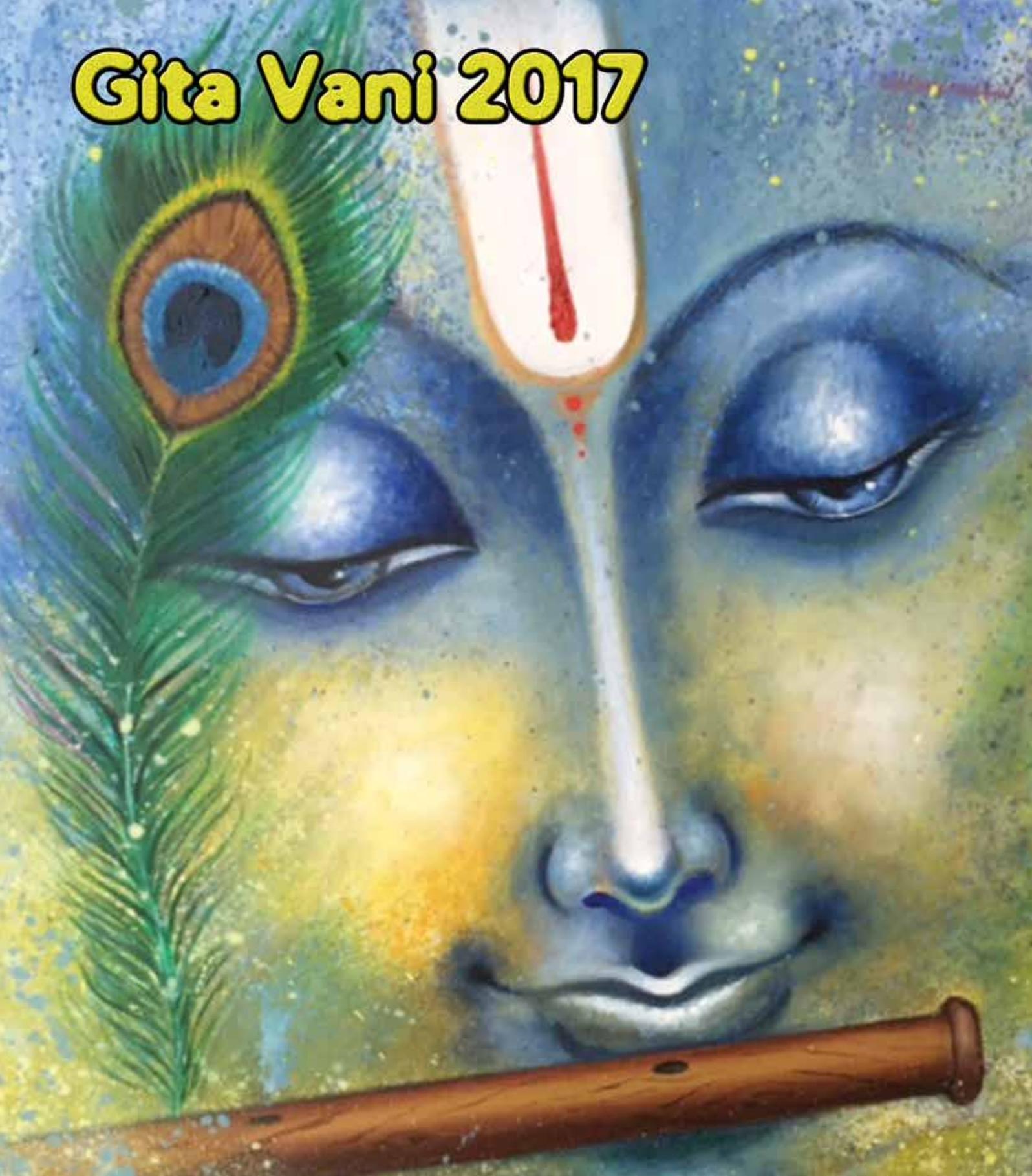


Gita Vani 2017



यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārho dhanurdharaḥ ।
tatra śrīrvijayo bhūtirdhruvā nītirmatirmama ॥ 18-78॥

The great work of Vedanta, 'Yoga Vasishta Maharamayana' commences with a question by a seeker by name Sutikshna, who goes to the hermitage of the great Guru Agasti in search of answers. His question is of tremendous significance. He asks, "What is it that will bring final release from the bondage of life? Is it works or knowledge? Or both?". To this question Agasti replies, "The birds do fly in the sky with the help of both their wings; just so is final liberation achieved through both knowledge and works. Neither of the two alone can bring release. Hence both knowledge and works are requisite for moksha." This answer is of great relevance to students of Gita who are seekers of wisdom, at the same time living active lives in the world. Yoga Vasishta affirms that the highest Truths and realizations are very much for those living here and now. The whole question is how the works are performed in the world and also what is proper knowledge. Gita provides invaluable guidance on how the works are to be performed and also on spiritual wisdom. One needs to be both a dynamic and active personality whose works excel, all done as an offering, but at the same time being an instrument of the Lord, for the Universal music to flow through. Now, what is this knowledge or Jnana? Srimad Devi Bhagavatam throws light on this matter. It says there are two types of knowledge – (1) merely sound (*Shabdakam*) and (2) from deep experience (*Anubhava Jnanam*). By mere intellectual study, all one gets is the *Shabdaka* Jnana or auditory knowledge. Devi Bhagavata gives the simile, as darkness cannot be destroyed merely by talking of light, without lighting any lamp, so the knowledge of sound merely cannot destroy the darkness of the inside. To get this experiential knowledge (*Anubhava* or *Aparoksa Jñāna*), intense effort or spiritual sadhana is required.

