, coming towards them. The old man smiled at her, and the girl, exuberant with energy and vitality, smiled back. .... and the old man held her hand and walked on. Within a few steps, as if by contagion, he got her energy and enthusiasm; he felt revived and both of them danced and skipped about and thus for five centuries, State and Science have been walking forward hand in hand.

Now in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the old man is again weary and exhausted, because he cannot keep up with the enthusiasm

of this young girl, who is still kicking about! Now Science is striding forth into new realms of dangerous vocation, such as the nuclear or space age, but the people, the State, are stuck in a neurotic fight for their own existence on the surface of this Earth; therefore they have started looking back, for the reliable old lady but alas!!! Religion, that old lady, when she saw the old man going about with that young girl, she got rather annoyed, and with all the faithful obedience, she stood right there in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. So here we are in the 20<sup>th</sup> century looking back, and when we want Religion, poor Religion has stayed dressed up as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. We can no more recognise her - the language (Sanskrit, Arabic or old English) we cannot follow, the dress looks so funny, but we know that there is *something* about her which is useful. She is still standing in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, while man (the society) has moved to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, there is now a gulf between the two which somehow has to be bridged.

In recent times, people of modern education such as Annie Besant, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Ramana Maharishi, undertook this task within and outside India. They interpreted the old Religion in the language of Science and using modern vocabulary, they brought it within our reach, *in a language that we could understand*. Therefore people have been

able to take it up with great enthusiasm indeed. Buddhism is gaining popularity in the Western world, especially USA, because Buddhist ideas have been sufficiently interpreted in English, in the language of the modern psychologist and psychiatrist. The key point to note here is that it is not that the **Science of Religion** is lost but rather that modern day interpreters are lacking and so it is not *available* to the youngsters.

In Hinduism, especially in Vedanta, it is this **Science of Religion** that is taught and explained as a scientific process. Religion is not portrayed as something to look for in a God beyond the clouds, or a time to be experienced after death, but rather it is to **be lived right here and now**. Vedanta advocates that **the dividend of religious living is in the present moment**. This is *not* the religion of ringing of bells or a Friday *namaaz*; it is *not* a mere temporary type of religion that we are discussing. Rather, when religion is adopted as a *way of life*, it brings about certain adjustments in our intellectual thinking, emotional equilibrium and physical relationships with the outside world, such that the individual bring forth a greater harmony and achieves greater success in his chosen field of endeavour.

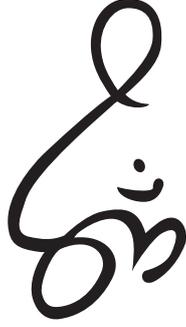
We are all aware that our external physical activities are all directly controlled,



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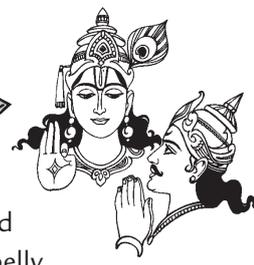
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regulated and modulated by the emotions behind and the values of life underlying those actions. Low values of life and stinking emotions naturally lead to foul and fiendish actions. Think! However, where our ideals are high and noble, then our thoughts also are chaste and beautiful and the actions that stem from us are necessarily noble and great. If an individual's only goal is to get the maximum money with minimum effort, then to his mind, an attractive way to earn his livelihood is to print money locally or pick pocketing! But one who has as his ideal, 'doing something great for my country' will have creative thoughts and all his endeavours will be geared towards a more noble way of living. Thus, while meeting our own challenges in life, the very beauty and cadence of one's activities will depend upon the quality of thoughts entertained, which themselves are determined by the nature of the ideal in the mind.

Modern education gives you data but never an ideal. Is it not true? Think! Through all these years of study, has the education you received given you an ideal? You may certainly have ideals, ideals given by your parents or elders at home – not the University – such as wanting to serve the society, which brought you to medical college in the first place. The university gave you at the most only a certificate! When the entire country is

without an ideal, the thoughts of its people are selfish and their actions unsocial and contrary to community living. People then start blaming the younger generation and fearing for the future of the country.

Religion or philosophy gives us the technique of right living and art of maintaining correct relationships with all around us that constitutes our world, irrespective of our walk of life. *What is the goal of life?* If it is the mere satisfaction of the biological urge, then in what way are we different from the four-legged ones? Does not a buffalo also satisfy its biological urge whenever it feels like? Food, clothing, shelter, admittedly are required at the bare minimum. But is that all there is to be lived for? We have got love, we have got ambitions, we demand respect and reverence.... At this moment precisely because you are human, what all responsibilities are therein! Even physically it is explained that when the animal stands on its four legs, its head, its heart, its belly and its genital organs are all on one line, parallel to the earth. But when this animal learns to walk on its hind legs, then the entire arrangement is changed. The head is on the top, then the heart, then the belly, followed by the rest. Clearly, ***biologically and anatomically, man's glory is in living up to his intellectual convictions*** without compromising with his emotions. Then only when

satisfied emotionally and intellectually, does the belly have any significance, and finally thereafter alone, all the other urges of life. But unfortunately today, in the modern world, man seems to be standing the other way round; all other things are most important; the next best is the belly, thereafter wards some cheap emotions and at the very end only some are respecting their intellectual convictions in life.

Man must learn to live up to his convictions - sacrifice everything, if need be his very life, to honour his convictions. It is only such an individual that even today inspires the world. When we read and examine the life history of great men and enquire sincerely 'who is a great man?', is the answer the fellow who lived constantly for that which is below the belly? Is it the fool who was living on cheap emotions that won our respect and reverence? Are not Christ or Mohammed respected for their staunch convictions and the noble virtues of life that they embodied? They refused to compromise with their ideals, whatever the circumstances, facing all adversity with a smile, in the joyous ecstasy of fulfilment. Such are the characters that have been inspiring the world from time immemorial. Even today among you if there is a student who is capable of living up to his own convictions, let's say as



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a teetotaller, straight, firm in principles; his future success is hardly surprising, even to be expected. So the one with authority over his own intellect; who rules over the passions of his own mind and flesh, living for the higher and nobler or the evolved aspect of his personality, that man is truly prepared for a greater achievement in life.

Friends, as human beings, this is the only privilege that you have got! The glory of the human over the animal is that he has a rational intellect. It is not befitting to voluntarily surrender that rational intellect and choose to continue to live on as two-legged animals. Such are the cheap men of the world who though physiologically human, are psychologically still only animal. These are all aberrations of the human species, not 'real men', with integrated minds, living a life of self-control. *To live up to your convictions, to chasten those convictions by the study of the examples of the mighty men who had lived in the past, this is what religion calls for, and thus to live uncompromisingly the greater ideas and ideals, and bring forth the greater fervour of our personality, and live a noble, worthwhile life, serving everybody all round, without compromising with our little or cheap, moment to moment passions. **This in short is spirituality or religion.***

One can live a noble life, achieve great things for oneself

and *more* for the society around, in all walks of life - as an engineer or a doctor, as an ordinary farmer or an innocent politician - if only we have these noble convictions in ourselves. *The science of this self-development is called Philosophy.* In order for the conclusions of this pure science to be beneficial to the society, it has to be technologically implemented within the society, just as mathematics (a Pure Science) cannot serve the world, but requires the field of Applied Science. Similarly, the methods by which the scientific truths expounded in the Pure Science of Philosophy is rendered practical in the world, is the applied science or technology we know as Religion. The mighty Masters and prophets of the past have exemplified and clearly demonstrated this in their own living; they went further and documented for us in the scriptures the technology, the 'know-how' of how each one of us can translate these ideals into our everyday life. *This aspect of the technology is called Religion.*

Religion is the gymnasium where these great scientific truths of the philosophy are practised subjectively within, so that our body and mind are brought in line with our intellectual convictions, and all our activities reflect the resulting inner harmony. The individual who has achieved an integration of his physical, mental and intellectual

personalities, is called the mighty man of the age. The various methods by which this integration can be achieved is called 'yoga' in Hinduism, and prayer or worship in all other religions. The common theme is that if these methods are diligently practised, we can gain a mastery over our own cheap, momentary passions of the body, as well as the emotional fluctuations of the mind. Our own discriminating intellect can govern and control these at all times, so that we are not only conscious of the outer world, but we also become aware of the wrong notes that have been raised by either the mind or body in our own inner life.

One who is thus adjusting and attuning himself at all times to live a better life, creating more happiness and sense of fulfilment within himself, and producing more results for the benefit of the world, that individual is a truly religious man. Such a person lives in constant awareness and a watchfulness of his own instruments, and such a way of life constitutes true religion at its best.

In today's modern times every young man wants only a 'comfortable life', which is basically minimum work, maximum profit! This equates to a goal of 'democratic socialism' for the entire country. How can a country ever achieve this if everyone wants to give minimum but



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take maximum? Therefore, it is crucial that every individual chastens his mental attitude, which is but the silent cry of all religions and philosophy. Man must learn to imitate Nature; in nature we observe that everything noble in the world has always been giving rather than taking. Has the sun ever asked a dividend? He just pours out energy. The rivers, the ocean, the wind, the air, the sky - look around everywhere; the trees, the plants, the animals, everyone of them, unintelligent though they be, nature's law seems to be 'give', 'give'. It is only the 'intelligent' man, who wants everybody else to give, but not himself! A man of true self-respect is one who produces and gives back to the world more than he takes, and in so doing he wins our respect.

Whenever we have thus gone away from nature, problems have started, whether at international or national level; inter or intra-communal trouble, inter-family trouble, or within the family, a quarrel between the father and the son, all can be attributed to this. It is all because this **principle of giving** has been broken.

So what you as doctors and we as *Swamis* have in common is our dedication. Those who have not married, stop right there! If you want to serve, do not marry or else you will end up pleading to the government to appoint yourself and your

spouse to the same hospital, or having a thousand other such considerations. To have the privilege and joy of serving the world outside, you will have to make sacrifices of your own personal comforts. Thus it was the self-dedicated workers who were all the doctors and the *mahatmas* in the past; this is the simple reason why medicine has always been associated with the *mahatmas* and *sadhus* in India, in the monasteries in Christianity or in the mosque in Mohammedanism. Why were they dedicated to a church, mosque or temple? For the simple reason that they were all fit for serving the society constantly, for the very *joy of service*. In the West (and now also in India) it has been reduced to becoming a profession and a lucrative one! The main consideration is how much money can be made out of it.

The very first few stanzas of the *Ayurvedic shastras* instruct the *Ayurvedic* physician not to accept any money for his service; whatever is given by the patient out of gratitude is to be received as *prasad* from the Lord. He is advised to accept that as the Lord's Grace and live accordingly with the barest minimum of needs. The *vaidya's* (doctor's) joy is the **joy of serving** others and reducing their sorrows, rather than the joy of hoarding wealth. To hoard wealth one can go and conduct business in the big city, which is the place to make

money. But the purpose of this sacred profession is to relieve the pain of others and gather the wealth of the inner joy of fulfilment.

*Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om!*

*Now then come on! Any questions please?*

### Q/A Session with Swami Chinmayananda

**Question 1:** *In your speech you said look at nature and try to imbibe nature, then why not marry? It is just a biological function – continuation of species. So what is wrong in this?*

**Answer:** A very sacred and salient question. When I said, 'if you are not married, please don't', it is not a statement as 'Thou shalt not marry'. The meaning is 'wait, watch, and if you find that you cannot live without a partner, have one. ONE. The idea friends, is this. Now let us analyse very carefully. If you look at the lives of great artists, research scholars, great thinkers, geniuses across all walks of life, you will see that they are all very unhappily married. It is not *they* are unhappy – *their wives are unhappy*. The man has his entire energy and intellectual enthusiasm turned towards his science or his art, and as a result has become mentally indifferent to certain homely duties. When you divert your mental energies to a higher climb of vision and when you have a





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mission in life, the biological urges are not so powerful as you now think. They are most prominent to the unemployed rich person, who has plenty of food and no mental anxiety for tomorrow's food.

But one who has got a goal, an ambition in life, whether it is to make a great name for himself, or to make a success of his own profession, that man has no time for anything. While a rich fellow, with no work to do would be complaining from morning onwards – he has got nothing else to do. Poor man! His mental energy, where will he throw it away? And therefore it dissipates into sensuality etc.

If in case you are true doctors of tomorrow, and want to reach the top of your profession, perhaps even represent our country amongst the competent other nations, certainly it will be a full time commitment - hence the remark that if you have not done.....don't. But if you must, have one. One, underlined! You understand why I am saying this - it is not that I am against marriage. But let me explain from a wider angle. If you have a little less responsibility you can be more independent. For instance, supposing now, you are already a married man, and having passed your examination you have got the feeling that *'I must go to the village and practise, because in the village there is nobody to*

*serve – let me go and serve'*, - you cannot leave so easily because you have certain obligations towards your father-in-law! You may plan to do so after he goes, but such father-in-laws will never die for your convenience! By then, the children too have arrived and have got accustomed to a certain lifestyle and standard of education – so it is not so easy to uproot oneself and go to the village to work. So therefore for the rest of your lifetime you live with this one regret – others may be congratulating you as a successful man, but in your heart, this regret lingers. What is it? *'I wanted to work in the village among the poor, but I could not'*. All because of this one bother on your head. Therefore, wait.....what is wrong? After all, what is the hurry burry about? The world is not going anywhere!

In the case of the animal, during the breeding season, the animals are wholly prompted by instinct and impulses and have not the intellect to control. But let not man also become an animal, that just because the biological urge exists and surfaces, he must be swayed by it. Why should he not control? Why not **redirect that energy into a greater field of a greater ambit of life?** Is it not that as the examination nears, the student controls the urge to go to the cinema, or a cricket match and applies that energy in the field of study.

Anyone who wishes to live a worthwhile life lives in self-control, whereas one who has nothing worthwhile to do, indulges in sensuality. This is the glory of *tapas*. *Tapas* is the method by which, our channels of self-dissipation of energy are all dammed, controlled and we discover a new column of energy within. That column of energy is redirected to creative fields and thus the individual grows in creativity. So this is the context of my statement - but if I have wounded your feelings, my apologies.

The theme of married life in Hinduism is glorious and without any compunctions! It is not considered the 'first sin' in Hinduism – we never believed that it is a sin; it is natural. It is only said, *live in self-control*, so that all our energies are not dissipated. In *Bhaja Govindam* Shankara says "*sukhatah kriyate raamaabhogah*" - that is '*raamabhogah*' (enjoyment of rama or women) is '*sukhatah*' (readily available or without any training). That is to say training is not necessary to develop sensuality – man instinctively does it, just give him the opportunity. But '*paschaat* (later on), '*dhanta*', (what a pity!) '*shareere roгах*' – the body starts getting diseases. Why? Dissipation leads to lower resistance. The resistance power is gone due to over indulgence. This over indulgence can be physical, mental or intellectual. An



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excessively worrying or fearful nature can also lower your immunity.

So while sensuality need not be taught, spirituality is an evolutionary process and therefore *must* be taught. In mountaineering for instance, one is only instructed how to climb the mountain but to descend no instruction is required. It is sheer devotion to fall back to the animal level of living. Even the best of men, promising leaders of the future, have fallen prey to this over indulgence. As a carefree student, in the bloom of youth, you may not be affected, but later on, the intellect is dissipated, emotional balance is gone and the person is physically debilitated. So even though you may have come out as a good man, a promising youngster for serving the society, you may not have it in you, in the end.

So again, if you have got a great ambition (all will not have it), and if you have got the courage to live alone (everybody cannot), this is the message. If however, psychologically, you cannot face the world alone and want a companion, then very well - have a '*sahadharmacharini*'. This is the Sanskrit term for a companion to live the noble life with. Go ahead - I have nothing against marriage please. Marriage is necessary or else none of us would have been here - we are each the product of it. But my caution

is do not be in a hurry, rather wait and watch. If you get a mission in life, grab that or else go ahead and settle down with your chosen partner.

**Question 2:** *Swamiji, what is the prescription for teaching these ideas? At what age and how is it to be taught ?*

**Answer:** Religion should not be taught as part of a formal curriculum in the schools and colleges, because any such preset 'scriptural class' has invariably low attendance. But this great Science can be trained by various methods.

Under the '*Balvikas*' scheme that has been worked out by my Mission, we have a method by which, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> standard onwards in the schools, slowly we start instilling these ideas into the children. '*Vikasam*' meaning blushing or blossoming forth; '*balak*' meaning children.

In today's system of mass education, it is more appropriate to give training to the teachers themselves and not to the students. The Professors, Principals and Headmasters of schools and colleges are given an orientation at a training centre, say about 3 weeks a year, for 4 or 5 years. In this period they absorb some of the wonderful ideas that the centres are founded upon - the centres themselves are concerned with teaching the underlying science behind the philosophy, to improve

the people and children who come there, not merely turn them into professionals and throw them away, but create mighty, human personalities. When the teacher *himself* has thus got it in him, he cannot but talk of it, even though he may be talking Medicine, Engineering, Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry. *But if he has got it in him, it will come out of him at all moments.* When he is thus talking, it is the personality that is talking, and his natural convictions will spring forth. So even when the teacher digresses, his story or example will reflect his convictions and this is what captures his young audience, and the real learning begins. So our advice to the teachers is learn to soak it in yourself, be honest on the platform, in the classroom, and these ideas will spring forth convincingly and effectively.

Secondly, we all learn better by seeing rather than by hearing - all medical professionals will agree that you learn much more just by looking over the shoulder of another man performing a surgery and watching. Children always understand more by the eyes than by the ears. *Therefore it is not only preaching, but it must be precept.* If in the classroom the teacher says 'Silence' but is himself always visibly noisy, the children will not respect his wishes. The teacher has to be precise, perfect, ever cheerful, ever clean and punctual. As parents also, we can train our



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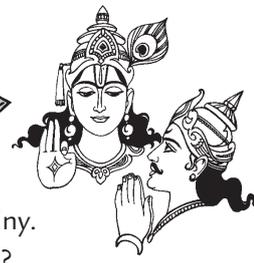
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children by our precepts rather than by our words. Therefore the teachers are trained thus under this *Balavikasa* to be ideal teachers.

In the universities, we are developing a 'scheme of study' for students who would like to take up the study - we send people to talk to them of Hinduism, or rather the system of science, of true living, as expounded in the universal textbooks called the *Upanishads*. Such Hindu study centres have been instituted in the various colleges.

Furthermore, there are study groups whereby textbooks are prescribed and studied, in a particular sequence, so that the ideas are developed and assimilated step by step. Study group members meet and discuss among themselves. They are sent postal tuitions every fortnight, as well as a question paper, to check understanding, and this way they get all the required fundamentals. This is particularly suited to foreign students since they are used to the system of self-study, under the guidance of a professor, who provides a 'reading-list' of books to be researched independently.

So these are the different schemes, but in all cases, **it is precept, precept alone.** Many a time we have heard the older generation remark how a professor of their time influenced his students, not by

words but by his very sincerity and way of life. Such Masters are not now available but 'precept' is the sure method of changing and bringing about cultural beauty in the country; similarly in politics also our rulers, supervisors and superiors must have the ideals, and thus when that has been accepted the entire scheme can be changed.

**Question 3:** *Swamiji, we have studied that 'Example is better than precept' but you say that by precept alone is the method of changing and bringing cultural beauty?*

**Answer:** Now then *precept* is when the example is **lived** by the preceptor. In that sense of the term we have instructors today but not preceptors. Instruction is data, facts. Preceptors are those who give not only the data, but support it by their own example. They must exemplify their own ideals in their actual living.

**Question 4:** *Swamiji, The East generally live upon faith - faith meaning they call it 'prarabdha', fate or destiny. The Westerner says, 'no you are wrong, it is all one's wilful action. Which is right - please explain?*

**Answer:** The question asked is whether it is destiny or action that is powerful. In the language of Eastern philosophy - whether *prarabdha* (destiny) is powerful or *purushartha* (actions undertaken by one's own will) is powerful? By my own wilful

actions I create my destiny. Which is more powerful?

Now then friends, it is natural for the scientific intellect in man to seek the cause for every effect he observes. Causation hunting is the pre-occupation of the human intellect. This is how science has developed, by finding out 'why?', 'how?', 'when?', 'where?'. Now at the moment I am a *sannyasin* - but why? Why not a doctor or an engineer? The eastern man will say it is my destiny while the westerner will consider it as wilful action on my part. Both are right.

I am a *swami* now, talking to you the philosophy of India, because in the past for about 20 years I have been studying only that. If however I had gone through an engineering or law college, I would have been an engineer or lawyer meaning *I am today, the sum total of my past*. So it is for every individual - no exception - whether Christian, Muslim or Hindu. So this is not about Hinduism, but it is a scientific fact that today we are each the sum total of our entire past - physical, emotional, intellectual. Physically, you are the sum total of what you have already eaten, digested, assimilated and burnt up - the balance, the bank balance is your physical body. Similarly, your emotions, similarly your intellectual abilities and capacities.

Even though thus I am a child



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of my past, as far as my future is concerned (since the law is that at any given moment you are the sum total of the past), with reference to a future period of time, you will be again the child of the entire past. Naturally therefore, the present is going to be the past of my future. So today what I am doing is changing slowly my destiny of a future period, that is ***the present is not only the product of the past, but it is also the springboard for the future.*** Just as a man can be both son and father, with reference to his own father and son respectively, the present too is both child of the past and father of the future. Put another way, even though I am an effect with the reference to the past, I am the cause with reference to the future.

Since the present is the confluence of the past and future, everything in the present has got intimate connection with the past and the future. I am merely a destiny, destined to be what I am, only with reference to my past; for instance if I really want to become a doctor tomorrow, by studying hard and attending medical college, it can be achieved. What is the difficulty? So that is the future – you need not go to a *pundit* or an astrologer, ***the future is the past, modified in the present.*** Similarly a drunkard of today, is a product of his past lifestyle (destiny); but whether he remains so or becomes a teetotaler in the future

depends on him. **So then your life is in your hands.**

With reference to the past, as we have ordered, is our life. The blueprint we already designed in the past; if in the future we desire another design, *change the blueprint, thought by thought, action by action.* We are ordering the future in every moment now. Choose your thoughts, keep the right ideal, pour forth your efforts with enthusiasm. Where is a man where he cannot gain what he wants? But he has to have the sagacity and that conviction - that arduous sincerity. So the eastern man is right because he is talking of the present with reference to the past – he is helpless, he has to live through it. The western man is right because he is talking of tomorrow, that in whatever condition he is, he shall make his destiny of tomorrow, therefore everyone of us is at this moment both the victim of the past and the architect of the future.

Therefore our *shastras* say what you meet in life is ordered by the past. But how you meet it is called the will power, or *purushartha* which creates our future. What you meet in life – poverty, lack of self-confidence, subjectively broken down environment - all these are ordered by the individual's past. Many people have been in adverse circumstances but by the dint of their determination, have risen beyond. Others - children of

rich fathers – do not go on to become successful in their own right, no matter how much they are pushed by the father.

The future is always open. You can make or unmake it, by putting forth the right effort in the right direction. You can give the right direction and purpose of your life, this is the freedom of man. But at any given moment, he is the product of the past. Vedanta says *look ahead*, don't look backwards. The past is dead and gone – nothing can be done. But 'do' vitally in the present. Create your future – *go ahead. Look Ahead.* Don't worry – move, and thus take your life in your own hands. Be an architect of life. Create a good blueprint right now. Part by part let it be accomplished and thus make the temple of your own life wonderful, for which you must have an ideal in your mind - and that ideal may be religion, spirituality, political ideologies etc. Some ideal is necessary. If there is no ideal, one would be selfish. To live in selfishness is to court disaster for ourselves and for others around. So *this is Purushartha and Prarabdha.*

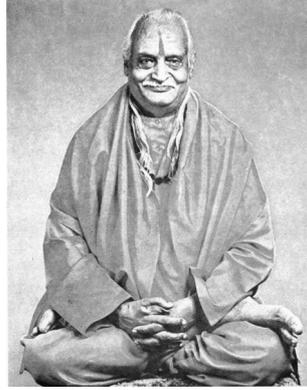
**Question 5:** *Swamiji, they say there is a past life. What is the past life? Purvajanma and its effects on this life?*

**Answer:** The question is - is there a past life? Honestly speaking, had we been in a temple under a tree, I would have said there is a past life



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Brahmagnau Brahmana Hutam,  
Brahmai'va Tena Gantavyam  
Brahmakarma Samadhina**

*The act of offering in sacrificing is Brahma, the oblation is Brahma,  
the sacrificer himself is Brahma, the sacrificial fire as well is Brahma;  
Brahma verily he attains, who realizes the presence of Brahma in action.  
B.G. ch.4, v.24.*



- listeners there would have accepted because of the colour of my clothes. But here at Manipal University, I become very scientific. I can neither give you first hand information about whether there was a past life (I don't remember it) and nor can I demonstrate or discuss with you if there is a life after death, since the only method by which this can be done is against the law of the country! So scientifically, don't ask me to demonstrate; however there are very many things that scientifically cannot be demonstrated, yet the human intellect is capable of understanding.

For instance, while you cannot 'prove' that you have a great, great, great grandfather and you may never have seen him, *intellectually you perceive the possibility of it*. Because if I say I am, then I must have a cause. Similarly, we saw every present moment is the product of the past. Then what is *my* cause? When do I say 'I', 'I'?' With all due reverence to our respective forefathers who gave us the initial capital for a physical body - in this physical body, I live now, and not my father. 'I' meaning, my mind and intellect, my feelings and my thoughts - *my personality*. A bare equipment is needed for the personality to 'enter' into, and this is what is provided by the father and developed by the mother. Once the child in the womb starts to develop features and begins to have independent movement, it is

considered to be a conscious entity.

Now this *Jiva Bhavana*, this individuality, enters the womb. Why? Because of its past. Why do 'I' choose that particular womb, to identify and enter into that child, and be an entity, an individual, separate from my father? *That* must have been because I, as an entity, demanded this physical body and this environment to exhaust my demands. On analysis, when one considers the different types of people in the world outside, the only satisfactory explanation is that there must be a continuity of progress.

Evolving through the various equipments the consciousness is spreading out, *evolving*. Apart from the biological evolution, there is the *personality evolution*; from the unicellular organism, the process of evolution has been plant life to animal life, and then into the rational human being. In the stone there is no consciousness, while in the plant kingdom, there is slight consciousness - an awareness of water vapour and sunlight only for photosynthesis purposes. Thereafter, in the animal, certainly there is more consciousness, and the human being is very apparently *conscious*. The animal is totally unaffected by the Vietnam problem, but as humans we are conscious and sensitive, so that what is happening in another part of the world

brings joy and sorrow in our bosom.

Thus developments in biological evolution are addressed by Darwin's Theory. But Darwin was a biologist and therefore he looked only at this packet - the physical body - and its development. The philosopher however, looked at the personality that expresses *through* the packets, its contents; he found that as the packing improved, the contents also improved i.e. where there was no consciousness in the stone, slightly awakened up in the plant, more in the animal, maximum in man. Therefore the scheme of nature should be from no consciousness to slight consciousness, more consciousness, most consciousness - naturally therefore *what should be the goal?..... Pure Consciousness*.

This is the scientific basis of Self-Realisation, *Ishwara Darshan* or God Realisation - *nirvana* in the language of the prophets. To a certain extent, biologically also we can understand and experience it - in the silent moments of deep contemplation or prayer, there is a widening of consciousness, a winging forth of our expansion within ourselves and a sense of great tranquillity and peace. At other times, our tranquillity, joy or peace are broken because of our identification with our body, mind and intellect. These are the three cantankerous and



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cancerous sources from which all the pains and agitations of life eke out.

The more we release ourselves from this equipment and transcend it altogether, there is a greater expansion of Infinite beatitude experienced by the seeker, and in the Pure Consciousness and Awareness,

all scriptures declare, is the *Infinite Tranquillity*, the Beatitude of Lord, the experience of Transcendence, the acme of evolution and the peak of development.

Well, these are the pointers shown; how far it is true I don't know, my friends. But, we will all together try. But let

us be at this moment - be in this world itself, now. Don't try for God now, let us try to improve our intellect, our own emotions, our own human personality in the world, and be of more use to the society and useful to ourselves.

Thank You. Hari Om!



**U Turn!**

Swami Chinmayananda at the St. Louis crystal factory in France 1983. Photograph by Kamal Bhavnani

31

**U Turn!**

"You can" is the confident assurance given by all masters to everyone who has approached them for guidance.

**You change, and the world around you will change!**

Change the texture of your thoughts and your life will change.

Without changing the old, the new dimensions of life and living cannot be achieved. **You have to give up imitating the false values of others around you.** Stop living blindly a stamped blue-print of life supplied by the fashions of the times, or by the sensuous men who seek their fulfillment in a fruitless life of mere sense indulgences.

Just living the routine life of any unintelligent imitation of others in society is the surest way to plunge into a passionate life of sensuality. All psychological cowards, often unconsciously live this life of escapism. This sense of 'escapism' is detrimental to any great achievement.

The thick coating of memories and desires in one's personality takes away one's moral fire. In spite of man's self-glorification and social status, he is indeed a coward to himself with no confidence in his own goodness.

**If you compromise due to lack of courage, you must have the heroism to suffer for it.**

Audio Cassettes:  
You change! by Swami Chinmayananda  
How to Master the Mind by Swami Tejomayananda  
The Science of Life Management by Swami Swaroopananda

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Cartoon courtesy "Say Cheese - Witty Wisdom" by Swami Chinmayananda, Published Aug 2004, by Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), Mumbai, India"



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# *A Holistic Approach to Business Management: Perspectives from The Bhagavad Gita*

*Charles Chow Hoi Hee*

## **Introduction**

Business is about meeting market demand by having the capability, capital and connections (3Cs) to sustain cashflow for the generation of profit. These 3Cs are cardinal features for an *aptitude* towards competition. However, business thrives on truth and integrity, and more importantly the *attitude* towards customers, stakeholders and society – to maintain mutual trust and the management of expectations. Development for aptitude is usually evidence-based and profit-centric. Cultivation of attitude is experience-based and purpose-centric.

Today, there is professional specialization in many aspects of management, e.g. Human Resources, Real Estate, Wealth, etc. However, there is still limited research on the *essence of management*.

Early analysis by Henri Fayol divided management into five elements (i.e. plan, organize, command, co-ordinate and control). According to Peter Drucker, a manager does his work by getting other people to do theirs. So, business management would include communication and commitment, in addition to the 3Cs.

Together, these 5Cs would encapsulate the essence of business management. Debate continues on whether a manager needs to be leader in order to be efficient or effective, including the balance between IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional quotient). But ultimately, all endeavors should prepare a manager for decision-making and implementation whenever a business opportunity strikes.

To bridge the gap between

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profit-centric and purpose-centric management, this presentation extracts wisdom from an ancient Hindu scripture. Part 1 is an overview of The Bhagavad Gita while Part 2 specifies its application to the 5Cs. For the purpose of this paper, the application of the Gita is examined from the perspectives of a manager (the decision maker) and that of a company, i.e. the legal person for doing business. These considerations are then consolidated into a Management Grid in the concluding Part 3.

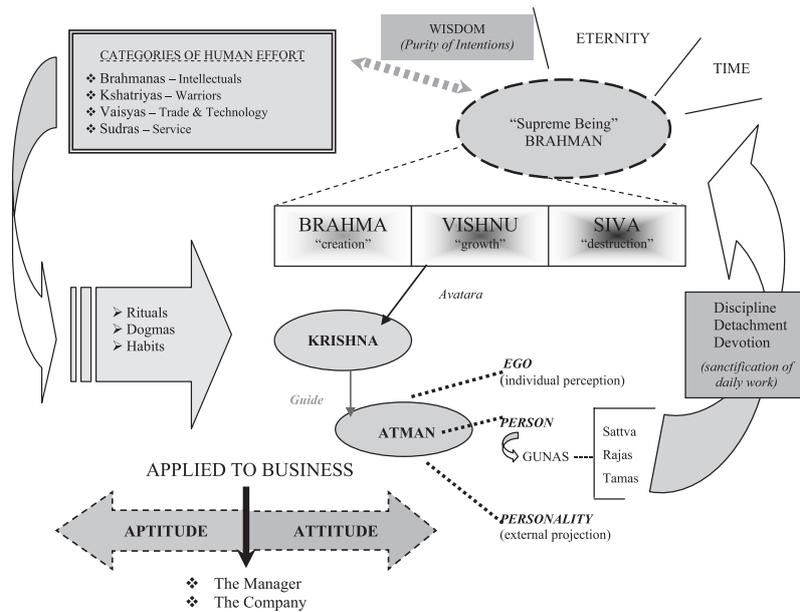


Exhibit A: THE GITA ILLUSTRATED

### Part 1: The Bhagavad Gita

The first English translation of The Bhagavad Gita was in 1785 by Sir Charles Wilkins. This Hindu epic is part of the Mahabharata written by Rishi Veda Vyasa that is considered as the world's longest poem. The earliest of the 100,000 verses could have been orally composed around 3140 BC. Written documentations are dated between 300 BC and 200 AD. In the Gita, there are 700 *shlokas* (verses). Being Chapters 25 to 42 of the epic, the Gita is a little shrine in the huge temple of the Mahabharata.

The Mahabharata recounts a feud between cousins that ended in a war in Kurukshetra, now a barren field in the state of Haryana of modern India. The Bhagavad Gita is an episode

in this war. It captures the dialogue between Ajurna, a warrior, and Krishna, his chariot driver, one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the Hindu God of Growth.

As illustrated in Exhibit A, the Hindus believe in a "Supreme Being" called **Brahman**. This is without qualities and attributes, neither existent nor non-existent. It is universal consciousness in eternity. This entity is not a denial of time or devoid of history, but a transfiguration of time akin to infinity.

Our entire world is basically not real. It seems real to those who live in ignorance. Endless chains of cause and effect (*karma*) bind individuals to a cosmic process (*samsara*). Redemption (*moksha*) is only through wisdom: dissolving the ego so that the

enlightened can freely and knowingly engage in chance and choice with perfect bliss. Although the world is not fulfilling a prearranged plan mechanically, such engagement would however involve human effort that the Hindus divide into four categories: *Brahmanas* (Intellectuals), *Kshatriyas* (Warriors), *Vaisiyas* (Trade & Finance) and *Sudras* (Service). Each category is unique. Yet, the quality of individual action lies not in performance, but in the motive or desire that prompts it. Actually, wisdom is always present, yet it takes the purity of intentions to reveal it. Unlike knowledge that can be acquired by learning, wisdom is born out of insight.

Another manifestation of Brahman is the "Divine Trinity" comprising *Brahma*



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(creative force), *Vishnu* (preserving force) and *Siva* (destructive force). All reinforce one another, existing concurrently. Whenever evil forces threaten to destroy human values, an **Avatara** or a descent of the Divine in human form appears. In the Gita, Krishna represents the embodiment of Vishnu. This guide is more to awaken than to instruct. When a student is ready, the teacher appears.

Also, deep inside everyone is **Atman** that cannot be extinguished by death, decay or corruption. So, the Supreme Being is actually within everyone. But not everyone is operating this link, therefore the cause for suffering. Since every physical form is the result of an inside tension, the human person enjoys an outward personality (e.g. extrovert, introvert) while restraining the ego (viz. pride, dignity, lust) by managing the **gunas**. These comprise **sattva** (lightness/goodness) that brings happiness/harmony, **rajas** (movement/passion) that ignites action/activity, and **tamas** (ignorance/inertia) that leads to delusion/confusion. They individually and jointly influence the psychophysical condition of a person.

Sanctification of daily work is by **detachment** from fruits of labour, **devotion** to duty, and the **discipline** to persevere for wisdom. Common distortions to such efforts

are the adherence to **rituals** like extravagant ceremonies, **dogmas** like mandatory routes of advancement for career development and multiple redundancies in contingencies, and **habits** especially in business entertaining that distract the link to and disturb the acceptance of one's own essential nature.

So, every individual manager and company would have an inherent **APTITUDE**: Brahmanas are those in research and development, think tanks and corporate planning. The Kshatriyas are those in marketing, sales, investor relations, benchmarking as well as those in physical security and espionage. The Vaisyas are naturally in finance, logistics and trade-related operations. Reinforcing all are the Sundras who are service providers ranging from receptionist (call centers), toilet cleaner (contractors) to CEO or bureaucrat and politician, i.e. anyone with intangible but vital service contribution to a business value chain.

The **ATTITUDE** in business can be attributed to the **gunas**, reinforced by individual discipline, detachment and devotion.

Therefore, as illustrated in Exhibit A, the various categories of human effort denote **CAPABILITY**. The

rituals, dogmas and habits are gateways to **CONNECTIONS**, especially to competitors and supporters. Individual management of the gunas is the most important **CAPITAL**, and the orifice in **COMMUNICATION** is the humble acceptance of the Krishna-Atman guidance. **COMMITMENT** is through discipline, detachment and devotion. Hence, all 5Cs are contained in The Bhagavad Gita.

### Overview of the Applications of The Bhagavad Gita to Business

The eighteen chapters of the Gita can be divided into three six-chapter parts. The first third deals with karma yoga (ways of selfless action), the second with jnana yoga (ways of self-knowledge), and the last with bhakti yoga (ways of love, devotions). "Yoga" literally means "link". Meditation is the process, while yoga is the result, the connection. The following tables (given in the subsequent pages) list the chapter summaries with the associated business applications:

### Part 2: Specific Business Applications From The Bhagavad Gita

The yogas described the tables discussed above, aspire to link ordinary man with the Divine. In mundane business, there are basically



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Karma Yoga



selfless action requires **DISCIPLINE**

CHAPTER SUMMARIES	APPLICATION TO BUSINESS	
	THE MANAGER	THE COMPANY
<p><b>Chapter 1 SELF-DOUBT:</b> Overcome by the need to kill own relatives, Arjuna gives up his determination to fight.</p>	<p>Paralysis of analysis.</p>	<p>Quantitative justifications do not warrant the business, yet for the sake of long-term relationship an engagement needs to be made.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 2 SPIRITUALITY OF BEING:</b> Death is only an illusion. The soul travels from life to life by changing the body as a garment. Controlling material pleasures strengthens individual will. More important is to subdue possessiveness and egocentricity.</p>	<p>The corporation prevails, in spite of regular changes in management personnel.</p>	<p>Succession planning to include transmission of tacit knowledge and the assurance of continuity in corporate culture and mission.</p> <p>Bankruptcy, mergers and acquisitions service the market, not individuals.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 3 SELFLESS ACTION:</b> By aligning with the supreme purpose of the universe, a self-realised person enjoys the pleasure from within while instilling compassion in others.</p>	<p>Develop and remain relevant with niche competencies that service a specific market segment or industry.</p> <p>Lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Corporate social responsibility to share benefits and improvements with society at location.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 4 WISDOM IN ACTION:</b> There is a need for a guru to guide. Wisdom is the end of selfless action. Knowing is the fruit of doing.</p>		<p>Participate in relevant industry councils and provide shared opportunities, especially in international tenders.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 5 SANCTIFICATION OF WORK:</b> A detached worker performs dutifully with own rhythm and purpose. This person sees divine essence in all beings.</p>	<p>Win-win options, always with an abundance attitude: The pie is big enough for all.</p>	<p>Co-opetition (cooperate while competing) including in the development of innovations.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 6 MEDITATION:</b> Meditation tames the turbulent mind. Once in full consciousness of the Supreme Being (<i>samadhi</i>), the person lives in spiritual freedom (<i>moksha</i>). But, this is extremely rare. Only few have attained brief glimpses.</p>	<p>Frequent examination of key performance indicators bring order, with order individual time is multiplied.</p>	<p>Structure follows strategy, but always with back-up/standby plans during execution.</p>



**Exhibit B: APPLICATION OF KARMA YOGA TO BUSINESS**

Source: The Author

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES	APPLICATION TO BUSINESS	
	THE MANAGER	THE COMPANY
<p><b>Chapter 7 SUPREME TRUTH:</b> Everything is <i>prakriti</i> (lifeless and dark) until illuminated <i>purusha</i> (efficient cause). The three <i>gunas</i> create forms and illusions.</p>	<p>Reality checks - know own resources and influence. Work within such boundaries. Leverage on extended networks, if possible.</p>	<p>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis for appraisal of prevailing situation. However, these will change with time.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 8 UNITY WITH THE SUPREME:</b> Always rebirth except when united with Krishna at the time of death. In meditation, focus all energies to the head while repeating the syllable “OM” to resonant with the Supreme Spirit.</p>	<p>Unity of life – congruence of work, play and family binding body, mind and soul.</p>	<p>Esprit de corps – convergence of purpose for a motivated team.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 9 DEVOTION:</b> With purity of will and freedom from selfish motives, even a sinner who takes wholehearted refuge, becomes good.</p>	<p>Purity of intentions is key to own wisdom. But be prudent by accepting truth with tact.</p>	<p>“Stick to the Knitting”, remain focused on the deliverables. Be honest with customers, employees and stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 10 ALIGNMENT:</b> Verses 8 - 11 are the gist of Gita, i.e. Krishna is the source of all spiritual wisdom. Loving devotion to Him dispels ignorance and brings forth happiness and fulfillment.</p>	<p>Guidance is always available, therefore “ask”. Be humble.</p>	<p>Remain relevant to market demand. Change is constant, speed is king.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 11 UNIVERSAL FORM:</b> Krishna reveals to Arjuna his various manifestations from human form to a supernatural fire consuming the entire universe.</p>	<p>Dare to dream - vision of an entrepreneur.</p>	<p>Who is the customer ? Otherwise create one.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 12 DIVINE QUALITIES:</b> The faithful will develop divine qualities: friendly, compassionate, look upon friend and foe with equal regard, not agitating the world nor being agitated by it, grieves not, lusts not but let things come and go as they happen.</p>	<p>Courtesy and decorum lubricate social interactions.</p> <p>Detachment services a human need beyond Maslow’s self-actualization.</p>	



Exhibit C: **APPLICATION OF JNANA YOGA TO BUSINESS**

Source: The Author

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES	APPLICATION TO BUSINESS	
	THE MANAGER	THE COMPANY
Chapter 13 DETACHMENT: <i>Akasha</i> is a space that remains pure even in the midst of unpure things, so the Supreme Self can never be tainted even though it dwells in every creature.	Respect private space, otherwise burnout.	Corporate retreat, to jointly recharge and plan ahead.
Chapter 14 WISDOM TRANSCENDS KNOWLEDGE: Those who have gone beyond the <i>gunas</i> become steadfast and impartial.	Sincere about own efforts, yet nothing is impossible with a willing mind.	Unity in diversity, tolerance for mavericks to ensure business continuity.
Chapter 15 THE SUPREME SELF: There is a Supreme Self that is part of Krishna. It becomes the inner Self in every creature. It enters the body at conception, dwells in the body and departs at death. It is the vitality and the propulsion of the body. This is Atman.	Reputation goes before a manager and lingers on after his death.	Branding and brand value developed in accordance with business constitution.
Chapter 16 DIVINE AND DEMONIC NATURES: Everyone has divine and demonic tendencies. Avoid lust, anger and greed while containing pride and selfish desires. Give freely, be sincere, be compassionate and gentle.		Specify corporate dos and don'ts in a Credo, endorse in Standard Operating Procedures with regular reviews and updates.
Chapter 17 FAITH: Every person is his faith, expressed in his worship and the type of food preferred. However, no act or intention can be added to spiritual growth if it is "faithless". All work done without faith is nothing.	Not just drive but also have determination to ensure success.	Management by Objectives, Management by Exception, Servant Leadership.
Chapter 18 RENUNCIATION: By devotion to one's duty, everyone can attain perfection by controlling speech, body and mind. Do not share Gita's wisdom with those who are not ready.	Non disclosure agreements; Embargoes.	Limited circulation on "need to know" basis.