The Gita Jayanti events and celebrations provide an environment to facilitate study and understanding of the Gita. Even the ritual like is Gita Havan is symbolic of the real ahuti where the pot that is nothing but the mind which holds the havis (objects to be offered) of the manifest universe that is purified with sacred mantras, and offering it into the fire of consciousness flame (*chid agni*) which is nothing but Pure Brahman (*ahantha patra bharitam, idantha paramamritam, para hantha pare vahnou mantra putam juhomyaham*). It is also a tantric wisdom that this fire of knowledge is ever burning in oneself, awaiting only to be revealed and released. Every action can be divine offering – if done with the proper mental frame.

This issue of Gita Vani, as in previous years, have many articles and essays from very many different perspectives. It is blessed with meditations on the Gita by renowned thinkers and religious leaders of recent past, like Swami Chinmayananda, Sadhu Vaswani etc and current leaders like Swami Tejomayananda, Dada Vaswani and Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha etc. Leading modern thinkers like Dr Ananda Reddy and Scot Teitworth have shared their vision based on the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Narayana Guru. We also have several contributions from local Singaporean perspectives, including one from Chinese professional, Dr Charles Chow. This issue also captures the activities of the yearlong celebrations like various competitions, Gita Forum, Krishna Manjari cultural programme, Havan etc, all meant to develop and deepen the understanding on the Gita and enrich and liberate ourselves. It is our sincere hope that a careful reading of the articles in this publication will certainly deepen one's understanding of the Gita, opening fresh cross dimensional insights, linking Gita to the current challenges in business, health, and nature.

Through Gita, may wisdom dawn in us, so that we may see all things in clarity; may wisdom be transformed into right action, so that we may do what must be done; and may wisdom enliven us, so that we do right things in the right manner and right attitude and right perspective.

|| हरिः ॐ तत् सत् || hariḥ om tat sat ||

Krishna Kumar M



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Srimad Bhagavad Gita - the spiritual
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Cover Page artwork: "Kanha", 2016, Oil on Canvas by Gauri Gupta. Gauri has been a visual artist for over 25 years and has been featured in various art exhibitions in Singapore. By profession she is a playwright and theatre worker and has staged several successful and critically acclaimed plays in Singapore and India. Her theatre has a recurring theme of addressing some contemporary issue or the other. From social integration, migrant workers, deforestation and river purification, mental illness to child abuse, she weaves these themes into her stories.

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RADHESHYAM



MESSAGE BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR

JAWED ASHRAF



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MESSAGE

The Gita Jayanti deserves fullest appreciation and compliments for organising the Bhagawat Gita Jayanti every year in Singapore.

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, which is a metaphor for life, the sermon from Lord Krishna to Arjuna addresses the fundamental questions of life, duty, thought and action. Powerful and beautiful, the Bhagawat Gita is an eternal font of wisdom, a guide to society and a beacon for life. For several millennia, men and women have dived into its depth to seek the Truth. It embodies the essence of India's ancient civilisation and spiritualism, but its message has universal application for the entire humanity.

The annual event in Singapore is a testimony to the enduring strength of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Singapore Indian community. It is also a tribute to Singapore, which is an inspiration around the world as a successful nation that embraces pluralism and celebrates its diversity.


(Jawed Ashraf)
High Commissioner

Art of Living Foundation Ltd



Krishna is not a vyakti (person) but shakti (energy).

His life has all the nine rasas (flavors).

He was naughty as a child, a warrior,
joy personified and a source of knowledge.

Krishna was poorna kala avataran (a complete incarnation).

He was a perfect friend and guru.

There never was and never will be a friend like Krishna.

To awaken the Krishna in our consciousness is the right way.

'Krishna is not far from me, not separate from me,
he is within me': this feeling will fill your life with Krishna.

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JOINT MESSAGE HINDU ENDOWMENTS BOARD HINDU ADVISORY BOARD



Greetings!

It is indeed a great tribute to the large number of Hindu organizations that through their combined and collaborative efforts, Gita Jayanti celebrations has sustained and grown over the last 19 years. This year's effort is led by the Sri Muneeswaran Temple, Queenstown. Our heartiest congratulations to them for taking up the leadership for the event.

The eternal path of dharma leading to enlightenment, as explained for the common man, by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, needs to be spread and understood so that we have clarity of purpose and direction in life. There are several Hindu organizations in Singapore who conduct regular classes on the Gita and they play a very important role in this respect.

We note that though the Gita Havan is the highlight of this annual event, the organizers have also organized various competitions on the Gita, monthly Gita parayans and an International Gita forum. It is indeed heartening to see these events adding to the interest and understanding of the Gita.

Let these great efforts to spread the divine message of the Gita continue and grow and the Hindu Endowments Board will continue to provide all the necessary support.

We wish the organizers all success and all participants in the Gita Jayanti celebrations, peace and happiness in their personal journey.

R Jayachandran
Chairman, Hindu Endowments Board

Rajan Krishnan
Chairman, Hindu Advisory Board

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M E S S A G E

CHAIRMAN, ORGANISING COMMITTEE

(GITA JAYANTI 2016-17)



Congratulations to one and all who have contributed by various means to celebrate Gita Jayanti in Singapore and to spread the eternal message of Bhagavad Gita.

The Management Committee and Trustees from Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Commonwealth) are indeed very honoured to be part of the Gita Jayanti celebrations.

During this short tenure of mine, I felt the dedication and cohesiveness of the Gita Jayanti team, remarkable. This could have been a hidden mantra for their success all these years.

Let me quote from the Gita:

“On this path effort never goes to waste, and there is no failure. Even a little effort toward spiritual awareness will protect you from the greatest fear.

Whatever happened was good, what’s happening, it’s going well, whatever will happen, will also be good. You need not have any regrets from the past. Do not worry for the future. Live in the present.”

The Gita Jayanti team with the other participating organisations presented many events like dance, drama, competitions and talks to the Indian community in a very colourful and delight manner to spread the eternal message of Bhagavad Gita. Not forgetting the Hindu Endowments Board who played a vital role to further rejuvenate the Gita Jayanti celebrations.