Exhibit D: APPLICATION OF BHAKTI YOGA TO BUSINESS

Source: The Author

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four types of managers that are not mutually exclusive. The first group believes in “*doing things right*” and resist change (conservatives). The second relishes change and believes in “*doing the right things*” (entrepreneurs). The third group represents change and also *gets others to do things* that are perceived to be right (leaders). Lastly are those who *complicate the issues about being “right”* (politicians). However, all these managers would need to optimize their 5Cs for profitability and productivity. Detailed below are specific extracts from the Gita to apply to business:

**Capital :** Capital comprises basically *money, men, machines* and *methods*. However, their optimal combination would be determined by a business *motive*. This is expressed in the business vision, mission and core values, and they would remain as mere words if not implemented with passion and compassion.

Gita III:35 **“Nothing is ever lost in following one’s own dharma, but competition in another’s dharma breeds fear and insecurity.”**<sup>1</sup> Therefore, realizing one’s own contribution towards the entire cluster/industry is vital in unifying/justifying one’s existence. Core competencies, intellectual properties and niche expertise are intangible capital.

The Gita further specifies,

Gita II:47 **“You have the right to work, but never to the fruit of work.”**<sup>2</sup> Gita II:50 **“When consciousness is unified, however, all vain anxiety is left behind. There is no cause for worry, whether things go well or ill.”**<sup>3</sup> So, managing and owning capital are forms of stewardship from the Gita perspective.

**Capability :** While *capital* is essential to service market demand, *capability* refers to the intrinsic qualities that contribute to competitive advantage. For example, fresh perspectives that do the same things better, faster, cheaper. These include outsourcing, corporate governance and corporate social responsibility.

In Gita VI:5 **“Reshape yourself through the power of your will, never let yourself be degraded by self-will. The will is the only friend of the Self, and the will is the only enemy of the Self.”**<sup>4</sup> Although change is an intra-organizational decision, it is more important that the new capabilities developed are linked to heritage while servicing new market demands.

So, strive for links with business multipliers and network catalysts. Gita IV:18 **“The wise see that there is action in the midst of inaction and inaction in the midst of action. Their consciousness is unified, and every act is done**

**with complete awareness.”**<sup>5</sup>

Gita IV:20 **“The wise, ever satisfied, have abandoned all external supports. Their security is unaffected by the results of their action; even while acting, they really do nothing at all.”**<sup>6</sup> Masterplans (e.g. revolving long range planning) and scenario planning outline strategies to retain, replace or review essential capabilities that are vital for the business as an on-going entity.

**Connections :** While *capital* and *capability* provide for the supply-side, a business needs *connections* to capture its demand-side. These include feedforward (market intelligence, feasibility studies) and feedback (reviews, audits). Gita XVII:23-27 mentions **“OM, TAT, SAT”**<sup>7</sup> OM being the sacred syllable that connects the known to the unknown; TAT refers to supreme reality beyond what human language or thought can describe; and SAT embodies all that is good in self-harmony. Likewise, professional jargons and codewords provide limited access to qualified members. Being connected means staying afloat in the same boat.

More importantly, Gita XVII:28 refers to **“ASAT”**<sup>8</sup> as all work done without faith is nothing. So, sincerity is vital for all interconnectivities between deeds and needs. Truth prevails. A business



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needs to maintain the culture of integrity in order to sustain trust, inside and outside. **Communication** : While *connections* refer to the physical links and intricate personal networks, *communication* is the process for such interconnectivities.

In Gita XVII:20-22 **“Giving ... without thought of return, at a proper time, in proper circumstances, and to a worthy person, is sattvic giving. Giving with regrets or in expectation of receiving some favor or of getting something in return is rajasic. Giving at an inappropriate time, in inappropriate circumstances, to an unworthy person, without affection or respect, is tamasic.”** <sup>9</sup> So, besides sender and receiver

(worthy or unworthy), communication within the Gita perspective is dependent on timing and circumstances, regardless of content and duration of the message. From the business perspective, data mining and market analyses help prepare impactful deliveries to targeted audiences. Very often, it is not *what* but *how* things have been said or packaged that determine immediate responses.

**Commitment** : Another

purpose-centric perspective is the *commitment* of managers and owners to the business as an on-going concern. From Gita II:34 **“... for a man of honor, dishonor is worse than death.”** <sup>10</sup> And, sustaining a business is an honorable duty.

**Part 3: The Management Grid**

Therefore the essence of business management can be graphically summarized as follows:  
In Exhibit E above,

YES	<b>EMPOWER</b> Need for Strategy	<b>LEAD</b> Need for Control
<b>URGENT</b>	<b>DELEGATE</b> Need for Structure	<b>NETWORK</b> Need for Culture
NO	NO	YES
	<b>IMPORTANT</b>	

**Exhibit E: THE MANAGEMENT GRID**  
*Source: The Author*

“important” refers to influences and impacts that are significant to desired results. “Urgent” refers to time-sensitive issues that need decision-making. For “not important”, there is still influence although in varying and perhaps in reduced degrees. On the other hand, “unimportant” refers to a banal matter incurring sheer waste of resources.

Matters that are not urgent and not important can be **delegated**. However,

transparency in the organizational *structure* is vital so as not to disrupt and distort the ordinary rhythm of business.

For urgent but not important issues, appropriate parties could be **empowered** to act. However, they need to be abreast with the strategic intent of the business. *Strategy* is about aligning activities to create a unique and distinctive mix that cannot be easily and quickly emulated by competitors.

Matters that are not urgent but important usually affect the business in the long-term requiring an extensive **network** of expertise. However, these need intimate understanding of local *culture* for

optimal management. Tact and tolerance are vital in handling differences, spoken and unspoken.

In urgent and important matters, usually depicted in a crisis or chaos situation, **leadership** is necessary. There is a need to exhibit conscious *control*, although timely communication (feedforward, feedback) requires efficient co-ordination and effective co-operation of all parties involved.



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The Supreme Lord said:

*O Mighty one! Undoubtedly the mind is fickle and difficult to be checked. Yet, O son of Kunti, it can be brought under control by detachment and spiritual practice and perseverance.*

.....Bhagavad Gita Ch 6 vs 35

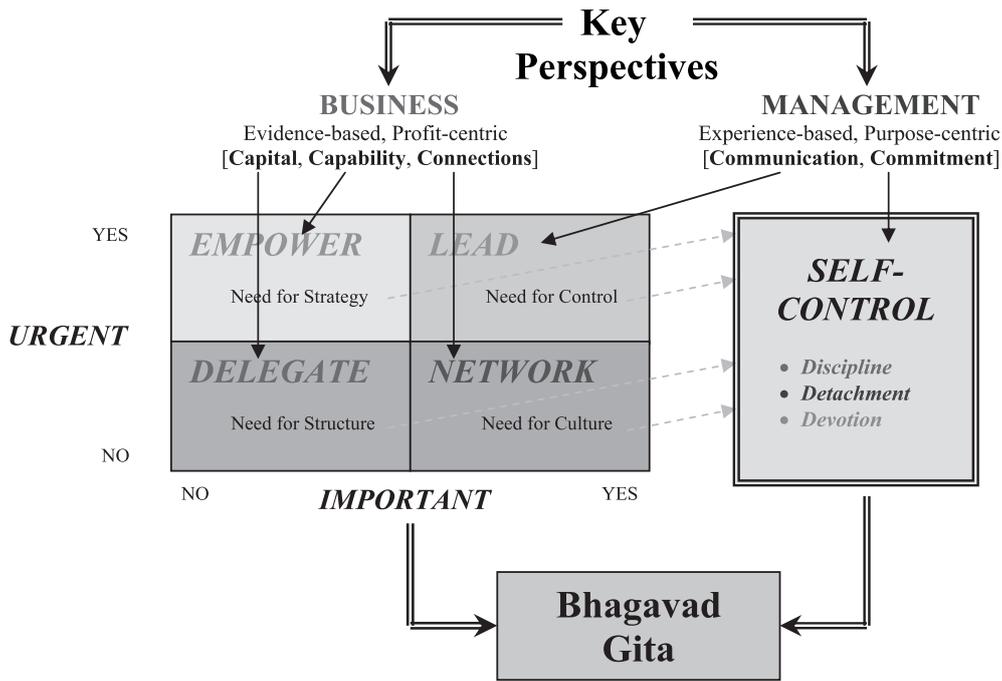
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**Exhibit F: THE ESSENCE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

Source: By the author

### A Holistic Approach

While the preceding Management Grid consolidates the business perspective by focusing on evidence-based, profit-centric approach, “Self Control” as promoted by The Bhagavad Gita completes the experienced-based, purpose-centric aspect of management.

As illustrated in Exhibit F, (next page) capital can be delegated when there is a transparent structure in an organization (e.g. licensing, franchising). Capability can be empowered when the overall strategy is clear (e.g. agencies, sub-contractors, OEM – own equipment manufacturers). For connections, the expanded networking would today include blogs and portals with realtime pushmails

via Blackberry or similar technologies. The vital link between business and management is the leader. This person relies on communication to bond an enterprise together. From the wisdom of The Bhagavad Gita, this process can in summary involve discipline, detachment and devotion, reinforcing the commitment to sustain an on-going concern for business.

### Validity

This presentation cannot be tested empirically because not all aspects of the 5Cs can be measured adequately. However, the various models herein can help managers and companies have less haste and more speed in decision-making. Clarity of thought breeds confidence in action.

Adherence to The Bhagavad Gita would also include an abundance attitude (win-win), always grateful and sincere towards business opportunities.

### Conclusion

From The Bhagavad Gita, the essence of management can be summarized as “self-control” focusing on *discipline* in perseverance, *detachment* from fruits of labor, and *devotion* to duty. The key components in business management are the 5Cs: capital, capability, connections, communication and commitment. A Management Grid facilitates decision-making based on urgency and importance. Unlike conventional business models, this presentation is based on the



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assumption of abundance  
instead of scarcity.

Singapore, 21 July 2006

#### End notes

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2. ibid, p.66.
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4. ibid p.104.
5. ibid, p.87.
6. ebenda.
7. ibid, p.198.
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9. ibid, p.198.
10. ibid, p.64.

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## Gita Jayanti 2006 - Competitions Winners

### Gita Chanting Competitions

#### Category - I

- 1st – Akshari Nidugala
- 2nd – Kavya Sivakumar
- 3rd – Prakruthi Manjunath
- 4th – B.K. Balaguru
- 5th – Amrutha Somasundar
- 6th – Shreya Chandran
- 7th – Navneeth K.
- 8th – Aditya Vijay

#### Category - II

- 1st – Amrutha Srinivasan
- 2nd – Shanmugasundaram Nandhini
- 3rd – Ruchika Venkateswaran
- 4th – V. Poornima
- 5th – V. Kokulsiddarth

#### Category - III

- 1st - Radhakrishnan Srikanth
- 2nd – Kandala Sai Surya Kiran
- 3rd – Amitkumar Gamane
- 4th – G. Harish
- 5th – G. Girish

### GITA ESSAY

- 1st – Lakshmi Chandrashekar
- 2nd – Anand Chandrashekar
- 3rd - Vivek Kumra

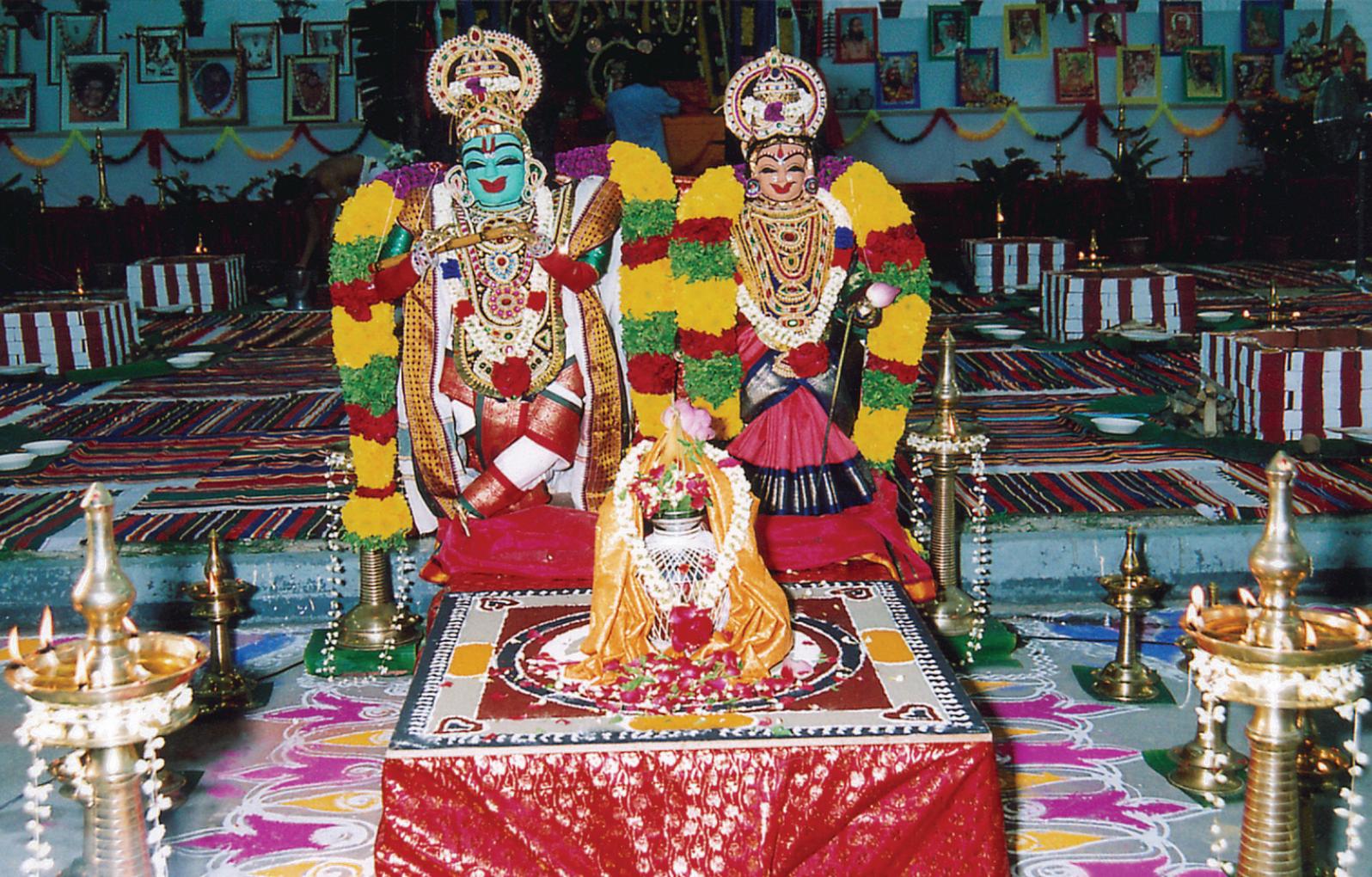
### ORATORICAL COMPETITION

- 1st – Anand Chandrashekar
- 2nd – Lakshmi Chandrashekar
- 3rd – Chinmaya Joshi





**Gita Jayanti 2006 main event snapshots**



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# THE ROLLER COASTER OF LIFE.....

Divya Venkataraman

How often we must bear the challenges of  
life,  
The endless roller coaster of happiness and  
sorrow,  
The constant ups and downs of daily strife,  
And always the question remains.... why?

Life is not an easy road for most,  
It twists and turns with many forks,  
And inevitably choices abound...

Do we turn to the right ... or the left?  
Do we take the high road ... or the low?  
Do we take the easy path ... or the difficult ?

Decisions are not easy  
To those struggling for direction...  
The choices and signs overwhelm...

While standing at the crossroads,  
The urge is to take the most comfortable  
path,  
The road with least resistance...  
The shortest or most traveled...

And yet, if we've been down that  
comfortable road before,  
Have gleaned its lessons in life, and learned  
from our experiences,  
Do we yet again follow the known?  
Or does our destiny lie in the unknown?

The fear of the road less traveled is tangible  
and all too real,  
It manifests itself in many ways,  
And tends to cloud that which might  
otherwise be clear....

It is in these times of confusion,  
That we must seek peace and solitude,  
Approach our beloved Krishna in total  
surrender,  
Contemplate on HIS pearls of wisdom,

Given to us as HIS manifestation of heart  
and soul - "THE BHAGAVAD GITA",  
And have total faith in HIM and believe in  
our prayers...

Then dawns upon us the time of  
enlightenment....

Time to contemplate on our life,  
Our experiences and our choices past,  
Time to look back, and reflect on what we  
have learnt...

Free from any trace of fear or confusion...

For only each of us know our personal  
thoughts,  
Our unique past and history,  
The experiences that brought us to the  
crossroads we now face...

We can always learn a small degree from  
others experiences,  
And yet ... no one person can walk in our  
shoes,  
Others know not, the trials and tribulations  
faced in private...  
For each is individual ... unique ... and  
personal....

And that is why ... while standing at these  
crossroads,  
We, with the help of our beloved Krishna...  
Deliberating on with clarity and wisdom...  
From the answers springing deep within,  
Can formulate the decision for ourselves,  
That true direction lies within,

For it is only through personal reflection,  
That we can now choose our destiny;  
.... Our next adventure,  
.... And the future we will embrace...!!!

**Hare Krishna!**





**Winners of Gita Jayanti 2006 competitions**





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**Gita Jayanti 2006 events**



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# *Streams of Yogic and Mystic Experience (Synoptic Extracts)*

*Padmashree Prof Manoj Das*

The antiquity of Yogic and mystic experiences go back to an era lost in the remote horizon of time. If the Vedas are to be taken as the epitome of the earliest quest of man in his awakened consciousness for the mysteries of God, Light, Freedom, Bliss and Immortality, we do not have convincing evidence even about the time of their origin. Could it be six thousand years ago – as B.G. Tilak, thought on the basis of the planetary position described in those hoary works? Or could it be even sixty thousand or six million years ago as Madame Blavatsky thought, for that position repeated itself every six thousand years when viewed from the Arctic? Alas, the theory of the Aryans coming into the Indian subcontinent from their early Arctic home is a theory tending to be discredited.

It seems the history of consciousness is governed by two calendars. While the chronological one governs the life of humanity in a slow progressive manner, one idea or event leading into another, the other calendar that precedes it can be called the calendar of consciousness. A great truth or inspiration may dawn in the consciousness of a Rishi that may take centuries in order to take roots at the collective plane. For example, Mandavya was a Rishi who was wrongly accused of theft and awarded death and put on a spike for the purpose. But soon the authorities realized their mistake and released him and apologized to him. When the Rishi demanded of the god of Dharma an explanation for his ordeal, he was told that as a child he had once driven a thorn through a butterfly. Hence



(Reproduced from Jan 2007 Newsletter of the Sri Aurobindo Society Singapore from a talk given by Prof. Manoj Das on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2006 at the Sri Aurobindo Society Singapore)



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- 11.30 am → 12.00 pm - Bhajans by Shri Devkinanadassand Group
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- 12.30 pm → 12.35 pm - Recital of Hanuman Chalisa / Ekta Gaan
- 12.35 pm - Aarti, Shantipath, Jai Gosh followed by Prasad & Preetbhoj



he had to undergo a similar experience. The agitated Rishi then decreed through his spiritual power that thereafter no child below a certain age should be held fully responsible for his actions and that it is not the action but the motive behind it that should determine the degree of punishment. Millennia passed before this enlightened idea became an accepted principle in the legal systems of civilized countries.

The Vedas and the Upanishads are inspired pronouncements from spheres sublime. But multiplicity and variety being fundamental characteristics of Creation, the human quest for the ultimate goals also became varied. The two great streams of quest, Yoga and Tantra – the first requiring an approach that steered clear of the lures of Nature that bind us to ignorance and aiming at the Lord of Yoga, and the second daring to discover the Divine present as disguised Shakti in Nature itself – gradually branched out into a thousand streams. The systems of Yoga, broadly three well-known ones as the Jnana, Bhakti and the Karma, led to new subordinate or supplementary systems such as Raja Yoga, Buddhi Yoga,

Adhyatma Yoga, Natha Yoga, so on and so forth, not to mention of the popular Hatha Yoga. Sometimes the ways of the Yogis may appear opposite to each other's, creating confusion and conflict. But viewed from a loftier height, their essential drive may be at the same goal.

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A classic example is that of Bibhisana of Ramayana and Bhishma of Mahabharata. Since Bibhisana knew that Rama was the Divine, he forsook his hostile brother's camp and joined Rama.

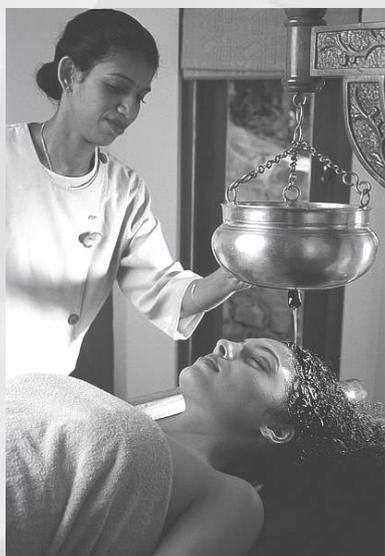
On the other hand though Bhishma was one of the few who had the knowledge of Krishna being the Divine, he stuck to the hostile Kaurava camp. We have to find the cause in their Swadharmas. Bibhisana was a Bhakti Yogi, a seeker through devotion, whereas Bhishma was a Jnana Yogi, a seeker through Knowledge. As a Bhakta Bibhisana chose to remain with his Master; as a Jnani Bhishma knew that even if a hundred Bhishmas were with the Kauravas, victory will go to the camp that had Krishna's support. His changing camp meant nothing.

The essence of all the schools of Yoga boil down to three principles: those of Aspiration for a life Divine, Rejection of all that stands in the way towards that and Surrender to the Divine Mother. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is integral because, among other reasons, it views the world as a form of the Divine and not as something undivine from which a seeker of Truth must escape. It also envisions

the transformation of all parts of our being into their original Divine splendour. Last but not the least, while we aim at the Lord of Yoga, the Mother, as the Divine Shakti, is our Guide.