Best wishes to one and all on this joyous occasion.

R Selvarajoo
Chairman, Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Commonwealth)



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MESSAGE: MS SUNDARI SUPPIAH
PRESIDENT, KRISHNA OUR GUIDE
LEAD ORGANISATION 1997



|| OM NAMOH BHAGAVATE VAASUDEVAYA ||

On behalf of Krishna Our Guide, I extend my greetings appreciation to all the volunteers who render their services on a regular basis to make this annual event a memorable one.

All work done in the Service of Bhagavan Sri Krishna becomes worship.

Krishna Our Guide congratulates the management committee, of Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Queenstown) who, together with the steering committee have put together this celebration of the Bhagavad Gita.

Dada J.P. Vaswani, in his book 'The Seven Commandments of the Bhagavad Gita' stated that "..... the Gita was given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna who was young in years, rich in idealism and strong in the powers of concentration."

As such, we hope and trust, this annual event-- the Gita Jayanti --- together with the year long activities and classes conducted, would indeed inspire the young to turn to the Bhagavad Gita for immense guidance.

|| KRISHNAM VANDE JAGAT GURUM ||

MESSAGE: MR SOHAN LAL DHAWN
PRESIDENT, GEETA ASHRAM
CO-LEAD ORGANISATION 1999



I wish to congratulate the organising committee of the Geeta Jayanti celebration. On this day lord Krishna gave his universal message of immortality of soul and doing one's duty irrespective of rewards. Doing your duty [karma] is in your hands but not its rewards.

In the battle field Arjuna was sad, dejected and refusing to fight and do his duty as a warrior. It was Lord Krishna's message that arose him, invigorated him and made him to fight and do his duty.

The teachings of Geeta are for the whole of mankind and are as relevant and inspiring as of old.

I wish all the success for this Geeta Jayanti celebrations.

Jai Shree Krishna.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ॥

sarvadharmānparityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja ।
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ ॥ 18-66॥

Relinquishing all *Dharmas* take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee
from all sins; grieve not.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९-२२ ॥
ananyāścintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate ।
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānāṁ yogakṣemaṁ vahāmyaham ॥ 9-22॥

Persons who, meditating on Me as non-separate, worship Me in all
beings, to them thus ever zealously engaged, I carry what
they lack and preserve what they already have.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ ७-१७ ॥
teṣāṁ jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktirviśiṣyate ।
priyo hi jñānino'tyarthamaham sa ca mama priyaḥ ॥ 7-17॥

Of them, the wise man, ever-steadfast, (and fired) with devotion to
the One, excels; for supremely dear am I to the wise, and he is dear to
Me.

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MESSAGE: MR N VARAPRASAD PRESIDENT, HINDU CENTRE CO-LEAD ORGANISATION 1999



Once again Hindu Centre is delighted to be part of Gita Jayanti celebrations and related activities. What started out in a small way in 1997, has grown, with the blessings of Lord Krishna, to be a uniting event among all Hindu organizations. Hindu Centre is happy to be part of this once again.

Gita Jayanti 2016-17 is held with the support of Hindu Temples and organizations of Singapore under the auspices of the Hindu Endowments Board. We are all grateful to the HEB for its annual support.

The Gita stands at the pinnacle of our scriptures and is the most read of all our scriptural literature, and the most interpreted. Its relevance to any era arises from the fact that we are always on a moral or dharmic battlefield, and the guidance provided by Lord Krishna to Arjuna is applicable to us too in our daily life. We are constantly fighting the war within us as well as outside of us.

Hindu Centre places Dharma at the centre of all our teachings and activities. We are pleased that our members and the public at large continue to seek knowledge towards their self-awareness.

May I wish Gita Jayanti 2016-17 a great success and express our gratitude to all the members of the various event organising committees and the editors of Gita Vani 2017. Shradhaavaan labhate jnanam - The Man with Faith gains Knowledge.

MESSAGE: MR CHANDRU BHARWANI PRESIDENT, CHINMAYA SEVA CENTRE SINGAPORE LEAD ORGANISATION 2000



Hari Om! "Get up and fight" is the clarion call of the Gita.

This is a call to each one of us to get up and fight the battle of our own lives according to our Swadharma, so that we may exhaust our Vasanas and purify the mind.

Since many years, the Gita Jayanti Celebrations conducted in a true Yagna spirit, have been an outstanding example of spreading this universal call, living the right humane values and has become a contributing force to Singapore and our people.

H H Swami Chinmayananda one of the great exponents of the Gita in our times spent 40 years of His life spreading this Knowledge far and wide throughout the world.

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda carried this work forward from 1993 - 2016 expanding the work in every field of social life.

On 19th January 2017 Swami Tejomayananda nominated Swami Swaroopananda as the next Head of the Mission Worldwide.

We are extremely privileged to welcome Mukhya Swami Swaroopananda once more to Singapore and look forward to being a great contributing force in the spread of this noble cultural evolution through the study of the Gita...



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MESSAGE: MR RAJAN MENON
CHAIRMAN, AMRITESWARI SOCIETY
LEAD ORGANISATION 2003



We are very grateful to the Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Queenstown) for taking the lead in celebrating Gita Jayanti 2016-2017 with other supporting organizations in Singapore.

Such a periodic celebration with great devotion and dedication serves to highlight the great philosophical, political, psychological and spiritual values conveyed in the Bhagavad Gita.

We hope the various activities organized for the Celebrations will enable all participants to see in the Bhagavad Gita paths to a much better existence in Society and a more meaningful conduct of their everyday lives.

We congratulate and are much obliged to all those who have put in much time, effort and expense to ensure the smooth conduct and execution of the large array of activities organized for the Gita Jayanti Celebrations culminating on 12 March 2017.

Best wishes!