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# Tryst with Sloka 66 of Chapter 18, Bhagavad Gita

Jayanthi Ramachandran  
Sri Aurobindo Society, Singapore

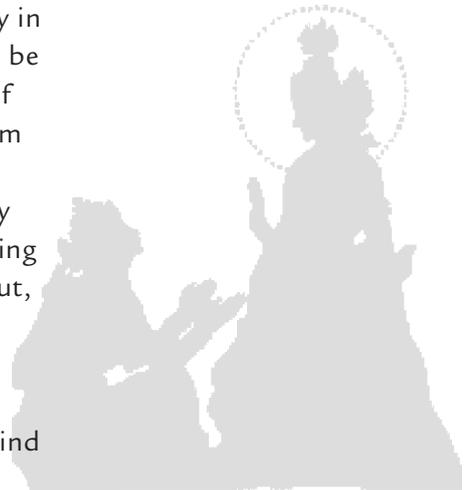
*Sarvadharmam parityajya  
Mam ekam saranam uraja  
Aham tva sarvapapebhyo  
Moksaisyami ma sucah*

**Abandon all Dharmas and  
take refuge in Me  
alone. I will deliver thee  
from all sin and evil, do not  
grieve.**

These words have crossed one's path time and again. Whether one has been almost drowning in the mire of disappointment and self-pity or trudging along and alone on a path beaten and weathered by experiences adverse, or facing a setback in one's endeavour, these words have had the miraculous power of making one sit up and make a decision to move on, bearing within the warm assurance that the One, the Purushottama was, is and will be with one always. The "do not grieve" alone has

been the most attractive focus of the being tossed in the turbulent waves of time. It has been an intimate whisper of the divine himself offering solace to the being. Such has been the blessings of a faith fanned by an unquestioning mind. This order has now found a new perspective since the budhi started asserting itself actively.

The actively involved aspect of the being has stepped back. The intellect has put out its tentacles of enquiry in a search that is proving to be quite intriguing, the bits of finds proving to be far from conclusive. In fact, every time one goes into a frenzy of questioning and searching directed within and without, one feels like one is only beginning, all over again. Such is the nature of the intrigue, witnessed by a mind in some kind of ferment



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or even unrest. Such is the state into which the sloka 66 of chapter 18 revisited has thrown one into.

The first cause of the unrest probably was, the mind did not know, to begin with, what “dharma” was. Some searches later, on a few commentaries read or heard and on the text of the Gita itself, one has been able to infer that dharma refers to law. What is the nature of this law? Is there only one law that governs our being? Aren't there many laws indeed that assert their authority according to the time and need of the moment? One confronts laws of conduct differing from place to place, from relationship to relationship, from task to task, from one need to another. But one is also aware of an intrinsic thread of a principle that remains the same in all laws that govern our actions and state of being, a common thread that reminds the self of its uniqueness.

The text of the Bhagavad Gita offers no easy solutions. The first discovery was that the mind is not going to find enlightenment in isolation. The above sloka appears in the 18th chapter, and the last, of the Bhagavad Gita, and occupies the 688th

position in the line of 700 slokas that form the Gita and appears in Chapter 18 as the 66<sup>th</sup> sloka. The entire song of the Lord is almost over when Vasudeva makes this Upadesh to Achyutha. Reading the Gita cursorily in the beginning, sloka by sloka in their interpreted version, offered some temporary solace, as the mind found

*It dawns on one that the Bhagavad Gita is an ocean whose bed is actually and literally decked with pearls concealed within clams that virtually remain shut and nothing short of patience, sincerity, determination, perseverance and the strongest aspiration to know can loosen the tight hold of the cryptic text in order for some of the gems held therein to be released.*

comfort in picking out the seemingly simple iterations as comprehensive. But with time, as the mind began casting its incessant questions one after the other, this comfort lost its

ground and the mind stands baffled and sometimes, surprisingly immobile and silent, in realizing its incapacity to provide all the answers sought.

It dawns on one that the Bhagavad Gita is an ocean whose bed is actually and literally decked with pearls concealed within clams that virtually remain shut and nothing short of patience, sincerity, determination, perseverance and the strongest aspiration to know can loosen the tight hold of the cryptic text in order for some of the gems held therein to be released. The commentaries sought and the text highlight the point that the Sloka 66 of chapter 18 is inextricably linked to the rest of the 667 that precede it and by virtue of this fact, also the rest of the ten odd slokas following suit. One sits face to face with this ocean, once again, in a relationship of another dimension.

In the attempt to define one's dharma of being, one's nature stands looming over the entire process. What is one constituted of? What is one's nature? What are the codes of action and inaction that one follows in living one's life – in carrying out



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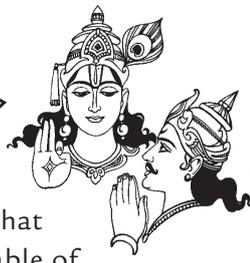
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one's actions, in formulating one's intentions and giving them a shape in realization, in crafting out a niche for oneself in a given setting, in dealing with challenges that one faces in the niche, in aspiring for higher aims and pursuing them – and the ultimate question, Who exactly is this “I”? What is the nature of this personality? If what one has perceived of oneself is beginning to crumble in the face of a mind that is perceptibly limited, of the emotional being that runs wild sometimes and exhausts itself in vague fields smothered over by mist and sometimes withdraws into retirement, a being that is attached to this and the other and trudges on strenuously, shackled and intuitively perceiving that it could be flying free, of a body that is not able to keep up with the insistence of the mind and vital and inspirations from on high, of points of views held so strongly at one time being easily flipped to the wayside like one would flip aside a sweet wrapper (not where it is not permitted though!), of finally realizing that what one is apparently in one's nature cannot be all that one possibly is, in actuality.

What exactly is one asked to relinquish at this stage, in sloka 66, in the name of dharma? What is the Gita's offering of possibilities?

What is the nature of the various dharmas expounded by the Gita? Sri Aurobindo, in his commentary on the same, typifies dharma in varied forms, following the trend of the text of the Gita, as the law of inertia or a law of action or a law of harmony and regulations. Law here appears as a code, say of conduct or of being based on principles one adheres to. The next question that follows is, would all codes or laws be the same? Is there a universal law that exists for everyone? It appears that in our day to day lives, we all have our own codes of conduct and being. Then the suggestion comes from the Gita that the law or dharma varies according to one's nature or bent in life. Each of these laws pertains to and is influenced by one or more of the triple gunas, Tamas, Rajas and Sattva respectively. The Gita progresses on to speak of the natures of these gunas and the characteristics of a person bound by these gunas which feature in various degrees and combinations in individuals. Sri Aurobindo then points out that though making an ascension to the Sattvic state is desired and encouraged, this is not the end of human progress. Though the Sattvic nature is taken to be the best nature amongst the earthbound, it falls short of a perfect perfection. This too is limited and does not carry

one to realms beyond that the spirit within is capable of experiencing or realizing. It is again subject to laws that limit, and hence the seed of an idea to transcend that appears here in this sloka when the Lord says “**Abandon all Dharmas..**”

Can the being work without the scaffolding of a law? For isn't abandoning the dharma which one has bound oneself to all these years going to be difficult? Can this state be attained for one who has not treaded the earlier paths? Were the earlier expounding of the multiple modes of Yoga in the Gita only a preparation of the being to reach this state? Is one prepared for this seemingly big step in the Yoga?

The seed of an answer to this is planted in the words that follow thereafter, “**take refuge in Me alone**”. If one has to abandon everything that one had believed in thus far and worked according to, it has to be an absolute abandonment to a higher force that the being looks up to for everything and nothing less. One's relationship with that being has to be of an elevated nature, a psychological condition of utter trust and faith.

Then the next question is, does one have all that takes for this utter trust and faith? If one is still embroiled in the outer workings and takes



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them to be sole reality, then this faith and trust that one would want to profess must be hazy because of a confused and cloudy mixture of desires and wants as well as fear. When the being is free enough to transcend its binding to phenomena born out of lower conditions and is ready to arrive at something higher, then one can hope for the possibility of letting go of all laws of action, or being and hope for a pure and delightful relationship with a higher force, say the Divine. The mind can be an aid, then, so long as it can help one to discriminate between what the world offers and what one wants, in the depth of the being and what an absolute trust in the Divine and one's divine destiny offers. Beyond this, something more is called for. There has to arise a situation where one would know in one's very bones that the Divine is the means and the aim of existence. It is only in this state that one can be above grief, for wherefore grief to a being who recognises the Divine in every aspect of his life and being and the world at large and creation itself, not mentally but with his entire being, in his very consciousness? This fact or knowledge appears to be resounding in the Gita at various places.

The Purushottama then assures Partha ***“I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve.”*** He who establishes a firm trust in Him will be without grieve, for the Lord himself takes up our every step. He raises one above the dualities that a nature shackled to ignorance renders.

This sloka is referred to by

*The Purushottama then assures Partha **“I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve.”** He who establishes a firm trust in Him will be without grieve, for the Lord himself takes up our every step.*

Sri Aurobindo as a Supreme Secret. It is quite evident that a being not prepared for this Supreme Secret may find this a difficulty that will remain the puzzle of a life-time or many. But the rest of the Gita that precedes this supreme statement would have been a preparation for one to arrive at a viable psychological condition that could enable the being to even make sense of this statement

and act accordingly, with utmost conviction and enlightenment. Or this high tendency is bound to fall in line comfortably for one who has grown in his spiritual stature for some reason or other.

Ultimately, what is called for is that total trust in the Divine as the Being who upholds one's being and sails with one on the sea of samsara in order to realise the purpose for which the soul incarnated upon Earth, for a self-transcendence perhaps. What is called for is an abandonment of one's entire being, in its minutest detail, to the Divine, in total consciousness. What is called for is a widened and deepened consciousness that would more and more realise the existence of that Godhead in oneself and in all.

More and more, what is called for is the dropping of the separate individual moved by the ego principle that works in ignorance and the transformation of the person into a universal being illuminated by God knowledge and love and who works in total communion with the Divine.

This brings one to another question – What is the time line that the Gita works under? A transformation of



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one's psychological make-up is called for. Will this take a life-time or many? Are we doomed to crawl on for live-times in ignorance towards the light of enlightenment? Those before us, whose commentaries one referred to and other readings, point to oneself as the key to this puzzle. One's own aspiration for this transformation has to be utterly sincere. A mental decision to effectuate this call cannot be of much help much help other than being a small starting point. It has to be an all-consuming cry of aspiration from the depth of one's being, it appears. The internalising of this Supreme Secret cannot be until and unless one is given to this transformation in one's deepest self and leaves at the Divine's feet the subsequent work to be done and the result of it as well.

The reading of the Bhagavad

Gita, at this point in time, given the circumstance that surround one, has been an enlightening experience. For the first time, the mind understands why the Gita has been referred to as a "Science of Living", or the "Science of Being". While laying the foundation for one to organize one's life according to its nature and bent as well as level of consciousness, while beckoning the mind to go on an Odyssey of sorts at self-enquiry, of laying oneself bare to oneself so that one may live according to the truth of one's being, The Gita moves on to laying the foundation of the need to transcend the best of one's own nature, and merging with the Godhead in order to exist in God, for God and by God.

Sloka 66 of Chapter 18 has led one on this voyage of sorts with oneself. The

several commentaries that one has had a chance to glance through (not study) and hear and the text of The Gita itself will be only words at the end of the whole exercise if I, as a being, do not internalize the truth therein.

That the quest for the highest and only the highest object of one's knowledge, one's love and one's action be kept alive and alight is a prayer one can and must offer while referring to this great work called The Bhagavad Gita, or for that matter, all other spiritual works. For is it not so that that which calls out from its depth and opens itself to receive from its depth too whatever is given in response or not given, is cultivating an apt condition that prepares one to transcend one's limitations, mental, vital and physical? Salutations then, to this mighty work and to the Lord of The Divine Song.



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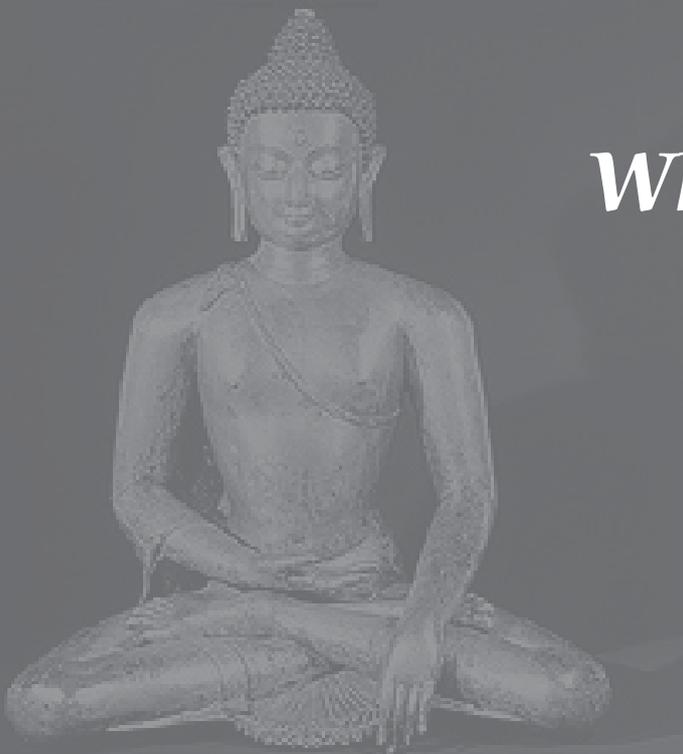
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# What is Meditation ?



*Dr. Harsh K. Luthar*

My Dear Friends,

You have heard many things about meditation and perhaps there are questions in your mind about it. Today, there is no shortage of information on any topic having to do with meditation and yoga. There are literally thousands of books on meditation and yoga and self-help techniques. If you go on the Internet and put in a few key words, you will come across many views on meditation.

Some people equate repeating a mantra with meditation. Others say that if you focus on the in-going and out-going breath, that is meditation. There are people who believe that you must be able to sit cross-legged in the lotus position with a straight spine in order to meditate effectively.

Having meditated since early childhood, I can assure you that this is not true. Inviting aches and pains by sitting in a lotus position will not lead to a peaceful mind. Meditation, after all, is about relaxation and peace. Having peace, or recognizing the peace within, is meditation. What takes us away from being peaceful cannot be meditation. Whatever brings us peace is meditation.

## **Avoidance Of Stillness**

It is my experience that people like to keep busy. In today's world, being busy is considered a very high virtue. We want to keep busy and be productive in some way. Otherwise, we feel we are wasting time and feel guilty. Certainly, being active is a good thing and allows us to make a living and maintain

*Dr. Harsh K. Luthar is a Professor of Management in the College of Business at Bryant University. He started practicing meditation in early childhood with the Gayatri Mantra. He is an active scholar and a professor and has written articles related to yoga, mediation, self-inquiry, and on the Bhagavad Gita. Professor Luthar also publishes in academic journals and gives interviews in both the television and print media. He has appeared on the Rhode Island PBS show 13th State with Paul Zangari in six separate half-hour interviews related to the importance of corporate ethical behavior in society, use of Internet as a community builder, the trend of outsourcing to India and China, employee loyalty in today's organizations, stress management in work and life, the role of gender in workplace perceptions, and related management issues.*

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relationships in the world. Even Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita that one cannot avoid action. One is compelled to act according to one's nature under the force of circumstances. That is the universal law of Karma.

But we have to understand the nature of action and our relationship to it. This is why Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to act according to his duty and dharma but without any expectation for any fruits of action. Our expectations undermine our peace when they do not come to fruition. Right conduct, according to one's best understanding and judgement, brings peace. Therefore, it brings us to meditation.

### **Mental Experiments**

Ancient Yogic and Advaitic sages gave methods and taught us to conduct mental experiments to find the nature of truth. These mental experiments can indirectly help us recognize the Pure Being within our center as our own Heart.

The techniques of meditation, such as mantra, chanting, yoga, pranayama, breath-awareness, etc., are simply mental and physical experiments. These practices start us on a journey with the potential for personal and spiritual growth.

However, real meditation is beyond visionary experiences and is the discovery of peace within. To reach there, we have to be quiet and learn the art of stillness. Once we know how to be still while doing nothing, we can carry this stillness into our actions as well. But first, we must discover the nature of this inner peace; and to do that we have to learn the art of doing nothing.

### **Are You Able To Do Nothing?**

Are you able to do nothing? Absolutely nothing! The art of meditation is learned by seeing the value of doing nothing. If you can sit very still and quiet without mental disturbance, you have already come a long way towards the experience of meditation.

It is only a rare person that enjoys doing nothing. Doing nothing is not as easy as it may sound. Try it sometimes. Just sit on the sofa. Don't go to sleep. Stay awake and think about nothing in particular.

You will soon find your mind racing here and there, thinking about your girl friend, your boy friend, your boss, your co-workers, your business, your friends, your family, tofu, pizza, chocolate... the sky is the limit!

### **The Mind Is A Monkey And A Donkey!**

Yogic sages have compared the human mind to a monkey. Just like the monkey cannot be quiet and must be restlessly hopping here and there, so it is with the mind. It is the nature of the mind to be either brooding about the past (regrets, mistakes, guilt, lost opportunities, the roads not taken) or fantasizing about what the future will bring.

The burden of carrying the past and the future in this present moment is heavy. But the mind, like a donkey, gets used to carrying this load and plods along.

However, the mind that is always lost in memories (past) or hopes (the future) misses the most delicious feast of all that is taking place in the present.

The eternal reality, we can call it Self, Sat-Chit-Anand, God, the Supreme Being, the Supreme Goddess, Paramatman, Brahman, the Great Void, or the Kingdom of Heaven, always exists and is shining in the present right before our very eyes.

The Divine mystery is recognized when the mind is calm and awake and free from anger, hatred, and greed and thus not subjected to the pulls of the past and the future. This



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is why all major religions encourage human beings to be good and kind and compassionate. These virtues serve as the building blocks for the spiritual life because they remove the agitation of the mind.

### **Why Meditation Techniques Do Not Always Work**

Meditation techniques are fully effective only in a mind that already has some understanding and maturity. So really, laying the foundation or the groundwork for meditation is more important than the practice of meditation. Just like a seed grows naturally on fertile ground, meditation happens spontaneously in a reflective and a quiet mind. When the mind is ready and ripe, meditation works and self-inquiry is fruitful in a short time.

When the mind is restless, anxious, and troubled, meditation becomes a forced activity and is not always helpful. At such times, one should take a walk, practice deep breathing, or go for running or do push-ups and other exercises. Those are more useful than meditation when the mind is not ready to be calm.

Pranayama, involving deep rhythmic breathing, is an ancient yogic method that can serve to calm and sedate

the mind in a natural way. According to Hatha Yoga Pradipika and other classic yogic texts, one first has to master proper breathing in order to progress to meditation. This is the commonly held belief in the school of Hatha Yoga. However, the path of Jnana Yoga does not emphasize breathing exercises or Hatha Yoga Mudras and Kriyas and considers these to be irrelevant to Self-Knowledge.

Advanced Pranayama practices involving breath retention or awakening of Kundalini Shakti can be found in many yogic texts and modern books. However, these should be learned very cautiously from an experienced practitioner of pranayama.

### **Laying The Foundation For Meditation**

In order to advance in meditation and learn it in depth, we have to understand the nature of the mind and learn to be alert and watchful of its activities. It is this constant watching, that is the key method behind all the techniques of meditation. A form of this is what Buddhist calls, "Mindfulness". Jains call it Upa Yoga (Yoga of Awareness), Hindus refer to it as the "Inquiry into the Self" or Self-Remembrance.

A spiritual seeker is watchful.

The essence of this watchfulness is that with the mind one watches the mind. If meditation is going to take place, if this recognition of Pure Being with clarity is to be gained, an inner silence must ensue. One cannot see one's image clearly in the water, when the water is full of waves. In a still pool, our image is reflected and can easily be recognized. Similarly, in a still mind, we can see the nature of our being.

This inner watchfulness, the observer being aware of the observer, this self-inquiry can occur in a ripe mind that is calm, content, and ready.

### **We Are Dancing For Others!**

The difficulty is that our minds are noisy. This is the nature of the mind that goes outward only. It is overcome by sensory experiences and is unable to see its origin. The worldly chatter overshadows and muffles the subtle divine music that is playing.

Friends, sometimes I think, we are dancing to the drum of other people's expectations, which we have internalized.

There is no end to this dance. This dance has a stronger hold on us than



## Basic Human Values

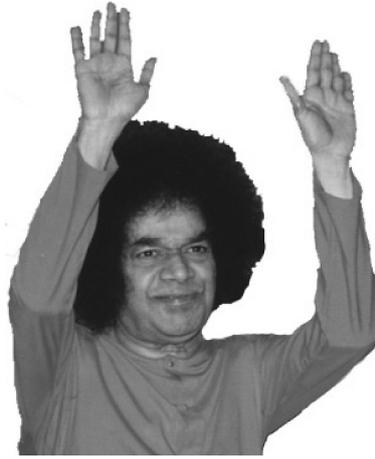
*Sathya - Truth*

*Dharma - Righteousness*

*Shanti - Peace*

*Prema - Love*

*Abimsa - Non-violence*



*Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

## Key Activities

**Spiritual** - Bhajans, study circles, meditation, prayer

**Educational** - Human Values education, experiential learning

**Service** - Food for needy, shelter/ care for the old & destitute, free medical care - in conjunction with Sathya Sai Social Service, a VWO.



Sri Sathya Sai Society, inspired by the teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, runs spiritual programmes like weekly bhajans, nagara sankeertan, jyothi meditation, study circles, and prayers on special occasions.

These programmes are designed to help the individual progress spiritually. The educational programmes are designed for the children and young adults to understand and practice human values as taught in the vedas, and by Bhagawan. They are trained to apply this knowledge to personal improvement and community service.

It is especially valuable in today's world of materialism, where parents want their children to grow up with roots in spirituality, and learn to balance material and spiritual worlds. Besides Human Values, children are also taught vedic chanting and vocational skills.