MESSAGE: MR RAVI KUMAR RANGA
PRESIDENT, THE SINGAPORE TELUGU CULTURAL SOCIETY, LEAD ORGANISATION 2006



Greeting from The Singapore Telugu Cultural Society...

We congratulate Sri Muneeswaran Temple(Queenstown) for organizing and leading GITA JAYANTI 2016-17 along with other Hindu Temples and organizations of Singapore under the auspices of the Hindu Endowments Board, for actively participating and spreading the message of Gita for solace, peace, freedom, salvation and perfection of all human beings.

*Dhyato Bishayan Punsas Sangasteshu Upjayate / Sangat Sanjayate Kama Kamat
 Krodhobhijayate || Krodhatbhabati Sammoha Sammohat Smritibhibhramaha /
 Smribhransat Buddhinaso Buddhinat Pranashati*

The above quotes from Gita verses 62 & 63 from Chapter 2 are so relevant in today's modern world. Anger leads to hypnosis to the object and develops grief. In hypnosis for the object he loses the logic of differentiating good and bad (in any way he/she needs the object). Loss of logic leads to loss of spiritual intelligence and without intellect one perishes.

There are so many personalities which were inspired by the teaching of Gita and many more such to happen in future. The Hindu organizations main objective should be to teach the world the way of life and how they should not live and also to safeguard the nature which the present generation should pass to the future generation of the world.

On behalf of Singapore Telugu Cultural Society and its management committee, I wish you and your loved ones good health and happiness. We also hope that the spirit of organizing yearly Gita Jayanti activities continue in the coming years to protect and serve the immense morale for the future generations.

*With Best Compliments
From*

**Mr & Mrs
Dhirajlal Kapadia
& Family
Labasa, Fiji Islands**

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

MESSAGE: MR SUNDER RAMCHAND PRESIDENT, SRI SATHYA SAI SOCIETY, SINGAPORE LEAD ORGANISATION 2002



It is only with the collective support of every participating organization that Gita Jayanti celebrations in Singapore have continued for the last 15 years. On this auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti on 12 March 2017, Sri Sathya Sai Society, Singapore wishes the organizing committee of Gita Jayanti 2017 one more year of success in spreading the knowledge enshrined within Shrimad Bhagavad Gita.

With its rich and perennial teachings, the Gita reveals new wisdom every time we revisit it. May this annual occasion give us yet another opportunity to refresh our understanding of the values taught by Lord Krishna and reinvigorate our pursuit of Dharma.

MESSAGE: MR SHASHI LAL KASHYAP CHAIRMAN, SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY LEAD ORGANISATION 2005



Gita Jayanti occupies a very important place, in our hearts and minds, as we look at the world around us and look within to once again light the lamp of the knowledge and redeem our lives to the ideals of the Bhagvat Gita – the eternal song Divine.

We now hear often of an emerging VUCA world (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) environment. It is somewhat startling and unnerving for most of us much of how we related to the world outside us. Much depends on the world that resides within us! The Gita provides a beacon light to this.

Sri Aurobindo, beautifully summarises in his Essays on the Gita ““The Gita’s philosophy of life and works is that all proceeds from the Divine Existence, the transcendent and universal Spirit. All is a veiled manifestation of the Godhead, Vasudeva, and to unveil the Immortal within and in the world, to dwell in unity with the Soul of the universe, to rise in consciousness, knowledge, will, love, spiritual delight to oneness with the supreme Godhead, to live in the highest spiritual nature with the individual and natural being delivered from shortcoming and ignorance and made a conscious instrument for the works of the divine Shakti is the perfection of which humanity is capable and the condition of immortality and freedom.”

This becomes possible when we realise the deeper truth: “A Godhead is seated in the heart of every man and is the Lord of this mysterious action of Nature...”

The journey of the entire life is in discovering this truth and realizing the Godead that resides within us. It will provide us the compass to lead our lives, in peace and in consonance with the world, despite all externalities with certain equanimity.

The Gita Jayanti brings together every year all the positive forces amongst all of us and I and the members of our society look forward to partaking its activities that range from ceremonies, prayers and festivities.

I thank the organisers of this years Gita Jayanti and wish all of you in the Vasudeva Kutumbakan (one Divine Family) a wonderful Gita Jayanti,



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**MESSAGE: MR VIJAYA RANGA PRASAD N S
PRESIDENT, KANNADA SANGHA (SINGAPORE)
LEAD ORGANISATION 2007**



अवजानन्ति मांमूढामानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् । परं भावमजानन्तो ममभूत महेश्वरम् ॥

“Bhagavadgita”, shortly called Gita, helps us to understand the core values of Vedas and Upanishads and hence referred to as “Gitashastra”. The Gita is a discussion, rendered in the form of poetry, between Human-Warrior Arjuna and Guru-lord Krishna a charioteer which put religion and moral action on a very practical basis. The two main aspects dealt in Gita are, yogashastra in that it talks about karma-yoga (service) and the brahmavidya, knowledge of Brahman (renunciation). Bhagavan Krishna explains the complexities of the mind and ways to deal with the truth behind the various forms to Arjuna. What is so unique about the Bhagavad Gita is the elucidation of the 18 different yogas mentioned therein. The teachings are most scientific, objective and work for all who care to apply the same in their lives.

This Gita Jayanti is an event organized to spread this invaluable metaphysics to the next generation. The community involvement in the Gita Jayanti celebration has been growing exponentially since its inception and unites mankind regardless of class, linguistic and regional boundaries. Gita Jayanti opens door for greater possibility of understanding of thyself and ultimate co-existence.

On-behalf of Kannada Sangha (Singapore) I congratulate all great souls for their fervent effort, time and commitment in consistently organizing Gita Jayanti festivities for many years. I pray the supreme Lord Krishna to shower his blessings on all “Yajniks” for continued success in years to come.

**MESSAGE: MR G SRINIVASAN
PRESIDENT, SINGAPORE DAKSHINA BHARATHA
BRAHMANA SABHA, LEAD ORGANISATION 2008**



Srimad Bhagavad-Gita is the best commentary we have on the Vedanta philosophy. Set as a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in an uncommon and unusual venue., viz; a battlefield, it unfolds as the beautiful summary of the Upanishads which themselves carry the essence of our Vedas.

The battlefield is nothing but our mind that is always torn apart between the good and bad deeds. Srimad Bhagavad Gita tells us how to perform our actions thereby keeping the mind in equilibrium always. Peace prevails when such equilibrium is achieved. Thus Gita not only lays out the spiritual path for us but also teaches us the attitude we must have in performing our daily worldly activities to maintain this inner peace.

The reconciliation of the different paths of Dharma and performing our actions without any expectation over the result (Prasad Buddhi) are the special characteristics of the Gita.

Gita Jayanti Singapore is organising successfully several events over last two decades including the apex event - Gita Havan. It is a wonderful exercise and experience to witness several organisations joining hands together for spreading the wisdom enshrined in Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

Singapore Dakshina Bharatha Brahmana Sabha (SDBBS) had the privilege and honour of leading Gita Jayanti Celebrations eight years ago . SDBBS has been actively involved in Gita Jayanti and can affirm the above statement.

On behalf of SDBBS, I extend our best wishes and choice greetings to Gita Jayanti 2016-17 led by Sri Muneeswaran Temple, Queensway.

With Best Compliments from



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**MESSAGE: MR KAMAL KISHORE
PRESIDENT, MARWARI MITRA MANDAL
LEAD ORGANISATION 2009**



It is with great happiness that I write this message for the Gita Jayanti 2016. Gita Jayanti celebrates the birth of the universal scripture for mankind that has emanated from Hinduism a few thousand years ago. Though it is a part of the great epic, Mahabharata, it has developed a unique standing as one of the preeminent scriptural texts, in its own right. Its value is such that all the different schools of Hinduism value it as a fundamental textual authority. It is also one of the most commented and translated works of the world. It is indeed very appropriate that we celebrate its coming into being, as uttered by Lord Krishna to his friend and disciple, the warrior king, Arjuna.

Over the last 19 years Gita Jayanti has grown very well into a regular annual set of events, from very humble beginnings. Now under the umbrella of Gita Jayanti we have very diverse set of events like Krishna Manjari cultural programme, International Gita Forum, competitions for youth and adults etc, etc. I am also very happy that Gita Jayanti brings together the very diverse Indian community of Singapore – both expat Indians from all parts of India as well as local Indians. There are very few such events.

On behalf of Marwari Mitra Mandal, I wish Gita Jayanti all success, this year as well as years to come.

**MESSAGE: MR SUGRIM MISIR
PRESIDENT, SHREE LAKSHMINARAYAN TEMPLE
LEAD ORGANISATION 2010**



Congratulation to the organizers of Gita Jayanti.

Shree Lakshminarayan Temple (Singapore) is delighted to be part of Annual Gita Jayanti Celebration. Gita Jayanti has been the focal point in unifying all the Hindu Organisations. It is a celebration of the gift of the Bhagwat Gita by Lord Krishna to the people of the world. Bhagwat Geeta is often referred as a jewel in the crown of Hindu Philosophy and religious thought. Its teaching are broad, sublime and universal.

On Behalf of Shree Lakshminarayan Temple Management Committee would like to thank the organisers and their team for their dedication and commitment. We wish them success.

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MESSAGE: MR TUSHAR DOSHI
PRESIDENT, SINGAPORE GUJARATI SOCIETY
LEAD ORGANISATION 2011



Dearest Team GJ 2017

We at SGS fondly remember the time we had the honour of organizing Gita Jayanti. We understand the immense effort that it requires to execute what Krishna has in heart for all of us. However, we also know that His WILL will always prevail and we are nothing without His doing. The journey is one which is filled with mindfulness and everything converges towards a focal point. Such that meditation upon Krishna becomes effortless and natural.

On behalf of SGS's Members and entire Team SGS, I would like to extend our Heartiest congratulations on being able execute His work. Above all, congratulations on being the Chosen Ones. Our connection alone with you will clear the Path for us towards Liberation.

Lots of Love and Respect from all of us to each and everyone who has been a part of this amazing journey towards GJ 2017.

MESSAGE: MR AJAY KUMAR NAIR
PRESIDENT, SINGAPORE MALAYALEE HINDU
SAMAJAM, LEAD ORGANISATION 2004



Hari OM, Dhanyatman!

In the name of Malayalee Hindu Samajam, may I say that we are happy to be part of this great effort to popularise Bhagavat Gita and to get it embedded into the minds of our Hindu brethren in Singapore. All the more enjoyable is this co-working with 29 different organisations comprising of people from different states of India who worship the same gods in different methods and styles matching their local traditions; as one united Hindu community of Singapore.

From just learning to chant Gita, in the past 18 years this effort developed the urge in the participants to understand this great philosophical knowledge on how this whole world balance its equilibrium between the good and bad deeds done by its inhabitants. Arjuna's situation in the initial chapters and the realisation of people like Bheeshma and Karna after their intellectual exchanges with Lord Krishna later in Mahabharata, teaches us that just being law abiding, just and equitable alone is not enough to be a real leader. Lord Krishna's unfolding of the treasure of knowledge teaches how a Leader should react when people of respect become guardians of injustice, mistaking it as Dharma. There is much more to go deeper.

May the knowledge attained transform you all to be strong and confident to live a meaningful life, taking rightful decisions, leading this world as the Arjunas of modern time!