The service activities are done in conjunction with its sister-organisation, Sathya Sai Social Service (4S), a Government recognised Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO). 4S runs an extensive food-distribution programme throughout the island, the Bukit Batok Home for the Aged Sick, a rehab centre for senior citizens, a home for the mentally burnt-out, a free clinic at the Sai Centre (133 Moulmein Rd) giving general & specialist medical care, and various community adoption programmes such as 'Neighbourhood link'. It also undertakes volunteer development programmes to train volunteers. 4S offers a unique platform for prospective volunteers and students to learn and contribute to the society. Most of the programmes are conducted at the permanent building at 133 Moulmein Road. Anyone interested in voluntary service is welcome to participate.



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rock and roll or disco or rap music. It keeps us hopping all our life doing this and doing that or achieving this and achieving that. Ultimately, it is exhausting.

The whole life slips away in the blink of an eye as we keep busy in “doing” this dance making sure that the movement of our steps have the approval of others. We forget to “Be” who we are. To Be Still is the true meditation. Meditation is simply Pure Being.

The art of recognizing yourself as Pure Being is meditation. Pure Being is Self-Awareness or Awareness.

**A Powerful Intervention:  
Conduct This Experiment**

The state of meditation is simple. The methods and techniques and the philosophy behind it are very complicated. That is why thousands of books are written on such things. But the aim of meditation is simply peace. Peaceful Awareness. Meditation is easy to understand. It is being peaceful without expectations.

Conduct the following experiment with being peaceful without expectations. Tell yourself this: “For the next one minute, I am not going to worry about anything and be

bothered.”

Try to be free of all inner and outer conflicts for one minute. Give yourself this one minute as a holiday gift!

This is a powerful intervention. Can you be free from inner conflict for one minute? See what hinders your attitude to be worry free for one minute. If you can be peaceful and free from anxiety for one minute then you can do it for two minutes and then more.

**To Be With Yourself**

So dear friends, find some time to simply “Be” with yourself. To just “Be” is an amazing experience of the present moment. See what thoughts come to your mind. When you sit quietly, many visual images and thought patterns start emerging from the subconscious. This is referred to as “Surfacing” and it happens when you relax and your mind is at ease and free of tension.

If you remain awake and pay attention, you can gain insight into your own mind. These insights will teach you to not attach yourself to things that do not bring you peace. You will come to see that your nature is that of Pure Being which is associated with the many

thoughts in your mind and yet is independent of these.

Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great Indian Sage of Arunachala, gave forth this method of reflective Self-Inquiry, that focuses on the question, “Who Am I?”

This investigation, when done with understanding and sincerity, brings us to the state of Being that is free from thoughts. This inquiry is really at the heart of the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta.

**Always Be Gentle With Yourself**

If you are not able to sit quietly right away and be completely still for even one minute, do not worry about it at all. The reason it is difficult for us to sit quietly and do nothing is because often there are wounds inside which we would rather not become aware of or deal with.

The process of living life can be very very painful and stressful. Over the years, we put temporary bandages on our hurtful experiences, which for a short time dull the pain.

My teacher Chitrabhanu-Ji taught me that when we try to relax and meditate, our anxieties and fears and past suffering sometimes bubble





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up from the unconscious. So we have to be alert and to accept and let these things go so we can renew ourselves and be fresh.

The ancient Yogic Sages of thousands of years ago left us with great works on the nature of human suffering and how to alleviate it. Sometimes when I read the Bhagavad Gita or Patanjali's yoga sutras, Tao Te Ching, Buddha's path or Mahavir's philosophy of reverence for life and Ahimsa, I marvel at the depth of the insights contained in these.

The great Yogis of the past 5000 years have been really great psychologists who knew the nature of the human condition. They deeply understood what happens when spiritual seekers try to get insights into their mind and provided a path and guidance on how to walk it with the help of teachers and fellow students.

### **The Notion Of The Sangha**

In India, some people meditate in Ashrams or in communities. The notion of a Sangha (community of spiritual seekers) is important. In such a community, meditation is easier, because people are able to encourage each other and share each other's pain and burdens. When our mental or physical suffering is intense, we are not able to meditate. People turn to

alcohol or drugs to numb themselves so that they do not feel their own suffering. This, however, cannot lead to any permanent solution and satisfaction. Indeed, it can weaken the body and the mind and makes matters worse.

Being part of a vibrant spiritual community, or to just be in the company of good people who care about one another, can exercise a protective influence on you.

As a general rule, in order to advance in meditation, you should keep the company of good people who allow you to be who you are.

I studied with Chitrabhanu-Ji who is one of the key figures in 20th and 21st century Jainism. Chitrabhanu-Ji, before he make a Jain monk, was part of Mahatma Gandhi's movement to free India from the British through the peaceful means of Ahimsa (Nonviolence). Ahimsa is the cardinal principle in Jainism. Chitrabhanu-Ji taught me that a mind becomes fully fit for meditation and Self-Realization through the practice of reverence for all life and amity towards all beings.

A genuine spiritual community has to be completely dedicated to the principle of Ahimsa in thought and action and be

committed to alleviating suffering among all living beings. A teacher or a guru who does not understand or practice the principle of Ahimsa and is abusive to his or her students should be avoided. Such people are on power trips only and have their own problems to deal with.

### **Having A Personal Philosophy**

It is good to become aware of and think about fundamental life issues at any age, but particularly so if you are young. It allows one to develop a personal philosophy that helps to structure and interpret different experiences and put things into their proper perspective.

It is important to sit quietly and spend time with yourself in order to have an understanding of your own nature. Whatever philosophy one adopts, the following general rules are helpful in remaining calm and healthy.

### **Ten Tips From Yogic Texts And Sages**

1. Eat nutritious foods that suit your constitution in moderate quantities (My New Year's Resolution!)
2. Walk every day if possible (My Second New Year's



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- Resolution!).
3. Avoid people who are manipulative, loud, obnoxious, and destructive if at all possible.
  4. Keep company of people who are pleasant, easy going, cheerful, and supportive.
  5. Remain silent when you have the urge to be sarcastic or make fun of someone.
  6. Help people who are in need within your capacity.
  7. Take the time to be alone everyday and be with yourself.
  8. Never give into peer pressure to drink or do drugs or go to wild parties (Tame and sober get together with good friends and Satsang with fun singing and chanting is OK!).
  9. Develop confidence in your own ability to do what you need to do.
  10. Engage in introspection at the end of the day. Mentally wishing everyone well, always go to bed with a clean slate.

### Even A Little Effort Helps!

Friends, even a little right effort is never wasted. Every journey must start with the first step. The journey that takes you inside your own Self is the most wondrous journey you can ever take as it reveals the mystery of existence itself. Start from this very moment and enjoy the wonders of your own nature and the sparkling reality that has been smiling and shining on you for the whole of eternity.



### The Rhythm in the Gita by TL Vaswani

The Gita is a masterpiece of the mind, - greater, I believe, than the critique of Kant which I regard as the greatest single book in the whole range of modern thought. The world has not produced a greater thinker than Kant. Sankara is his equal. Greater than Sankara or Kant is the Mind of Gita.

The Gita is, I believe, the noblest canticle of action; it is humanity's greatest Poem which is at once a hymn and a philosophy of Life. It is a call to act in the face of all appearances. "Stand up, Parantapa" says Krishna to Arjuna. It is the first great note in the Rhythm of the Gita. Stand up in spite of suffering. It is a message of shakti or energism.

The Gita is a mighty protest against passivism.

Retaliation is not in the ethics of the Gita. The call of Gita is do your dharma. It is not for you to think of inflicting punishment. Don't hate. Do your duty. Retaliation and shirking are both unspiritual.

Mediaevalism said - "withdraw into the cloister". The Gita says - "do not deny life and its obligations".

Semitic and Greek thought often confounded manliness with retaliation. The Gita builds manliness on dharma, and so harmonises valour with humanity.

And the doctrine of dharma is supplemented by the doctrine of the Atman. Dharma and Atman, these two constitute the Rhythm in the Gita. So in the Gita, the law of retaliation is superseded by the Law of Dharma. And this is supplemented by the Law of the Atman. Realise that the Atman is in you and others; and you will act in the noblest spirit.

-- T. L. Vaswani

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# *The Primacy of Sruti in Sri Aurobindo's Thought*

*Prashant Khanna  
Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch*

Indian philosophy, embracing several streams of widely divergent persuasions, also includes in its fold, the six schools of Vedantic metaphysical thought. These again, though differing considerably in their conclusions, have one feature common and unique to them all, namely that they have the sacred texts, called *Sruti* in Sanskrit, as their starting point. In other words, at least for these six schools, all metaphysical enquiry resolves itself to the interpretation of the *Sruti*. All six schools are agreed on the primacy of the ancient texts – the Vedas, the Upanshads, the Brahmasutras and the Bhagavad Gita and believe them to be the possessors and expressions of the Supreme Truth and it is left to the philosophers *only to interpret* and explain their true meaning. The role of the metaphysicians, therefore,

is not to discover the Truth independently with the help of Reason and Logic, as in other philosophical traditions, primarily of the West, but rather to act as true, consistent, accurate and faithful exegetes – interpreters of the text. Since these scriptures are often very abstract in content and pithy and terse in their expression, they provide ample scope for widely varying interpretations and conclusions.

The bulk of Sri Aurobindo's philosophical writings, generally described as "Integral Vedanta" too fall in the category of exegesis. In Sri Aurobindo's view, correctness of interpretation would imply that the various verses of each text are self-consistent with the particular text taken in totality. In other words, whether we study an individual text or all of them



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together as a whole, it is for the exegete to demonstrate how an all-pervasive and abiding internal consistency remains the hallmark at every level.

In order to derive maximum benefit from these texts, it is imperative that they be treated as being not only abstract expressions of great metaphysical truths but also as organic and living entities imbued with the power to redeem and transmute. It is for the Seeker of Truth to forge an umbilical chord for the knowledge contained in them to pass into him. The most appropriate description of this phenomena is found in the metaphor used in one of the texts itself, viz. of a very coy mistress who yields herself up only after ardent and persistent wooing, *vivrinute tanum svam*.

According to Sri Aurobindo, while trying to understand and interpret these texts, it may also be worth our while to go back to their point of genesis and their method of actualization – how did they come into being? As Sri Aurobindo says in Canto 3, Book I of *Savitri* (38):

*Oft inspiration with her lightning feet,  
A sudden messenger from the all-seeing tops,  
Traversed the soundless corridors of his mind  
Bringing her rhythmic sense of hidden things.*

*A music spoke transcending mortal speech.  
As if from a golden phial of the All-Bliss,  
A joy of light, a joy of sudden sight,  
A rupture of the thrilled undying Word  
Poured into his heart as into an empty cup,  
A repetition of God's first delight  
Creating in a young and virgin Time.*

In other words, while the source of inspiration is an Absolute, Eternal, Cosmic and Supracosmic Reality which is the Creator, Upholder, Final Arbiter and Final Goal of this phenomenal world, the mode of transmission of the knowledge is Intuition. The Rishi by a process of self-purification and internal development – Yoga – experienced and even attained unity with this Reality and then became a completely spontaneous, transparent and unalloyed medium for the transmission and reception of knowledge by the mode of Intuition. These texts have no authorship; they are only “receiving from above” manifested through perfect mediums. It is, therefore, incumbent on the part of the Seeker to cover the same ground and discover and realize for himself the truth of the text. To the extent that his aspiration for right understanding of the text is sincere and earnest,

paradoxically enough, he will find maximum help by invoking the *grace of the text itself*.

In this context one also needs to bear in mind that however comprehensive the experience and perfect the medium, the individual should be in full possession of the necessary *Adhars* as well. The basic desiderata are good education, a well trained intellect and deep knowledge of the meaning of the Scriptures even if it be at a purely intellectual level to begin with.

A correct, proper and fully rewarding interpretation of *Sruti* would require that the exegete be also a seeker and should undertake to trace his steps backward with *aasrha* (faith) and *shraddha* (devotion) in his mind, making it receptive for inspiration to flow into him as revelation of the deeper meaning of the text, rather than have recourse merely to his own individual labour and intellectual reasoning. As the Gita itself declares, *shraddhavan labhate jnanam* – it is the devotee who is blessed with knowledge.

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# The Bhagavad Gita on Food

*Sudha Ranganath  
Sri Aurobindo Society, Singapore*

Sri Krishna spoke immortal words of wisdom and profound truths in the Bhagavad Gita and at the same time has given deep insights on leading our human lives to its full capacity and releasing ourselves from the subjection to the body and its needs.

Food and sleep are two activities that we are most preoccupied with and have the most trouble mastering. What is the solution to this? What are the regulations the yogi has to observe?

*Na' tyasnatas tu yogo'sti na cai'  
kantam anasnatah  
Na ca'tisvapnasilasya jagrato nai  
va ca'rjuna.*

Yoga is not possible for him who eats too much or for him who abstains too much from eating; it is not for him, O Arjuna, who sleeps

too much or too little.

(Swami Chidbhananda,  
1975, Chapter 6.16)

Our vital or the Prana is closely connected to the physical being and we draw our energy from food and sleep. It is important to know the different types of food, their effect on our mind, and to practice moderation as the above verse says. The Mother, of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, who collaborated with Sri Aurobindo in the practice of Integral (or Purna) Yoga, says that by eating too much, “*a large amount of your consciousness is absorbed in digesting and assimilating what you have eaten and eating too less weakens and tires the body.*”

Many religions recommend fasting as when we fast we no longer draw our energy from below, that is, from food but from the universal



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energies above, by not taking the prana from food we automatically draw it from the Universal vital forces and hence feel rejuvenated as this is a much higher source of energy than food. However the Gita advises on moderation in our consumption habits as illustrated by the following:

*“Those men who practice violent austerities not enjoined by the scriptures, given to hypocrisy and egoism, impelled by the force or lust and attachments, Fools they are, they torture their bodily organs, and Me, too, who dwell within the body...”*

*(Swami Chidbhananda, Chapter 17. 5, 6)*

Sattva, rajas and tamas, these three modes on their psychological side have been defined by Sri Aurobindo in “Essays on Gita” as “Sattva as her power of possessing and harmonizing knowledge, Rajas as her power of active seeking ignorance enlightened by desire and impulsion and Tamas as Nature’s power of nescience.”

These three modes are “everywhere present, intertwined, almost inextricable... These modes are described in the Gita only by the psychological action in man, or incidentally in things such as food according as they produce a psychological or vital effect on human beings.”

*(Essays on Gita, Sri Aurobindo)*

As we have seen, everything is intertwined by these three

modes of Nature, the food we eat is either sattvic, rajasic or tamasic according to its character and the effect it has on our body and mind. Just as the sattvic tendency in us would turn to those kinds of food which increase our life, strength and nourishes our being, so would the rajasic tendency turn to food which increases its ill health and grief and the tamasic tendency turns to food which causes inertia and sloth and death.

The three kinds of food, liked by the Sattvika, Rajasika, Tamasika are described in Gita in Chapter 17 verses 8, 9 and 10.

*The food which is freshly prepared, cooked mild and right, fresh food such as fruits and vegetables, enhances life, purifies, gives it strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, as the following verse from the Gita illustrates:*

*Ayuh sattva balarogya sukha priti vivardhanah  
Rasyah snigdah sthira hrdaya  
aharah sattvikapriyah*

*The food that augment vitality, energy, vigour, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury and oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, are liked by the Sattvika.*

*(Chapter 17, verse 8)*

The food, which is bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot and pungent which

causes grief and disease are described in the next verse.

This kind of food causes pain, grief and disease and can be a hindrance to spiritual practices.

*Katvamla lavanatsnatiksna  
raksa vidahinah  
Ahara rajasasye ‘sta dukkha  
sokamaya pradah*

*The foods that are bitter, sour, saline, over-hot, pungent, dry and burning are liked by the Rajasika, and are productive of pain, grief and disease.*

*(Chapter 17 verse 9)*

Food, which is cooked overnight, stale and spoilt, causes lethargy and sloth and leads the body to death, ill health, impurity, weakness, dullness and bad appetite.

*Yatayamam gatarasam puti  
paryusitam ca yat  
Ucchistam api ca medhyam  
bhojanam tamasapriyam.*

*That which is stale, tasteless, stinking, cooked overnight, refuse and impure is the food liked by the Tamasika.*

*(Chapter 17 verse 10)*

In this modern age, we all consume a lot of tamasic food in the form of fermented drinks, canned food, preserved fruits, etc. It would be wise to follow the teachings of Gita and eat foods which increase our sattvic tendencies and not the tamasic.



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The Yogeshwara promises that on following these rules of eating, by eating food which gives us energy and vitality, eating in moderation, yoga – the annihilator of pain comes easily to him - *yogo bhavati dukkhaha*.

*Yuktahara viharasya yukta cestasya karmasu  
Yukta svapnabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkhaha*

*For him who is moderate in eating and recreation, temperate in his actions, who is regulated in sleep and wakefulness, yoga becomes the destroyer of pain.*

*(Chapter 6. 17)*

Above all, eating in moderation and eating the right type of food and not being too absorbed by bodily activities should be practiced as it will lead us to develop detachment of mind and liberate us. In the luminous words of Sri Aurobindo:

*“The detachment of the mind*

*must be strengthened by a certain attitude of indifference to the things of the body; we must not care essentially about its sleep or its waking, its movement or rest, its pain or its pleasure, its health or ill-health, its vigour or its fatigue, its comfort or its discomfort, or what it eats or drinks. This does not mean that we shall not keep the body in right order so far as we can; we have not to fall into violent asceticisms or a positive neglect of the physical frame.”*

*(Sri Aurobindo, Synthesis of Yoga.)*

This release from the bondage of the body and not being enslaved to its needs liberates us from subjection to the body and makes us ready for higher realizations.

The great teachings of the Avatars and prophets and especially those of the Bhagavad Gita are our priceless treasures, they are not mere words but the “Word of God” and

practicing its truths and applying them to our daily lives make its action very real and dynamic.



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# *Static Life Principles in Bhagavad Gita beyond time and religion*

*Sundari*

**Swami Vivekanda said about Bhagad Gita “No better commentary on Vedas has been written or can be written... Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realizing not in believing, but in being and becoming”**

Gita is the quintessence of **Vedas, Upanishads and Darshana Shastras** passed on to generations as a colloquy between the divine statesman **Shri Krishna** and the warrior **Arjuna** amid the battle field of Kurushetra, when the latter was overwhelmed with depression looking at his dear ones standing on opponent’s side and destined to be killed by him. We all might have experienced similar state of mind under utter dilemma/ confusion driving us toward escapism while facing the

realities of life.

**“when doubts haunt me,  
when disappointment stares  
me in the face, and I see  
not one ray of hope on  
the horizon, i turn to the  
Bhagavad gita and find a  
verse to comfort me; and I  
immediately begin to smile  
in the midst of overwhelming  
sorrow’**

**Mahatma Gandhi**

Our life has become very stressful today than ever before, even though the best physical comforts brought by technological advancements are at our disposal. Even though the world has become smaller place with advancements in communication / transportation, we feel more isolated and depressed than ever before as our interaction /intimacy with fellow human beings is gradually



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reducing. The domain of human psychology (*Myers Briggs*) rooted in the theories of Plato and Aristotle classifying the human nature as four temperaments (*Artisans, Guardians, Rati-onalists, Idealists*) or the concepts of (*Parent, Adult, Child Ego states by Dale Carnegie*) imparted to students of Management for development of personality and inter personal relationship is not able to achieve its purpose of harmonious coexistence devoid of friction in organizations or society at large. The ancient Indian philosophy offers wider vistas in this domain.

In this age of widespread conflict, religions eclipsed by the collective human egos trying to erase one another, claiming their superiority while totally forgetting their spiritual core, countries trying to impose their economic strength and sell their ideologies, the entire population of the world under the grip of consumerism, What does *Bhagavad Gita* teach us to render this world a better place to coexist happily?

*Bhagavad Gita* may be viewed from a different angle as the greatest treatise on human psychology unique of its kind synthesizing into one

integral Man's various states of mind. The static principles explained in *Gita* are applicable for all age groups irrespective of their religious beliefs and ethnic upbringing and offer an entirely new approach to our existing perception of life and the world around us.

**Yoga:** The word *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Yog* 'to bind, to connect, to join, attach and yoke.' It thus implies a union or communion of the self with God. Yoga is a complete science of the human being. It takes into account the physical, emotional, vital, mental and metaphysical aspects of our being.

Yoga has nothing to do with any religion and we are observing that the *Ashtanga yoga* (8 modes) of *Patanjanli* from his *Yogasutra* (200BC) is gaining commercial importance all over the world but the emphasis is mostly on the *Asana* (postures), *Pranayama* (breathing) which is a very limited and partial picture of the complete Yoga as explained in *Bhagavad Gita*.

Our being is made up of different parts: vital strongly active with its emotions, mind or intellect that analyses and reasons,

the physical body the *Khetra* (the means of all action as per *Gita*) where the *Khetrajna* (the soul or the spark of the divine psychic being resides). *Yoga* means union with the Divine or inner Self in us in order to achieve a perfect control of all the parts of the being. The eighteen chapters of *Gita* are suffixed with the word Yoga starting with *Arjuna Vishada Yoga* where *Arjuna* is under introspection, the starting point of his Self-realization and concludes with *Moksha Sanayasa* 'yoga of self realization with detached action in the world'

**"First six chapters talk mainly of the individual, while the next chapters deal with the Lord. Last six chapters talk of the identity between individual and the Lord"**

*Dayanada Saraswathy*

**"Yoga Karmasu Kausalam .. skill in works is Yoga"**

**"All life is Yoga" shri Aurobindo Samatwam yoga uchyate (equanimity is Yoga)** are the most appropriate definitions of *Yoga*

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its limitations and perceive the inner being in us. Jyana (yoga of knowledge), Karma (yoga of works), Bhakthi (yoga of devotion) may be practiced according to individual Gunas (temperaments) derived from our *Swabhava* (inner personality).

Yoga is not a ritual or dogma but an approach to consciously transform various parts of our being with faith on Divine. As we start making our very life a Yoga and learn to look inward we realize that our very personality undergoes transformation.