वसुदेव सुतं देवं कंस चाणूर मर्दनं
देवकी परमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगत् गुरुम्

vasudeeva sutaà deevaà kaàsa cäëüra marddanaà
deevaké paramānandaà kãñëaà vandee jagat gurum

***My salutations to Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of kans and chanur,
the Supreme Bliss of Devaki, the Teacher of the Universe***



MARWARI MITRA MANDAL (SINGAPORE)

www.marwarimitramandal.com

MESSAGE: MS RANJANA NANIKRAM
SADHU VASWANI CENTRE, SINGAPORE
LEAD ORGANISATION 2014



When I am in a dilemma and have a war raging within me, my thoughts are drawn towards this invaluable, soul-searching epic The Mahabharata and within it The Celestial Song, The Bhagavad Gita, vocalized by Lord Krishna in Kurukshetra - the battlefield of life! It expounds on the profound knowledge of the Self and its liberation.

To Sadhu Vaswani and Dada J P Vaswani, our spiritual guides, who are regarded by many as "embodiments of the Gita"; The Gita is essentially the Song of Life. It shows how Man (the jiva), who lives a life of separation, may be united with the Source - The Eternal! The Bhagavad Gita, speaks to us of the Path to retrace each lost individual soul back to its true Homeland, guiding us to live with self-control and bringing hope of spiritual upliftment and Self-realisation. The scripture is a priceless gift to humanity and its boundless knowledge is beneficial to the entire human race!

Congratulations to the Gita Jayanti organizers for their continued effort in trying to spread the sweet nectar of the Lord's sermon through various activities to include all ages. May your devotion for the Lord and love for suffering humanity be your inspiration to continue your dedicated effort!

MESSAGE: MR VASHDEV KHIALANI
PRESIDENT, SINGAPORE SINDHI ASSOCIATION
LEAD ORGANISATION 2016



Each chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is titled as a Yoga. This surely emphasises the importance of performing all our Action in a holistic and Dharmic way that will surely lead us to purify and unite us to realise our Humanity and eventually our Divinity.

On behalf of Singapore Sindhi Association (SSA). I am greatly pleased at having chaired 2016 Gita Jayanti Celebrations (18th). It was a truly memorable and humbling experience at joining in with all the dedicated volunteers who spent a considerable amount of their time and effort in ensuring that the Celebrations were held as planned and to please the throngs of the public of the participating organisations.

Of note is the participation by youth in the Gita Chanting and Art Competitions laying a strong foundation for the future.

We are delighted to extend a great welcome to Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Commonwealth) to lead Gita Jayanti 2016/2017 and are confident that their chairmanship will lead to greater heights in the promotion, awareness and practice of the teachings of the Gita.

With Best Compliments From



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**MESSAGE: MS ASMITA TADWALKAR
PRESIDENT, MAHARASHTRA MANDAL (SINGAPORE)
LEAD ORGANISATION 2012**



Namaste friends!

Congratulations to the Gita Jayanti Organising Committee and volunteers for zealously carrying forward the mission of spreading the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita year after year. Maharashtra Mandal (Singapore) is humbled to be associated with such a noble cause.

In the modern times of multiple distractions, a guiding light such as the Bhagavad Gita, which teaches us how to lead a good life, how to make the right choices and how to be righteous, is so relevant and important. The teachings are indeed eternal.

Wishing Gita Jayanti 2017 celebrations all the success!

**MESSAGE: MR RAJESH ANAND
FOUNDER MEMBER & LIFE TRUSTEE,
BIJHAR (SINGAPORE), LEAD ORGANISATION 2018
(UPCOMING)**



On behalf of BIJHAR (Singapore), I extend our sincerest thanks to the Gita Jayanti Singapore for bestowing to us the honour and privilege to lead the Gita Jayanti celebrations in 2017.

“Sarvopanishado gavo dogdha gopalanandana,

Partho vatsa: sudheerbhoktha dugdham gitamrutam mahat”

“All upanishads are cows. The milker is the son of the cowherd, Krishna; Arjuna, son of Prutha, is the calf; the men of purified intellect are the drinkers and the milk is the supreme nectar of Gita.”

Bhagwad Gita or simply Gita needs no introduction as it has been followed and adored by millions since the time it was spoken by Lord Krishna about 5000 years ago. The verse above summarises the importance of Bhagwad Gita unequivocally.

It is for us humans to take shelter of this transcendental knowledge and to surrender to Almighty under a qualified spiritual teacher to the extent we decide to derive the benefits.

We at BIJHAR have this great opportunity to contribute our efforts in spreading its glorious message wherever we can.

Our President Abdhesh Prasad, Life Trustee and Co-Founder Prakash Hetamsaria and Life Member Suresh Agarwal, also the Chairman for BIJHAR Gita Jayanti celebrations are at the forefront of this campaign and I have confidence that under their leadership BIJHAR team will strive their best, in this most glorious work.

Jai Shri Krishna!!

With Best Compliments



Sri Krishnan Temple conducted the last Consecration Ceremony on Sunday 24-11-2002. This was carried out after the restoration, strengthening and some redevelopment works to the main Temple hall and the construction of the 5 storey building.

Now 16 years, apart, the next Consecration Ceremony will be held on

Sunday 3rd June 2018



SRI KRISHNAN TEMPLE

152 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187961

Tel: 6337 7957, 6336 6300, Fax: 6334 2712

Email : srikrishnatemple@hotmail.com



Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudeva

Message

HARE KRISHNA

On behalf of The Singapore North Indian Hindu Association and Maa Durga Temple, Staff and Management Committee Members, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Shree Muneeswaran Temple's and the Hindu Endowments Board, Staff and Management Committee for organising the auspicious and joyous Gita Jayanthi & Gita Hawan Festival.

Gita Jayanti is the day when Lord Krishna enlightened Arjuna with the holy teaching of Bhagvad Gita. Through extraordinary divine dialogue Lord Krishna explained to confused and dejected Arjuna the meaning of Karma Yoga and how he can attain the purpose of life by performing his prescribed duty and following his Dharma (Righteousness). He uplifted Arjuna from his confused and dejected state of mind (Lower-self) into his Self-realised state (Higher-Self) through step-by-step spiritual journey.