***Gunas and Sthitha prajna: (different temperaments and the state of mental equilibrium)***

***“The three qualitative modes of Nature are inextricably intertwined in all cosmic existence. Tamas, principle of inertia which suffers all shocks and contacts ...Rajas the principle of creative endeavor and motion and impulsion in Prakriti ... that passion is the nature of all vital existence.. Sattwa the principle of understanding knowledge and of according assimilation, measure and equilibrium ...”***

***“Gita applies this generalized analysis of the universal Energy to the psychological nature of man in relation to his bondage to***

***Prakriti( Universal nature) ... These three qualities of Nature are evidently present and active in all human beings and none can be said to be quite devoid of one and another and free from any one of the three; ... they are variable and in a continual state of mutual impact, displacement and interaction”***

***- Shri Aurobindo***

**Gunatita** is the state in which man becomes a master of his **Gunas** and acts according to the guidance of his inner Self. In that state of consciousness, all actions become perfect offerings to the Divine **Prakriti** (Nature). We all possess these **Gunas** in different proportions and our entire being is dominated by their influence. We have to consciously observe our own **Swabhava** (nature) before we attempt to alter the effect of our own **Gunas** in our thoughts and actions.

**Sthitha Prajna: Sthiti** or perfect mental equilibrium is difficult to attain but not impossible with persistent self-observation of our emotions, thoughts and actions and change in our attitude. We see intensive emotional disturbances among the youth as well as adults today for our present educational system is based on imparting

knowledge about the world filled with volumes of data and information but fails to teach the knowledge of the Self. We often speak about positive attitude in workplace and our dealings with others. **Gita** shows us the perfect path towards mental equilibrium and optimism.

*Duhkhesvanudvignamanah  
sukhesu vigatasprahah  
Vitaragabhayakrodhah  
sthitadhirmunirucyate*

(2.56)

(One whose mind is undisturbed by distress, without desires for happiness, free from attachment, fear and anger, that sage is known as steadfast in consciousness.)

**Nishkama Karma** (action without desire for result) : As we learn to realize that we are instruments of nature and proceed with all our actions as an offering to the Almighty, a great joy of detached action will shower on us even when plunged in the most hectic activities of the world. We all know that the central ideal of **Bhagavad Gita** is to carry on with our activities without worrying for the results in a total spirit of surrender to the Divine but is it possible to have an action without a result or reaction? It implies that the Nature or **Prakriti** is the doer and we ourselves are only instruments. This



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ideal motivates us towards perfection in our works without inducing in us the ego of being the doer of the action.

***Mamkarmaphalaheturbhuh  
'may you not take  
yourself be the author  
of the results of action'  
matesnagostvakarmani  
'don't run away from action'***

Practice of ***Nishkama Karma*** relieves us of all the stress and pain associated with our actions. We shall slowly learn to become ***SakshiBhuta*** (witness) to our own thoughts and actions. Gradually we develop an equality towards all ***Karma*** as we perceive it as an offering to the Divine and ourselves as conscious instruments of Nature. For Nature takes the same precision and care to create a tiny blossom in the forest or the vast oceans and gigantic mountains.

So why not we try to practice the teachings of ***Gita*** and do the duties destined for us according our inner nature or ***Swabhava*** in a perfect manner as an offering to the Divine Self in order to plunge into the ecstasy of ***Karma Yoga*** without brooding over the results, for Science too accepts the fact that many internal as well as external factors contribute in deciding the cause and effect of our

actions and results.

***"five causes or indispensable requisites for the accomplishment of works as laid down by the Sankya. These five are, first, the frame of the body, life and mind which are the basis or standing-ground of the soul in Nature Adhithana, next, the doer, karta, third, the various instrumentation of Nature, karana, fourth, the many kind of effort make up the force of action, cestah, and last, Fate ,daivam , that is to say, the influence of the Power or powers other than the human factors, other than the visible mechanism of Nature that stand behind these and modify the work and dispose its fruits in the steps of act and consequence. These five elements make up among them all the efficient causes, karana, that determine the shaping and outcome of whatever work man undertakes with mind speech and body"-- Shri Aurobindo***

#### ***Dharma and Swa-dharma:***

Dharma is sometimes translated as religion: ***Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam,*** and others. ***Dharma*** is not denominational religion, necessarily. It is rather a law operating in the universe, by which everything is kept in a state of cohesion so that there is no dismemberment of the life of anyone or anything.

This definition of dharma is hard for an ordinary person to comprehend because we are always, right from the beginning, initiated into a wrong notion of dharma as going to a temple, worshipping a god, following a faith. It is rather a law operating in the universe, by which everything is kept in a state of cohesion so that there is no dismemberment of the life of anyone or anything. It is not any kind of ***ism***. It is an ultimate law that keeps the universe in balance, keeps the body, the mind, your reasoning, society and everything in a state of perfect integration.

***Dharma*** is from the ***Sanskrit*** root verb ***Dru*** to hold together. Its secondary meaning is derived as duty or responsibility. ***Swadharm***a is more than a duty. It implies all our commitments towards our own individual self, the society, the group, the nation or world at large.

***"To follow the law of its being Swadharm , to develop the idea in its being , Swabhava is its ground of safety its right walk and procedure. -----And if he performs his natural function in the right spirit, if he enlightens it by the ideal mind, if he turns its action to the users of the Godhead within, serves with it the Spirit manifested in***



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*the universe or makes it a conscious instrumentation for the purposes of the Divine in humanity.... Each man has a Swadharma, a law of his inner being, which he must observe, find out and follow. The action determined by his inner nature that is his real Dhama. To follow it is the true law of his development, to deviate from it is to bring in confusion, retardation and error -- Shri Aurobindo*

*“Swadharmo nidhanam shreya paradhmo bhayavah”*  
– better to die clinging to one’s inner nature than to imitate someone else’s.

We think that the concept of individualism and the importance to individual existence has come from the west. Deep rooted into the Indian soil are the ideals of man and his relationship with other fellow beings and nowhere the individual’s progress was in such harmony with that of the society whose component he is.

The perfect intermingling of individual **Dharma** with that of social **Dharma** fulfilled the purpose of collective growth and the progress of an individual was never sacrificed for the growth of the group. We may finally conclude that the **Dharma** mentioned in **Gita** does not denote Hindu religion but teaches us the essence of life science that we all must

closely understand and put into practice.

May not the greatest composition of **Veda Vyasa** be confined only to the **Pooja** place of orthodox **Hindus** and its verses sung only aspiring that its miraculous power may help in fulfilling our vital desires but May this **Bhagavad Gita**, the essence of all that ancient **Indian Rishis/** philosophers gathered from their **Tapasya** and experiences be brought back to the book shelves of the young and old (as in the **Gurukulas** of ancient India) and studied repeatedly and meticulously comprehending the deep truths underlying these **Mantric** verses, digested and put them into practical implementation in our mundane life.

We need not escape from life’s realities to attain salvation but must ‘**transform earthly life into Life Divine**’ rendering ‘**All life is Yoga**’ for this is the battle field of **Truth and Falsehood** and the victory is where ‘**Yatra Yogeswara Krishno Yastra Partho danudhara**’ ( seeking human effort and Divine grace) on the side of Truth and Love .

A humble attempt to gauge the unfathomable depths of **Gita’s** philosophy of life and its application in the modern materialistic

world where Science and philosophy, the two windows to the secrets of the universe ‘ have become contradicting subjects and the right time to turn towards **Bhagavad Gita** for wider horizons of knowledge of the Self.

References:  
Shri Vivekananda, Shri Dayanada Saraswathy, Shri Aurobindo)



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# Joy of Living is Courage of True Loving

Lakshmi Chandrashekar

## Joy - our common goal

Every human being is pulsating with the desire for joy. The source from which we all come is joy, or ananda, so it is only natural that we always seek such joy, our true nature. Joy is the underlying current that lies under all our aspirations and actions. Why then, do we not experience this unending joy at all times, in all places? It is time we realise that the pursuit of this world, referred to as "*anityam asukham lokam*" (9.33), brings us only sorrow, agitation and restlessness in the mind. Because of our vasanas and ignorance, we have mistaken the transient pleasures of this world to be the joy that we are seeking.

Our scriptures thunder that only the pursuit of Truth, or the Supreme Self will bring True Joy, but the pursuit

of Truth is not so easy. To gallantly fight the pull of our vasanas requires true heroism and himalayan courage. Many learned scholars have succeeded in acquiring knowledge, but the application of this knowledge is the real challenge. It calls for tremendous courage to drop the impermanent things of this world and to seek joy in True Loving – loving the Truth alone! Bhagawan Shri Krishna in the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Gita, Raja-vidya Raja-guhya Yoga or Yoga of Royal Knowledge and Royal Secret, explains how to succeed in the pursuit of joy by attaining the Supreme Self – the source of all joy.

## Truth – the source of Joy

If we want to learn something, we have to seek a learned person. If we go to one who is ignorant himself,



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we will only end up drowning in his ocean of ignorance! Similarly, only the source of joy can give us ultimate joy. The Supreme Lord, or Brahman, is the source of all joy. The world is not capable of giving everlasting joy; this we experience in everyday life. Even the seeming joys that the world gives us ultimately lead only to more discontentment and dissatisfaction. Chapter 9 of the Gita tells us the Royal Secret “*raja guhyam*” (Chapter 9, Verse 2) through which this joy can be attained. The Gitacharya explicitly states the true nature of Truth, attaining which we can acquire permanent joy in life.

### What is True Loving?

When our love is steadfast and permanent, it is True Love. For our love to be true, the object of love should be true, eternal and unchanging. All worldly experiences are unreal and subject to constant change. What is changeless and eternal is the Supreme Truth alone. Thus, True Loving means loving the Eternal Truth. The first and foremost means of joy in living is in Loving the Supreme – love for the Lord, all unsurpassed. Bhagawan says, “*susukham kartum*”, that this is “easy to practise” (9.2).

When the object of love

is fleeting, changing and unpredictable, our love is also associated with mood swings corresponding to the changing nature of the object of our love. That is why when we love the world, it does not bring the joy that we seek but only sorrow ever so often. But the nature of the Supreme Lord is constant, unchanging, and everlasting. He is ever ready to give us joy, so when we love Him (True Loving), our life becomes a continuous flow of joy, like small rivers merging into the ever-blissful ocean. The common factor of the river and ocean is water. Similarly, the Supreme Source is full of joy, and when we are able to link with That, then our life too will be embraced by His true nature – ananda alone!

*Maya tatam idam sarvam  
Jagad avyakta murtina  
Mat-sthani sarva-bhutani  
Nachaham teshva vasthitah*  
(9.4)

True Love for the Supreme purifies us and enables the mind to get detached from all the worldly trammels. Loving Brahman is True Loving because, as the above verse explains, the lover and the Beloved are One, intertwined with one another. The verse, in Swami Chinmayananda’s words, demonstrates the “relationless-relationship” between Supreme Reality and the illusory unreal.

Bhagawan asserts that He alone is the substratum of all the manifested beings. Just as cotton is in all cloth, gold is in all ornaments, the Self is the essence in all names and forms. Loving this Essence is indeed True Loving.

Just as we cannot be in light and in darkness at once, or be awake and asleep at the same time, we cannot love the world and the Supreme simultaneously. True Love is undivided love; loving the Truth demands undivided attention. To love the Supreme, one must drop desires relating to this world of deceptive joys. The verse below is an assertion by the Lord that if we worship Him, then alone is He attained.

*Yanti devavrata devan  
Pitrn yanti pitrvratah  
Bhutani yanti bhutejya  
Yanti madyajino pi mam*  
(9.25)

Attaining the Lord enables us to lead a life of inner joy, free from the afflictions of the outer world. This however requires tremendous courage, to fight our vasanas and the ever-present distractions of the outside world.

### Why True Loving requires Courage?

Courage is always associated with the pursuit



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of Truth. It is courage that makes a simple Narendra into the thundering Swami Vivekananda, or an ordinary Balakrishna Menon into the great Swami Chinmayananda. Courage is that quality which makes us soar into the peaks of success, with unshakeable hope in ourselves and unmovable faith in the Divine Lord. It requires some courage not only to accept the Truth as ultimate Joy, but it requires even more courage to drop all that is not the Truth, i.e. objects of the world that lead to sorrow. Having courage means being rooted in one's conviction. To go in pursuit of True Love or Truth, dropping what the majority of the world is thirsting for, requires tremendous courage; as we show that we have a will of our own based on sound knowledge and understanding as revealed in Chapter 9 of the Gita.

How many of us have the courage to stand up to our true convictions? How many of us have the courage to live what we have learnt, rather than simply "knowing" it? It is this courageous spirit that Bhagawan Shri Krishna kindles in each one of us through the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gita. The Lord urges us to love that Self which He personifies. This alone is True Loving, as the object of

our love is eternal.

### **True Loving = Joy of Living**

Bhagawan Shri Krishna royally states "I am the Goal" (*gatih*) in Verse 18. All our seeking ends when our imperfections vanish in the total experience of the Perfect. When He Himself says that He is the goal, why should we hanker after the illusory goals presented to us by this world of maya? For one who is frightened by the delusory serpent in a piece of rope, consolation can come only when he recovers from his delusion and discovers that it is merely a rope. Similarly, only truly loving the Self, the Substratum of the sorrow-ridden universe of multiplicity, can enable us to transcend all the choking sense of limitations. We thus see that nothing but the Infinite can satisfy an intelligent man. Let us take Bhagawan's words for it!

Joyful Living means having a calm and tranquil mind. Life presents various challenges, whether to a saint or common man, scholar or dullard. A youth becomes incapable of meeting the demands of life because in his false estimation of the things and beings around him, he comes to play out of tune with the whole orchestra of life. One who is capable of tuning himself up

with the whole, is the one bound for sure success. Let us not become an image of the confused man standing impotent against the challenges of life; rather, we should be a shadow of our great saints and sages, the reflection of the Pure Self.

The difference between Joyful Living and mere existence is decided only by one factor – whether or not we establish the strong bond of True Love between Him and us. When a person is leading life joyfully, he is able to bring out his Divine nature. In the Divine self, there are only smiles and laughter, joy and bliss; sorrow or sobs, tears or frowns have no place. A man who loves the Truth, as expounded in the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, is able to take up the challenge of life with hope and enthusiasm. For him life is an interesting game where there is no winning or losing; living becomes a purely joyous experience. This is possible only when we are engaged in True Loving - Loving the Ultimate Truth alone.



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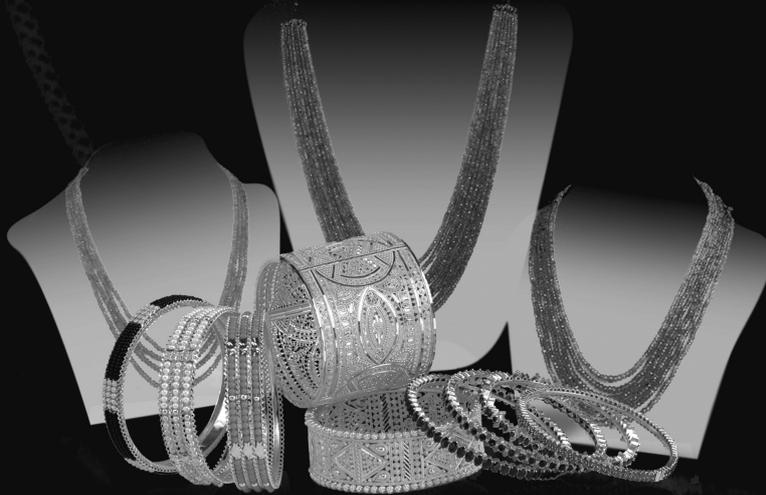
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# Holy Gita and Religious Harmony for Peace and Prosperity

By Dr V P Nair, MBBS, MRCP (UK), MRCPI, FRCP (Ireland) FRCP (Edinburgh), FAMS-Cardiology, (Singapore), FRCP (London), FICA (USA), FACC (USA).  
President, Hindu Centre, President GOPIO, Consultant Interventional cardiologist,  
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Race, Religion and Language, though different, are often intertwined and interdependent. The same race may follow different religions, while different races may practice the same religion. For example Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Buddhists, Sikhs, Bahais, Jains, Parsis and Jews are found among Indians while Chinese follow mainly Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, even though Islam, Christianity and other minor religions are also practiced by many of them.. Indonesian Malays though mainly Muslims, have Hindus and Christians among them. Agnostics, Atheists and Pagans have no religion at all and are found in small numbers in many countries.

Hinduism, the oldest religion known to mankind is a very tolerant, caring, peaceful, benevolent, philosophical,

loving, and at the same time, a scientific religion. Hindu represents “*Sanathana dharma*” or “Eternal way of Life”. It originated from the Vedas. The 4 Vedas dating to more than 8000 years are Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva Veda. The cream of Vedas is the Upanishads. Among the 4 most popular sets of Hindu Scriptures, the Vedas, *Puranas*, *Itihasas* and Tantras, the most popular and best known treasures of today are *itihisasas* comprising Ramayana and Mahabharata. In the great epic Mahabharata consisting of 100,000 stanzas, in chapters 25 to 42 found in the middle is Bhagavad Gita. Gita containing 18 chapters and 700 verses, has Vedanta philosophy made concise, precise and intellectually stimulating. Sri Krishna, the supreme Godhead Charioteer advised Arjuna the Warrior in the battlefield



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of Kurukshetra to fight against injustice and tyranny at the same time maintaining peace, prosperity, harmony and tranquility. The end result was harmonious living within a valued structure and common space. The Jews also talks about courage as not just the absence of fear, but as the mastery of fear. Confucius 551 BCE to 479 BCE said "Virtue is more to man than either water or fire".

The concept of origin of the first man as Manu and the first women as Shataroopa about 8000 years ago by the Hindu scholars was probably meant for human unity and co-existence. Similar concept of Adam & Eve by the Jews, 5500 years ago, by the Christians, 2006 years ago and the Muslims, 1384 years ago also augurs well for universal unity, understanding, brotherhood and sisterhood.

Scientific research have indicated that modern human beings, the so called homo sapiens ('homo' meaning man and 'sapiens' meaning intelligent), emerged from Africa about 160,000 years ago and spread to Asia, Europe and the rest of the World. Astronomical studies have shown that the Universe is 15 billion years old, Earth 4.6 billion years old and life on the planet evolved about 3.9 billion years ago. The transformation from

unicellular organism to multi-cellular organisms and later to mammals with organized blood circulation and ultimately human beings was part of evolution. The blood that circulates in our arteries and veins to supply essential nutrients for life though group specific are similar in texture in all of us, though our skin colour, complexion, physique, blood group, language, race and religion may differ. Blood is red in color with red blood cells carrying oxygen, white blood cells for defense against microbes, platelets or small red cells to facilitate coagulation and Plasma to carry nutrients. All the components of the blood must co-exist in complete harmony for the proper functioning and health of the individual. Disharmony will cause disease resulting in higher morbidity and mortality. Racial and religious harmony is also essential for the health and happiness of the individual, family, community, nation and the world at large. It must form a moral compass for the good of the society. Love all and hate none policy as proposed by the Hindu scriptures, should unite humanity for enduring joy, everlasting happiness, peace, progress and prosperity. Intolerance may lead to misunderstandings, abuse of power, fighting, ransom, racism, extortion, rape, bloodshed, killing,

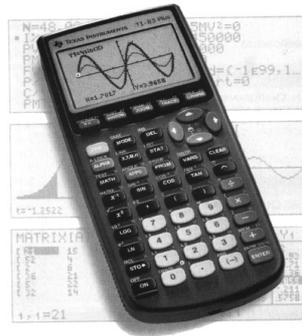
kidnapping, shooting, terrorisms, arson, aerial bombing, human bombs, beheading and universal suffering. According to [www.adherence.com](http://www.adherence.com) in 2002, the world population structure shows that there are 33% Christians, 18% being Catholics and 15% non-Catholics, 22% Islam, 15% Hindus, 6% Buddhists, 10% other religions and 14% with no religion at all. However another recent survey has shown that China has about 600 million Budhists, which will make Budhist population about 12 to 14 % and people without any religion much less than reported. The 4 large democracies in the world, where religion dominates the life of most people, have shown conclusively that religion and democracy can coexist and work together for peace and prosperity. India with a population of 1.065 billion has 82% Hindus, 12% Muslims, 2.2% Christians, 1.9% Sikhs, and 1.9% the rest including Jains, Parsis, Bahais and Jews. USA with a population of 293 million has 56% protestants, 28% Catholics 2% Jews, 0.5 % Islam 0.4% Buddhists 0.2% Hindus and the rest Agnostics. Indonesia with 238.45 million population has 88% Muslims 5% protestants, 3% Catholics 2% Hindus 1% Buddhists and 1% others, Thailand with 61.23 million population has 95% Buddhists 3.8% Muslims,



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0.5% Christians 0.1% Hindus and 0.6% others. All these great democracies of today in 2004 as well as truly multiracial multi religious Singapore has proven beyond doubt that people of different faiths and spiritual communities could cultivate harmony and foster positive engagement to achieve a peaceful just and sustainable society.

Hinduism being a peace loving religion has no racial or religious antagonism in their thinking, action, behavior or even dreams. Hindu scriptures such as Ramayana, *Siva purana* and Holy Geetha insisted on good human values, harmony and social unity among all the people. Working for racial harmony is gratifying but is sometime associated with great risks. Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of America, who issued preliminary emancipation proclamation freeing slaves and stopped civil war during 1861 to 1865 and unified USA was assassinated on 14/4/1865. Mahatma Gandhi, the British educated Indian barrister who practiced law in England and South Africa, proposed and practiced Ahimsa or non- violence and gained independence for India from Britain in 1947 had a similar fate in 1948. This subsequently led to independence of many countries including

Singapore in 1965. Similarly Martin Luther king junior, civil rights leader who fought for equal rights for minority and won the Nobel Prize in 1964 was shot dead in 1968. Inter and Intra racial tolerance and religious harmony are essential for peace and prosperity. Respect each other, love each other, and serve each other, smile at each other, share the values of each other, participate in each other's festivals and sports activities, adopt and learn their food habits and customs, learn each others religions, dress, mode of living and thinking. These are essential ingredients for harmonious living. The living Indian saint Sathya Sai Baba 1926 – present said, “defeat bad qualities in us, win good qualities and establish Dharma or virtue.