On this auspicious occasion, I sincerely thank Shree Muneeswaran Temple's and the Hindu Endowments Board management committee, priests, devotees and well wishers for celebrating all our Hindu Religious festivals, and extending core values, teaching and creating interests in Hinduism our religion among our young generation.

KIRPA RAM SHARMA

President and Advisor
The Singapore North Indian Hindu Association

Senior Advisor
Arya Samaj Temple and D.A.V Hindi School

Chairman Trustee and Advisor
Shree Lakshminarayan Temple

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Gita Jayanti 2016 -17 TEAM



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Sunil Kumar K



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Vashdev Khialani



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Not in Picture: Arjan G Kripalani, HP Dayani, Chandru Budhrani
For detailed team organizational structure, please see page 96



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Quality of Mind Determines Quality of Performance

All over the world we see people working in various professions and fields. It is only a few among them who have significant achievement to their credit. It is the quality of your performance that determines the glory of your achievement, the success in your endeavour, the profit in your work, your productivity, your individual personality.

The quality of your performance and its texture is ordered by, controlled by, the quality and texture of your thoughts. If the thoughts are noble and serene, intelligent and creative, your performance will also be creative and beautiful. There is no doubt about it. It is nature's law that you will be a success, and success



Swami Chinmayananda is revered as an embodiment of spirituality in the twentieth century. He was considered as an authority on the ancient Indian scriptures, especially the sacred Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads.

Swami Chinmayananda spent forty years of his life in helping others. He opened a number of ashrams, schools, hospitals, nursing homes and clinics throughout the world. He is also the author of more than 30 books, dedicated to the philosophical belief behind religion.

Chinmaya Mission was founded with an aim, to bring the timeless knowledge of Vedanta closer to people. At the same time, it teaches them a way to attain spiritual growth and contentment.

With Best Compliments from

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Let us analyse this: My neighbour and I are working in the same economic and social conditions, but his performance is more brilliant and his success is more glorious. Even though I am putting forth more efforts than him, the profit from my activities is not as much as his. Why does this happen? If you say that the quality of our thoughts determines the quality of our actions, what makes the quality of my thoughts inferior? This question has raised many thoughts and challenged intelligent people. The great subjective scientists, our Rishis of yore, began analysing and investigating this. They discovered that the quality and texture of our thoughts are determined by the values of life that our intellect has understood and accepted.

Values Determine Quality of Mind

These days everybody talks of values – value-based education, value-based commerce, value-based politics. Governments come to power on the promise of value-based politics. We find meetings and seminars being held on value-based matters everywhere. They talk in circles, and no one seems to be sure of what they mean by ‘value’. Each one attaches some meaning according to his own purpose. Some people are in quest of wealth and for them money is value. Some people want power and for them power is value. Value is that for which we put forth efforts. This value determines the quality and texture of thoughts. Thoughts projected become actions and behaviour. So if the values of life are healthy, thoughts will be beautiful. When the thoughts are beautiful, behaviour also will be beautiful, appropriate, efficient and brilliant. These will yield brilliant results. It is on the basis of this fundamental scientific truth of man’s inner personality and

“ **The great subjective scientists, our Rishis of yore, began analysing and investigating this. They discovered that the quality and texture of our thoughts are determined by the values of life that our intellect has understood and accepted....**

Thoughts projected become actions and behaviour. So if the values of life are healthy, thoughts will be beautiful. When the thoughts are beautiful, behaviour also will be beautiful, appropriate, efficient and brilliant. These will yield brilliant results. It is on the basis of this fundamental scientific truth of man’s inner personality and its function that all ideas of ethics and morality evolved.

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its function that all ideas of ethics and morality evolved.

Freedom is not License

Today, unfortunately, many people, particularly youth, have no belief in ethical and moral values. They have a wrong understanding that those who talk of the discipline of ethics and morals, of do’s and don’ts, are unaware of what real freedom and enjoyment is, and that they are jealous when they see the youth enjoying. They argue that the creator has made such a beautiful world so that his creatures may enjoy it. He has thoughtfully given us eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin to enjoy the sense-objects and we would be ungrateful to Him if we refuse to enjoy them. The hostess has very lovingly cooked beautiful food and served you; how can one refuse it? When music, dance and similar avenues of enjoyment available these days are dubbed unethical, immoral or vulgar, the youth do not like it. They want to live in total permissiveness. “I feel like doing it, so I do it.” Look at the animals. They do not have any restrictions. Why should man alone have restrictions? He must also have full freedom. The do’s and don’ts are born of religion; so religion must be discarded; it is a shackle. Thus go the arguments.

Compliments From

Bhartia Family

श्रीभगवानुवाच।
मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते।
श्रद्धया परयोपेताः ते मे यक्ततमा मताः ॥

śrībhagavānuvāca ।
mayyāveśya mano ye mām nityayuktā upāsate ।
śraddhayā parayopetaḥ te me yuktatamā matāḥ ॥

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshiping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect."

SBG. 12/2

“ if I cultivate the spirit of forgiveness. After forgiving, my mind is peaceful and serene. I eat well, sleep well, I can put my entire mind on any work that I am doing...