Bhagavad Gita is the book of knowledge for the Hindus similar to the Holy Bible for the Christians, Holy Dharmapada for the Budhists or Holy Koran for the Muslims. The secret of peaceful and balanced living is revealed by lord Krishna in Geetha about 8,000 yrs ago. A combination of knowledge, action, devotion and meditation are the essential ingredients of Gita and one can reach God through any of these modalities. Swami Vivekananda 1863 to 1902 is well known world wide through his maiden

speech at the world's first “Parliament of religions” at Chicago, USA in the year 1894. He addressed this most prestigious assembly as ‘Sisters and brothers of America’ and the world and he thanked all in the name of the mother of Religions. He also said at another occasion “Gita is a bouquet of beautiful flowers of spiritual truths collected from the Vedas and Upanishads”. He said, “The Hindu's view of life is that we are here to learn, the whole happiness of life is to learn and get experience. If there is but one religion to be true, all the rest must be true. All religions are so many stages. Each represents the stage through which the human soul passes to realize God”. Shri Narayana Guru(855-1928) said ” like the waves instantly arising on the ocean, each body one after one rises to subside again which is nothing but Maya”. Mahatma Gandhi (1869- 1948) said, “when disappointment stares me in the face and all along I see no ray of light, I go back to Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies” Henry David Thoreau the American poet, philosopher and essay writer said, “in the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and the cosmogonical, philosophy of the Gita, in comparison with



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which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial.”

Hinduism is the oldest religion known in the history of mankind. Judaism, Buddhism, Taoism, Jainism, Parsi, Christianity, Islam and recently Bahaism are the other religions evolved subsequently. All these religions are here for the good of mankind and each and every one of them propose, propagate and practice peace, love and harmony. Hindus always believed that there are many paths to God and spiritual life.

Hinduism from the very beginning got involved in mathematics, arts, science and medicine as part and parcel of religion. The elaboration of “Zero” and infinity in “Rig veda” at least about 8,000 years ago is perhaps the best and earliest breakthrough mankind has ever invented, which is indeed an essential component of mathematics, science, computer and space travel of today and the days to come. This is a superb discovery with enormous application then, now and for the future. A Vedic mathematician Pingalacharya further popularized zero in 200 BC. Zero. Decimal system and other aspects of Vedic mathematics including Various aspects of astronomy were extensively elaborated

by the well known fifth century Hindu astronomer cum mathematician Aryabhata who hailed from Kerala and later practiced at Nalanda University. At a later time the Arabs who frequently interacted with Indians learned Zero and other aspects of mathematics and astronomy from the Hindus. The west and the rest of the world learned these principles later.

Yoga and meditation, the early contribution by the Hindus and Buddhists, are recognized today as excellent for physical and mental health. Gita describes many types of yoga and the benefits of vegetarianism. Incidentally Japan’s Sumitomo Life Insurance Company a few years ago found that all those in their list, who lived 100 years or more were vegetarians. History and evidence shows that Charaka, 1000 BC and Sushruta, 700 to 600 BC were great Hindu physician and surgeon respectively long before Hippocrates (460 to 361 BC), who is regarded as the father of modern medicine. They described Ayurveda and many astonishing surgical procedures. Dr Gert Brieger MD in the textbook of Surgery, “the biological basis of modern surgical practice” said, “ancient India also has a rich medical legacy, all too often ignored by western writers. Sushruta described

more than 100 surgical instruments, which are par with modern instruments. He was well known for plastic surgery especially in the restoration of nose and ears. Wise, a western scholar on Indology, who studied Charaka and Sushruta has this to say “it is to the Indians, the Hindus we owe the first system of medicine” Aum (OM) or Brahman is the supreme or Almighty God to the Hindus. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, known as Trimurthy or Trinity are the 3 Gods responsible for Creation, Sustenance and Destruction respectively. The 10 Avatars or incarnation of Vishnu is described as scientific and consistent with evolution and modern scientific thinking. (1) Matsya or fish as evidence of early life in water, (2) Koorma or tortoise, is an amphibian and represent transfer of life from water to earth, (3) Varaha or wild Boar as early wild animal on earth (4) Nara-Simha or half Lion- half Man describing evolution of animal to human form, (5) Vamana, representing early intelligent small man, (6) Parasurama, strong man with machine tool, (7) Rama, Ideal God with Ramayana representing family life, (8) Balarama or enlightened man with heavenly qualities also described by some others as Budha with dharma (9) Krishna or Divine grace with Gita and jovial life



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and (10) Kalki representing destruction, recycling and repetition of the whole process.

In the epic Ramayana, Sri Rama and Ravana are described as having traveled by aeroplane from Ayodhya in north India to Lanka and Hanuman has traveled in Space. Whether it is a fact or fiction does not matter much as we all know that concepts lead to theories and later discoveries. Concept of Space travel in Ramayana was the incentive for modern space travel, according to the world's first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin of Russia who traveled around the world in space in April 1961. This subsequently led to space flight by Neil Armstrong and John Glenn of USA and later by others.

Hindus have absolutely no quarrel with any other religion and they believe in peaceful coexistence and harmonious living with all people, irrespective of race, religion, color, language, ethnicity, financial status or gender. Shankaracharya (788 to 820 CE), who revived modern Hinduism said "there is only one reality called Brahman or Aum, that is self existent, and all the rest are manifold variations". Hinduism is a religion, art, science and philosophy. It is open to all.

There is no active conversion

or recruitment. Any one leading a good and proper life can be a Hindu. In reality all the other religions in the world also preach universal understanding, tolerance and respect to each other. Hindus believe in equality for all and universal brotherhood and sisterhood. Gender equality is of paramount importance to them, as they respect Gods and Goddesses equally. Religious tolerance, racial and gender equality, and acceptance of each other as equals will certainly create enhanced peaceful coexistence. As we respect each other including their faith and spiritual wisdom, we can certainly cultivate harmony to achieve peace and prosperity to all.

Racial and religious harmony can be further enhanced through music, dance, drama, art and sports, which has no class difference, boundaries or barriers. Cash in the best of civilization rather than crashing through clash of civilizations. Instead of criticizing religion, learn the best values of each other's religions.

Mahathma Gandhi, through his daily prayer "*Raghupathi raghava raja ram patheetha pavana sita ram, iswar Allah tere nam sab ko sanmati te bhagvan*" has prescribed respect for each and every religion. This means Bhagavan, Allah, Esa or God are synonymous.

Religion can enhance universal brotherhood, sisterhood, comradeship, friendship and kinship. Each religion can assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve their individuality and grow according to their own path and strength. In the era of Globalisation and international cooperation, ethnic and religious groups should cooperate, co-exist and learn while avoiding confrontation and animosity. I feel that all Hindus should learn Holy Gita, in toto, recite it daily, know its meaning and share the wealth of knowledge with the others both Hindus and non-Hindus.



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Bhagavad Gita is not an ordinary poem, a mundane historical narration, or a philosophical reflection. It is a unique holy book, the purest scripture.

Bhagavad Gita means “spoken by Bhagavan”. *Bhagavan*, *Bhaga* means opulence and *van* means who possesses, that is Bhagavan means one who is full in opulence’s—in wealth, in strength, in fame, in beauty, in education, in renunciation. In these six ways, when one is opulent fully then he can be called *Bhagavan*. Only Lord Krishna who is the Supreme Personality Of Godhead is full in all the six opulences. So Vyasadeva writes in Bhagavad-Gita “*Sri Bhagavan Uvacha*” meaning “The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna said”.

Although widely published and read by itself, Bhagavad-Gita originally appears as an episode in the Mahabharata,

the epic Sanskrit history of the ancient world, in which it occupies chapters 25 through 42 in the Bhishma Parva. The Mahabharata tells of events leading up to the present Age of Kali. It was at the beginning of this age, some fifty centuries ago, that Lord Krishna spoke Bhagavad-Gita to His friend and devotee Arjuna.

Their discourse - one of the greatest philosophical and religious dialogues known to man - took place just before the onset of war, a great fratricidal conflict between the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra and on the opposing side their cousins the Pandavas, or sons of Pandu. As we read the Gita, we read a narration by Sanjaya, a disciple of Vyasadeva’s, to the blind King Dhritarashtra, the father of the impious Kauravas. Situated far from the battlefield, Sanjaya relates the holy discourse as it is revealed to



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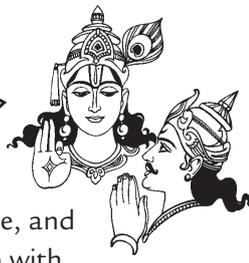
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him by Vyasadeva through supernatural vision.

There are in total 700 verses in Bhagavad-Gita - 1 verse by Dhritarashtra, 9 verses by Duryodhana, 31 verses by Sanjaya, 85 verses by Arjuna and 574 verses by Lord Sri Krishna, who is Bhagavan or God.

There are 18 chapters in the Gita, ornamented with the jewels of the ultimate import of the Vedas which are composed of three subjects, *karma kanda*, *jnana kanda* and *upasana kanda*. Through the first 6 chapters of the Gita Bhagavan Sri Krishna presents *niskama karma yoga*, through the second 6 chapters He presents *bhakti yoga*, and through the third 6 chapters He presents *jnana yoga*. *Bhakti yoga* is placed between *karma* and *jnana yoga* because of its confidential nature, because of its superiority by which it is able to give life to the other two, and because of its being most rare. And moreover, because these two are useless without *bhakti*, only by being mixed with *bhakti* do they become acceptable. Pure *Bhakti* is independent of *karma* and *jnana*.

At the beginning of the *kurukshetra* war, Arjuna is put into illusion and so he does not want to fight with his cousins and with his elders grand father *Bhisma* and teacher *Drona*. but makes so called peace proposals He

says "I do not see how any good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle, nor can I, my dear Krishna, desire any subsequent victory, kingdom, or happiness" Bg 1.31, . "It would be better to live in this world by begging than to live at the cost of the lives of great souls who are my teachers" (BG 2.5).

Bhagavan Sri Krishna then encourages and instructs Arjuna to fight, and perform duty. One may ask "what kind of God or Supreme Lord is this, who is advocating war and refusing to accept peace proposals?"

Arjuna, forgetful of his prescribed duty as a *ksatriya* (warrior) whose duty is to fight for a righteous cause in a holy war, decides, for personally motivated reasons, not to fight. Krishna, who has agreed to act as the driver of Arjuna's chariot, sees His friend and devotee in illusion and perplexity and proceeds to enlighten Arjuna regarding his immediate social duty as a warrior and, more important, his eternal duty or nature (*sanatana-dharma*) as an eternal spiritual entity in relationship with God.

Thus the relevance and universality of Krishna's teachings transcend the immediate historical setting of Arjuna's battlefield dilemma. Krishna speaks for the benefit of all souls who have forgotten their eternal nature, the

ultimate goal of existence, and their eternal relationship with Him.

Arjuna asks many questions through out Gita and Lord Sri Krishna clears all his doubts.

Arjuna asks (BG 5.1): "O Krishna, first of all You ask me to renounce work (*karma sannyasam*), and then again You recommend work with devotion (*karma yoga*). Now will You kindly tell me definitely which of the two is more beneficial?"

The Personality of Godhead replied Bg 5.2: The renunciation of work (*karma sannyasam*) and work in devotion (*karma yoga*) are both good for liberation. But, of the two, work in devotional service (*karma yoga*) is better than renunciation of work (*karma sannyasam*).

Krishna was thus advising Arjuna to fight the war and not go begging.

Then at the conclusion of the first 6 chapters, Krishna advises Arjuna to become a yogi,

*Tapasvibhyo adhiko yogi; Jnanibhyo  
api mato adhikah  
Karmibhyas ca adhiko yogi; Tasmad  
yogi bhava arjuna*  
(Bg 6.46)

A yogi is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O



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Arjuna, in all circumstances, be a yogi.

Then to become which yogi? Karma yogi, Jnana Yogi or Bhakti Yogi? Before even Arjuna asks a question, the Supreme Lord then goes on to declare that “among all the types of yogis the bhakti yogi is the highest”

*Yoginam api sarvesam;  
madgatenantaratmana  
Sharaddhavan bhajate yo mam; sa  
me yuktatamo matah*  
(BG 6.47)

And of all yogis, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion.

After Sri Krishna explained about His personal and impersonal forms in further chapters Arjuna asks a very important question. Arjuna inquired (BG 12.1): “Which are considered to be more perfect, those who are always properly engaged in Your devotional service or those who worship the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested?” This important question asked of Sri Krishna by Arjuna will clarify the distinction between the impersonal and personal conceptions of the Absolute Truth.

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna

answers (BG 12.2 – 12.5) Lord Sri Krishna said: “Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect. But those who fully worship the unmanifested, that which lies beyond the perception of the senses, the all-pervading, inconceivable, unchanging, fixed and immovable—the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth—by controlling the various senses and being equally disposed to everyone, such persons, engaged in the welfare of all, at last achieve Me. For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.”

Bhagavad-Gita is the essence of all the Upanishads and what is the essence of Bhagavad-Gita? The essence is the main instruction of Krishna in chapter 9 “*man mana bhava mad bhakto mad yaji mam namaskuru*” (BG 9.34). Now these are the only words in the entire gita that Bhagavan Lord Sri Krishna repeats once again in chapter 18 “*man mana bhava mad bhakto mad yaji mam namaskuru*” (BG 18.65) which means “Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me”

Lord Krishna has repeatedly said the same thing in both chapter 9 and chapter 18. If God is telling the same thing again and again, that shows, this is most important instruction above all other instructions in the entire gita that we have to follow first.

The easy way of thinking or remembering some one, is by calling out his name. The Hare Krishna mantra is specifically mentioned in many Upanishads, such as the Kali-santarana Upanishad, where it is said:

*hare krishna hare krishna  
krishna krishna hare hare  
hare rama hare rama  
rama rama hare hare  
iti sodasakam namnam  
kali-kalmasa-nasanam  
natah parataropayah  
sarva-vedesu drisyate*

“After searching through all the Vedic literature, one cannot find a method of religion more sublime for this Kali age than the chanting of Hare Krishna.”

So, for remembering Bhagavan Sri Krishna we can chant this Hare Krishna Maha Mantra regularly, as much as possible. We thus try to remember and follow this instruction of God, man mana bhava, “always think of Me” or “always remember Me” which is the essence of Bhagavad-Gita and thus become His devotee.

Please Chant Hare Krishna, (remember Krishna) and Be Happy.



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# *Svara to Ishvara*

*Padmini Chandrashekar*

Singing Bhajans is a celebration, a beautiful way to express one's devotion for the Lord. When we chant the Lord's divine Name, we joyously remember and revel in the Glory of the Higher, a potent means to purify ourselves and get closer to Him. When a person has developed devotion and is able to enjoy various melodies, singing the glory of God becomes a joy – the path of bhakti becomes dear to the heart and becomes an effortless journey towards the Higher.

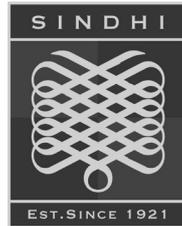
Music, a manifestation of sound, opens the gates to enter the realms of Higher Consciousness. Peaceful vibrations are caused by devotional music, and reveling in these vibrations to the exclusion of all other thoughts prepares the mind for meditation. There is a pause between every 2 lines

or phrases of a Bhajan and there is silence in this pause. The singer, if he has purified his heart and has developed love for the Lord, is able to feel the peaceful and cosmic nature of this silence between the lines. While he takes joy in singing His glory, he also learns to revel in the intertwined intervals of peace that comes with the silent pauses. If he is able to merge his mind in the Bhajan, thereby dropping the thoughts of the world and his ego, and sing with one-pointed devotion, he will reach a state of meditation. Thus singing Bhajans with devotion is a sure way to silence the mind and engage in divine contemplation.

If we are able to revel in the Glory of Lord's Name and when our hearts remain soft in His remembrance, it is an indication that



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we are reveling in Krishna Consciousness. In due course the singer, the Sung, and the song all become One and the same. Then the sadhak experiences inexplicable joy which is beyond time and space; in time, all thoughts of the world get dissolved in this joy! Such a person does not sit down to 'do' meditation, but is constantly in a state of meditation. Like a background music that keeps filling the air, all his activities are done as an offering to the Lord in a spirit of divine ecstasy.

Many saints have taken great pleasure in singing the Glory of God. Having been intoxicated with the sweetness of His Name, their unparalleled devotion could inspire thousands around them. Mirabai, Surdas, and Saint Tyagaraja are just a few for whom the Lord's Name had become a part of their breath – every breath of theirs was full of purity and devotion. Their words of devotion reflect the feelings that are deeply embedded in every devotee's heart – feelings of devotion that crave expression! These ecstatic words of devotion seeking union with the Lord teach people how to love the Divine. It is no wonder then that the masses were drawn to the divine melodies of their

devotional music, just like how the gopis and gopas of Brindavan were irresistibly drawn to the divine tunes of Krishna's flute.

It is said that in kaliyuga, the mere chanting of Lord's Name with devotion will take a person to the Higher. Severe austerities are not required. If a person has developed love for the Lord,

*“The purpose of all music is to return back to the self, to the silence. Singing should lead you into ecstasy and joy. It is to enable. all your senses to dissolve into the being.”*

he will be able to revel in His Glory while singing Bhajans. In due course, if one is convinced of the need to hold on to the Lord's Feet at all times, he will be able to continue to stay tuned to the joy and peace that he experienced while singing Bhajans even when he is not singing. Indeed, he would have learnt to revel in the Higher and feel blissful at all times and in all places.

Sri Sri Ravishankar, the founder of Art of Living

says: “The purpose of all music is to return back to the self, to the silence. Singing should lead you into ecstasy and joy. It is to enable all your senses to dissolve into the being.”

When we sing as a group, there are vibrations all around that remove stress and calm the mind. Devotional singing is being organised in Singapore by various organizations such as Sai Centre, Chinmaya Seva Centre, Hindu Centre, Amriteswari Society, etc. If one devotes time to join in these Bhajan sessions, it would be an easy way to spiritual upliftment. We thus begin this spiritual journey by chanting the Lord's Name regularly, making it an essential part of our daily routine,

so that we slowly develop love for Him. Eventually, we will begin to experience the Lord's love for us; the ultimate experience will be that the lover and the Beloved become one and the same. Then every thought will be a prayer and every breath, music!



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# The Eternal Family Tree

Prof AN Rao

The fifteenth chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita is entitled 'Yoga of the Supreme Person' or the 'Purushothama Yoga'. Another name for the same chapter is the origin of the spiritual peepal tree and its function. Botanically, peepal tree is "ficus religiosa".

Peepal tree is 'aswatha' in Sanskrit - 'arasumaram' in Tamil - which is beyond any destruction and ever changing or perpetually young. Almost every village in South India and near the premises of Hindu Temples, the peepal tree is planted as a sacred tree. Village meetings and other important events are held under the peepal tree. And the same is worshipped as a sacred in Hindu temples of the cities.

This spiritual Peepal tree is upside down; the roots

are above ground and the branches and leaves are underground. The leaves are the Vedas and one who understands the significance of this inverted order of the tree is the knower of the Vedas. The roots are high above and beyond the reach of human effort, indicating that the supreme reality is not within reach. The branches represent all the material substances of the world. The branches can be cut off by being detached to the worldly matters and thus one can be free from entanglement of the material world.

*Kathopanishad (3.1)*  
propounded the same idea.

*Urdhva mool'o vak shakha  
Esha Aswatha'ssanatanah  
Tadeva sukram tad brahma  
Tadevaamrutham uchyathe.*

This is the tree of Brahman



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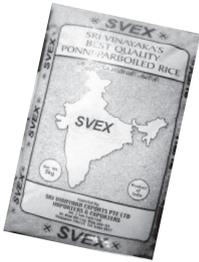
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or Purushothama. Referring to the worldly matters, three aspects of God are discussed. (1) the manifested Universe, which is ever changing and perishable – *KSHARA*, (2) as against these is the divine power which is unmanifest, unborn, actionless, but which is always present – *AKSHARA*, (3) these two are part of the Supreme Person or *Purushothama*, Brahman, in whom both manifest and unmanifest qualities are ingrained.

The doctrine (tatva) of Brahman is beyond reason, very secretive, beyond the reach of words and mind – “yatho vaacho nivarthanthe..”. But to make this unknown principle or factor to be known, some indicative symbol is necessary. The very first stanza of the 15th chapter indicates the unknown Brahman as the inverted tree – “Urdhva moolam adha saakham”.

The description of this eternal family tree is further explained in *Srimad Bhagavatam* – in Krishna’s life story. When Devaki (Krishna’s mother) was pregnant, the Gods led by Brahma visited her and offered her a prayer asking a fundamental question.

“ Oh Bhagavanta, you are the elemental seed to create the family in the form of this universe and the world.

Please tell us the nature of the tree that this seed would produce.

The answer was revealed in the form of this sloka (SB 10.2.27).

*ekāyano ‘sau dvi-phalas tri-  
mūlās  
catū-rasah pañca-vidhah  
shad-ātmā  
sapta-tvag asta-vitapo  
navākso  
daśa-cchadī dvi-khago hy ādi-  
vrksah*

*eka-ayanah* — only one supporting earth which is part of primary creation; *asau* — that; *dvi-phalah* — twin fruits - happiness / distress, *sukha / dukha*; *tri-mūlah* — having three roots, the three modes of nature (goodness or *satva*, passion or *rajas* and ignorance or *tamas*), upon which the body is created; *catuh-rasah* — four rasas, or tastes or the four objectives *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*; *pañca-vidhah* — consisting of five senses for acquiring knowledge (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and touch); *shat-ātmā* — six characteristic qualities or circumstances (lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst); *sapta-tvak* — having seven coverings (skin, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and semen); *asta-vitapah* — eight branches (the five gross elements — earth, water, fire, air and ether — and also the mind, intelligence

and ego); *nava-aksah* — nine openings – two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two excretory outlets, one mouth; *daśa-chadī* — ten kinds of life air, resembling the leaves of a tree; *dvi-khagah* — two birds (the *jeevaatma* and the *paramaatma*); *hi* — indeed; *ādi-vrksah* — this is the original tree or construction of the material body, whether individual or universal.

As the whole world constitute the tree of Samsara, the tree of creation is thus produced by Purushothama or Para Brahma. The above stanza from *Srimad Bhagavatam* is more elaborate than the first sloka of 15th chapter giving out the main components of all living beings including humans.

“He is the Originator, He is the Foundation, He is the Protector, whoever that is influenced by illusion (*Maya*) see different beings as separate. The wise are ever free from such illusion”.

May HE protect us all, all the time.

|| Sree Krishnarpanamasthu ||





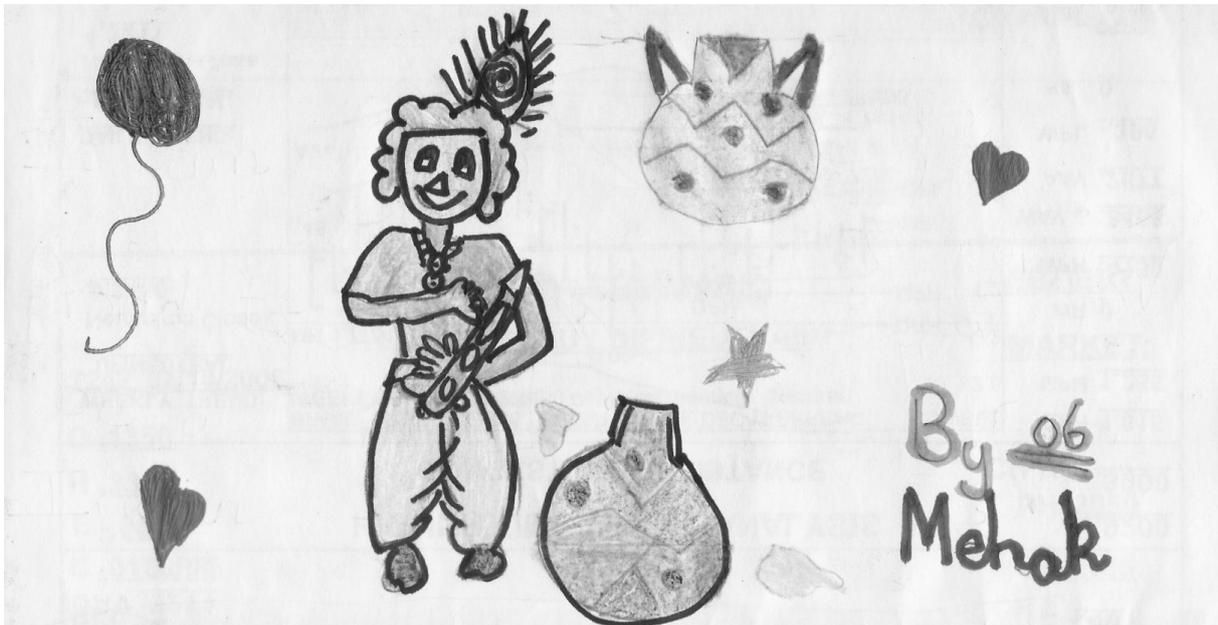


## Gopala, My Friend

Poem submitted by Mehak Bammi, Chinmaya  
BalVihar Student, 7+ yrs, Grade 2



Gopala, Gopala,  
You are my friend.  
Our difficult ways,  
You help us mend.  
You are called 'makhan-chor'  
You wanted butter more and  
more.  
Everywhere you are painted  
blue,  
And the cow with you goes  
mooo.  
All the Gopies loved You,  
And I love You too.



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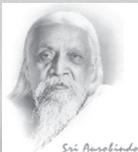
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# Look Ahead

*(Written By: Aditya Nagendran, Chinmaya Bal Vihar Student, 13 years)*

There will come in every man's life  
A time of pain, misery and strife  
A time of grief, hurt and a time of plight  
A time of the darkness of a mid winter's night

Yet from this problem there is a way out  
There is a way to end the drought  
Forget what's been done, forget what's been said  
The solution to the problem is to look ahead!

Abandon the ship of misery and pain  
Abandon the ship that won't come back again  
Foresee the prospects that lie ahead  
Seize opportunities from toe to head

Look ahead for futures of bright  
Look ahead and see the guiding light  
Look ahead, forget the pain  
Look ahead for a chance to shine again!



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# Our Spiritual Heritage

*compiled by V. Satya Murthy*

Every individual needs to know his/her geographical, historical, social, cultural, religious and economical aspects for one's own and nation's growth and development. India is an ancient nation and its philosophical base is considered to be one of the oldest. India never had any religion as such but its cultural and moral aspects reflect its practices. Hinduism is not a religion but is a way of life. When we belong to this oldest culture which has unique culture called "Vedic Culture" it becomes imperative for us to know some of the aspects of Vedic life.

It is a small attempt to bring in brief, our cultural values for the benefit of children who are just growing up and entering in to next millennium. It is only an effort to give some knowledge and hope we would inherit some of the values from our "Vedic Heritage" .

## AN INTRODUCTION TO VEDAS

The Vedas are called Vidhya-sthanas, the abodes of knowledge, as they lead one to the knowledge of the truth of oneself, the Lord and the creation. Traditionally, study of the Vedas is accompanied by the study of ten other disciplines called caaturdasa-vidhyasthanas.

### 1. FOURTEEN-FOLD VEDIC KNOWLEDGE:

- a) VEDAS: "Rig", "Yajur", "Sama", "Atharva"
- b) VEDANGAS: "Phonetics", "Grammar", "Prosody", "Etymology of Vedic Words", "Astronomy and Astrology", "Know-how of Vedic rituals"
- c) UPANGAS: "Analysis", "Logic", "Puranic Literature", "Dharma Sastra"

### 2. VEDAS:

The word "Veda" is derived from the Sanskrit root 'vid' meaning to know. The Vedas are divided into two parts.

- \* Karma Kanda : deals with actions
- \* Gnana Kanda : unfold the nature of reality and the truth of oneself.

Each of the Vedas has three parts - Samhita, Brhmana, and Aranyaka.

### FOUR VEDAS

- Rig Veda -Prayers to agni, indra, yama, varuna and vivaha ceremony. Samhita has more than ten thousand rik mantras—chanted in low, middle and high pitch. It also includes Aitreya and Kausitaki

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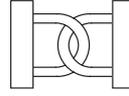
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Upanishads.

- Yajur Veda – ‘Yaj’ means to worship. Includes hymns of Sri Rudram. Sukla Yajur contains Isavasya and Brhadarayaka Upanishad. Krsna yajur veda contains Taittiriyanopanishad, Kathopanishad and Svetasvatara Upanishad.
- Sama Veda – Mantras to chant with music and are hymns on agni, indra and soma. Contains Kena and Chandogya Upanishad.
- Atharva Veda – derived from sage atharvan. Contains Prasna, Mundaka and Mandukya Upanishads.

Vedas classify human pursuits into four : Dharma – ethics; Artha – securities; Kama – pleasures and Moksga – liberation.

Vedic culture provides two life styles:-

- Pravrtti Marga – enjoys a disposition of karma – yoga
- Nivrtti Marga – committed to self knowledge.

### 3. FOURTY SAMSKARAS

Samskara help purify a person in a two fold way-

- by dosa – apanayana – removing inappropriate tendencies
- by gunadhana – creating an inner disposition that is conducive to cultivating the eight virtues of the self, the atma-gunas.

The forty samskaras are;

#### 1 TO 14 – SMARTA KARMAS (CERMONIAL SAMKARAS)

1. Garbhadhana – Conception ceremony,
2. Pumsavana – ceremony for getting a male child,

3. Simantonnayana – ritual for parting the hair,
4. Jatakarma – birth ceremony,
5. Namakarana – naming ceremony,
6. Annaprāsana – first feeding ceremony,
7. Cudakarna – head shaving ceremony,
8. Upanayana – thread ceremony,
9. Prajapatyam-veda-vrata – ritual for the study of the Vedas,
10. Saumya-veda-vrata – ritual for the study of the Vedas,
11. Agneya-veda-vrata - ritual for the study of the Vedas,
12. Vaisavadeva-veda-vrata - ritual for the study of the Vedas,
13. Samavartana – graduation ceremony,
14. Vivaha – marriage ceremony.

#### 15 TO 19 – PANCHA MAHA YAJNAS

15. Brahma-yajna – ritual pertaining to yajnas,
16. Pitr-yajna – ritual pertaining to the fore fathers,
17. Deva-yajna – ritual pertaining to the fore deities,
18. Bhuta-yajna – offerings to the living beings,
19. Nr-yajna – hospitality to guests.

#### 20 TO 26 PAKA YAJNAS

20. Astaka-anvastaka – ancestral rites performed four times a year.
21. Parvani – A monthly ancestral rite.
22. Sravani – offerings to snakes.
23. Agrahayani – ritual that brings completion to the sravani ritual.
24. Caitri – sacrifice performed for the blessings of the lord.
25. Asvayuji – sacrifice, offerings the first harvest grains to the lord.
26. Sthalipaka – ritual in which cooked rice is offered to the deities.

#### 27 TO 40 SRAUTA KARMAS (HAVIR AND SOMA YAJNAS)

#### 27 TO 33 HAVIR – YAJNAS



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26. Agnyadhana – ritual of consecrating the fire.
27. Agnihotra – daily fire ritual.
29. Darsapurnamasa – fire ritual performed every fortnight.
30. Agrayana – ritual performed once a year with syama grains.
31. Caturmasya – ritual performed once in every four months.
32. Nirudhapasubandha – ritual in which cow is tied to a sacrificial pillar.
33. Sautramani – ritual performed to appease the ksudra – devatas, lower deities.

34 TO 40 SOMA YAJNAS (some juice is offered in the following seven rituals)

34. Agnistoma
35. Atyagnistoma
36. Ukthya
37. Sadasi
38. Vajapeya
39. Atiratra
40. Aptoyama.

Of the forty samakaras, the nitya-karmas are six in number including the five pancha - mahayajnas and one havir-yajna, namely agnihotra.

#### 4. VEDANGAS

The word 'Vedanga' means the limb of the Vedas. There are six vedangas.

1. SIKSHA – refers to the text dealing with instruction on phonetics. Vedas employ words as a means of knowledge, so system of phonetics protect the meaning
  - \* Varna (letter Pronunciation),
  - \* Svara (vedic accents low, high and middle tones),
  - \* Mantra (duration of vocalisation),
  - \* Balam (declination of effort),
  - \* Sama (correct spacing in letter

pronunciation),

- \* Santana (flow of words)  
Paniniya-siksa and Yajanvalkya – siksa are most comprehensive compilations.

2. VYAKARANA – refers to grammar. There are nine systems of grammar- Aindra, Chandra, Kasakrtsna, Sakatayana, Sarasvata, Apisala, and Paniniyaka.

3. CHANDAS – refers to Prosody. Every metric composition has four padas(expect gayatri) Each pada has specific number of syllables. Some of the meters are

- \* Gayatri – has three padas each having eight syllables,
- \* Usnik – has seven syllables in each pada,
- \* Anustubh – had eight syllables in each pada,
- \* Brhati – has nine syllables in each pada,
- \* Pankti – has ten syllables in each pada,
- \* Ttristubh – has eleven syllables in each pada,
- \* Jagati – has twelve syllables in each pada.

4. NIRUKTA – etymology of vedic words. It had 12 chapters
  - 1 to 3 list syllables,
  - 4 to 6 list homonyms,
  - 7 to 12 deal with names of deties and devatas.

5. JYOTISHA AND JYOTISHA SASTRA
  - astronomy and astrology. There are three divisions of the Jyotisa sastra.
  - Siddhanta – skandha
  - Hora – skandha
  - Samhita – skandha

6. KALPA – know – how of rituals. Kalpam means action. It has all the other five vedangas. Kalpa- sutras explain this. There are 3 types of priests that chant vedic mantras.

- Hota, chant Rg veda;
- Adhvarya, chant yajur veda;and



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- Udgatr, chant sama veda mantras.

Kalpa – sutras are divided into 3 sections

- Srauta – sutras,
- Grhya – sutras, and
- Dharma – sutras.

## 5. UPANGAS

The Upangas comprise a body of literature that is ancillary to the Vedas.

It has four disciplines.

1. **MIMAMSA** – refers to an analysis of the vedic mantras. It is two-fold:

- purva – mimamsa, which analyses the vedic rituals,
- uttara – mimamsa, which analyses the Upanishads.

In purva mimamsa, the five fold analysis is

- a. visaya – the subject matter,
- b. visaya – doubt,
- c. purva – paksa – objections,
- d. uttara – reply to objections, and
- e. nirnaya – conclusion.

1. **NYAYA** – logic. Nyaya sastra classifies the creation into seven padarthas. They are

- a. Dravya – substance. The nine basic substances are substances of world of objects

- Earth- odour
- Water- cold to touch
- Fire- hot to touch
- Air- has touch and no colour
- Space- sound
- Time- reveals past, present and future
- Direction- classified eight fold substance that constitute the subject are
- Self- and
- The mind.

- b. Guna – quality
- c. Karma – activity

- d. Samanya – genius
- e. Vishesha – particularity
- f. Samavaya – invariable connection
- g. Abhava – absence

The six means of knowledge

- Pratyaksha = Perception
- Anumana = inference
- Upamana = comparison
- Sabda = words
- Arthapatti = postulation
- Anupalabdhi = knowledge of the absence of a thing

3. **DHARMA SASTRA SMRUTI** – Many wrote and main is Manu smrti. It contains 12 chapters. Acaras – code of conduct is dealt in 2 to 6 chapters. Vyavahara transactions in society and social order 8<sup>th</sup> chapter and prayascitta – reforming to a respectable person in 11<sup>th</sup> chapter.

## 4. PURANAS, ITIHASAS AND BHAGAVAD GITA

The word 'purana' means before. It has five characteristics

- The origin of the creation,
- The cyclic nature of creation, and re-creation
- Genealogies of sages, kings, gods and demons,
- Cosmic cycles ruled by the 14 manus
- History of solar and lunar dynasties.

There are 18 major puranas and 18 minor puranas.

Ramayana and Mahabharata are the famous itihisas. Self knowledge is default in upanisads, the Brahma sutras and the Bhagavad Gita.

The Gita addresses the fundamental quest of a human being for freedom from the sense of limitation and sorrow. The message of Bhagavad Gita, therefore, is a timeless message for all humanity.



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# Spiritual Humour

Growing old is inevitable, growing up is optional.

There is no key to happiness. The door is always open.

Silence is often misinterpreted, but never misquoted.

Do the math. Count your blessings.

Faith is the ability to not panic.

Laugh every day, it's like inner jogging.

If you worry, you didn't pray. If you pray, don't worry.

As a child of God, prayer is kind of like calling home every day.

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.

The most important things in your home are the people.

When we get tangled up in our problems, be still.

God wants us to be still so that He can untangle the knot.

A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.

He who dies with the most toys is still dead.

We do not remember days, but moments. Life is moving too fast, so enjoy your precious moments.

Nothing is real to you until you experience it, otherwise it's just hearsay.

It's all right to sit on your pity pot every now and again. Just be sure to flush when you are done.

Eat to live – you will surely evolve. Don't live to eat – you will merely revolve in the same rut.

Don't forget to include fruit in your daily diet, but do forget the fruit of actions – leave it to God.

Finally, remember to go on a 'non-ego' diet. The mind, your problem-child, is sure to stay quiet.

## 1 Minute Enlightenment!!

A temple-goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to temple every Saturday.

"I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 discourses. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the Swamijis are wasting theirs by giving discourses at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column.

Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time, my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

"Likewise, if I had not gone to temple for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

-- Divya Venkataraman



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# Food for the body, after a feast for the mind and intellect !

## 1. VEGETABLE JHALFRAZIE

Ingredients needed:

- 3 teacups mixed boiled vegetables (french beans, green peas, potatoes and carrots)
- 2 onions
- 3 spring onions
- 2 tomatoes
- 4 green chillies
- 12 mm (½”) piece ginger
- 1 tablespoon coriander
- ½ teacup tomato ketchup
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar (approx.)
- 3 tablespoons ghee
- Salt to taste
- Coriander leaves for Garnishing

Procedure:

- Chop the onions, spring onions (with leaves), tomatoes, green chillies, ginger and coriander separately.
- Heat the ghee in a vessel and fry the onions till golden.
- Now add the tomatoes, chillies, ginger and coriander and fry for at least 2 minutes.
- Add the tomato ketchup, boiled vegetables, spring onions, chilli powder, sugar, salt and a little water and cook for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Garnish with fresh coriander leaves.

Hot and delicious Vegetable Jhalfrazie is ready within minutes!!

## 2. VEGETABLE KOFTA

Ingredients Needed :

- Potatoes - 6 big nos.
- Carrots - 3 cups (sliced)
- Onions - 3 nos. (sliced finely)
- Garlic - 1 cloves (crushed)
- Ginger - 1 inch piece (chopped)
- Cinnamon powder, Cloves powder, turmeric powder. - 1 tsp. Each
- Tomatoes - 2 nos. (pureed)
- Chilli powder - 1/4 tsp.
- Salt and Black pepper
- Flour for coating, Oil for deep frying
- For Garnishing - 4 tbsp. thick cream and chopped fresh coriander leaves.

Preparation :

- Cook the potatoes and carrots and mash them up. Mix salt and pepper to taste. Reserve the vegetable stock.
- Form the mixture into small balls, coat with flour and deep fry in hot oil till golden brown.
- Keep it aside. Fry onions in oil till golden brown. Add ginger, garlic, cloves, cinnamon, turmeric and a little water.
- Cook for 2 mins. Add the tomato puree and simmer till it forms a thick sauce.
- Then add the stock, pepper, salt and chilli powder and bring to boil.
- Garnish with thick cream and fresh coriander leaves.

Hot and Yummy Vegetable Kofta is ready in a jiffy!



-- Divya Venkataraman

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Gita Jayanti 2007 organization is deeply and sincerely grateful to the following individuals and organizations for the significant roles they have played in making this event, a success.

1. Mr Hri Kumar, Member of Parliament for Toa Payoh Bishan GRC for kindly consenting to be the Guest-of-Honor for the event, in spite of his busy schedules.
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21. All devotees of the Lord and spiritual aspirants and lovers of Gita all over the world.

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!! ॐ !!

On this GITA JAYANTI the Amriteswari Society joins all other organisations in wishing for its great success



**!! Lokaha Samastaha Sukhino Bhavantu !!**  
**Om Shanti Shanti Shanti**



**Our Inspiration**

**H. H MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI - AMMA**

*Seek refuge in God alone with all your being. Through His grace  
you shall attain the Supreme State and the Eternal Abode.*

*Gita - Chapter 18 - verse 62*

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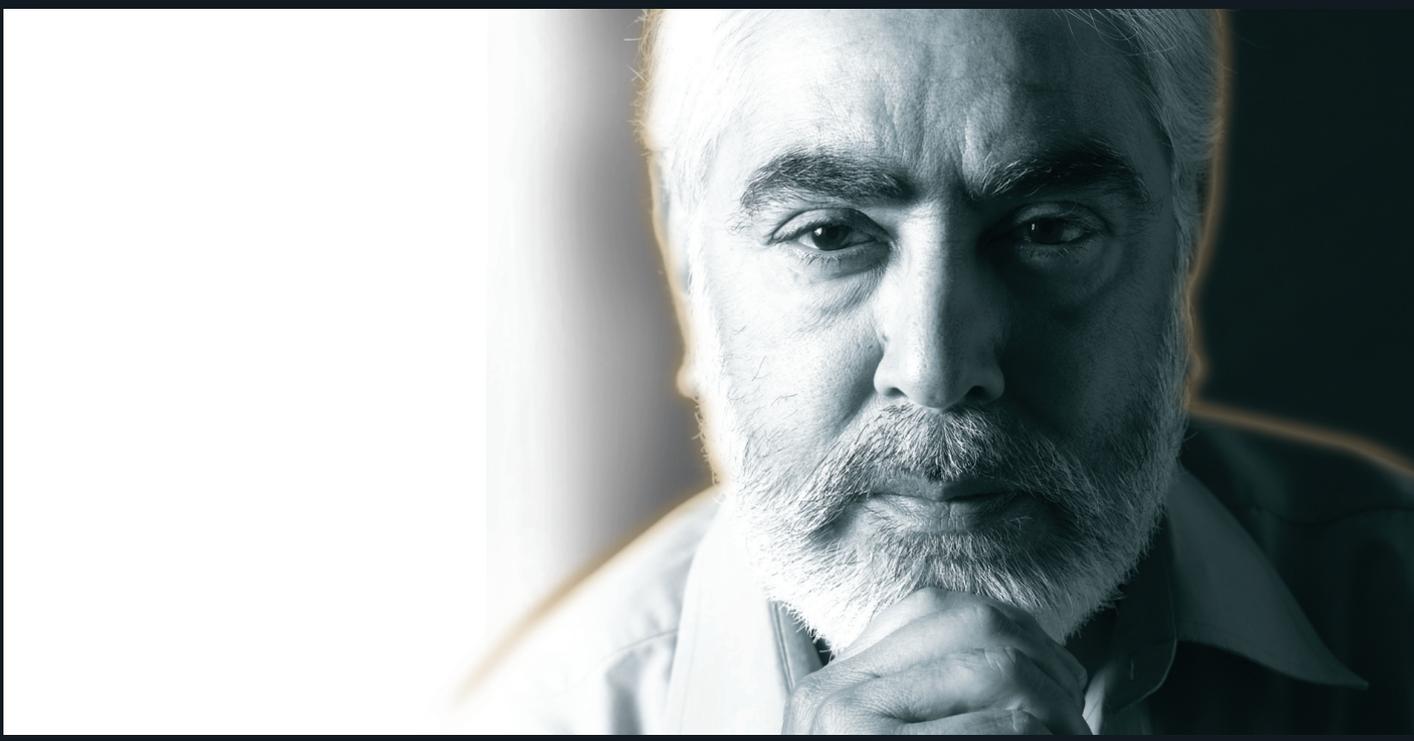
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