If I cultivate love, I love everybody; my mind is peaceful, quiet and alert. The millions of little challenges that I meet can be faced with bare minimum expenditure of mental vitality. The mental wealth is conserved, and it can be channelised into any chosen creative field of work. The economics of the outer wealth you know -- how to make money, how to find the funds, how to conserve it, how to redirect it and distribute it into creative fields. But you are ignorant and overlook the inner wealth. The inner wealth is mental and intellectual vitality. ”

Conserving Mental Energy

Think. Life is all about facing challenges. Every one of you has to face, at every moment, challenges, problems, crises, situations. There is no choice. If you do not face them, the problems will come and crush you. Face them either intelligently or unintelligently, but face them you must. Every living organism, plant, animal or human, man or woman, has to face challenges every moment. These challenges are met by you with your mind and intellect. They have to decide what is to be done, what is the solution, and then the physical body has to move to express it outside. Sometimes the mind has to incur extraordinary expenditure of mental energy. How you will face the challenge will depend upon the type of values your mind cherishes. Hatred, jealousy, greed, passion, lust -- if these negative values are in you, the mental energy that you will be spending in facing a problem will be enormous. Suppose I hate you, whenever I meet you in society, outwardly I will be acting civilly, shaking hands etc., but mentally I will be cursing, planning, thinking, how to destroy you. My mind will be in turmoil, and you, not knowing

this, are relaxed. So when I maintain negative values like hatred, a lot of mental energy is spent in meeting even small challenges. Suppose instead of hatred, I cultivate the spirit of forgiveness. After forgiving, my mind is peaceful and serene. I eat well, sleep well, I can put my entire mind on any work that I am doing.

Thus if I cultivate love, I love everybody; my mind is peaceful, quiet and alert. The millions of little challenges that I meet can be faced with bare minimum expenditure of mental vitality. The mental wealth is conserved, and it can be channelised into any chosen creative field of work. The economics of the outer wealth

you know -- how to make money, how to find the funds, how to conserve it, how to redirect it and distribute it into creative fields. But you are ignorant and overlook the inner wealth. The inner wealth is mental and intellectual vitality.

Inner Wealth

Mental vitality and inner poise are the greatest wealth. If that wealth is there, the outer wealth may come and go; even if it goes, you can make it again. But if the inner wealth is dried up, you have got a fatigued, exhausted, weakened mind. You cannot then face any challenge, even if you have outer wealth in millions. This creative power, this mental vitality, is at this moment being carelessly squandered away. One of the channels through which it is squandered is false negative values nourished in the mind. If, however, one cultivates the positive ethical values of love and kindness, affection, tenderness and consistency of purpose, these will minimise the expenditure of mental vitality, conserving it, so that it can be redirected into creative fields, whatever be the profession.

With Best Compliments from

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन। मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ २-४

ॐ

You have the right to work only, never to its fruits.

ॐ

Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction.



With Best Wishes From:



Centennial Maritime Ventures Pte Ltd. Singapore

But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form -- to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have. Bhagavad Gita – 9.22

अनन्यश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्यभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९.२२ ॥



SHASHI-TINA, AMITABH, RADHA, PRISHA

The dynamism and health of the inner personality is often overlooked. This may even lead to physical debility and illnesses like blood pressure, thrombosis, ulcers, hemorrhage, rising from mental tensions and lack of equanimity. We can see hundreds of such examples. Medical treatment will not help in such cases. The only remedy is development of equanimity by avoiding wrong approach to problems and cultivating right values by contemplating upon such higher values.

Choose an Ideal to Emulate

These values like love, tolerance, compassion, mercy, kindness, loyalty and faithfulness are ideas, and it is difficult to contemplate on them. You cannot live those values until you can think of a noble person -- a hero, who is an embodiment of those values, and whom you can try to emulate. You cannot contemplate on such a person without these values arising in your mind, for example, you cannot think of Mahatma Gandhi without the idea of non-violence arising in your mind. Buddha brings to your mind peace and tranquility. On the other hand, when you think of Hitler, your mind will be tainted by his cruelty and atrocious crimes against Jews, who were killed in millions.

So the method to be followed is *saguna upasana* -- contemplating on some deity or idol, like Sri Rama, Krishna, Hanuman, Ganesha, Siva, Vishnu, Buddha or Jesus. If you have a lord of devotion in your altar and bow down to him morning and evening, remembering Him at all times as though he is just behind you, looking over your shoulders, watching over what you are doing from morning to evening -- that is upasana. You must feel that He is supervising whatever

you are doing, He sees everything, He is guiding you and leading you. The thought in your mind should be 'May I do things in such a way that I get a nod of approval from Him.' If you do upasana in this manner, His qualities come automatically to the mind and in due course, you will find that your values have changed. I am not saying that values can be changed overnight. If you have the ideal in front of you and remember it continuously, slowly these values will get fixed in your mind. When your values change, the pattern of thoughts in your mind also changes. When the pattern of thoughts changes, the texture and quality of your performance also changes.

Some people say that this upasana is mere superstition, like some Guru telling that if you go to a Siva temple and pray regularly, your problems will be solved. But if you think over it, you will find that it is the faith which you have in the Guru's words that has been responsible for quietening your mind and making it more dynamic. When your mind is calmed, your actions will be more sensible and intelligent; your actions and reactions will thus be right. Finally, we see that you yourself have changed and faced the problems successfully.

Conclusion

So we can say that ethical and moral principles

“If you have a lord of devotion in your altar and bow down to him morning and evening, remembering Him at all times as though he is just behind you, looking over your shoulders, watching over what you are doing from morning to evening -- that is upasana. You must feel that He is supervising whatever you are doing, He sees everything, He is guiding you and leading you. The thought in your mind should be 'May I do things in such a way that I get a nod of approval from Him.. When your values change, the pattern of thoughts in your mind also changes. When the pattern of thoughts changes, the texture and quality of your performance also changes.

”

With Best Compliments from

Archana & Abhay Agarwal
Ayush & Swati

Charu and Deepak Choudhary
Nikhil and Nikita

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ २-४७ ॥

karmaṇyevādhikāraṣte mā phaleṣu kadācana ।
mā karmaphalāheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmaṇi ॥ 2-47॥

**Your right is to work only, but never to its fruits. Do not
let the fruit-of-action be your motive, nor let your
attachment be to inaction. [BG 2.47]**

have to be followed in every profession. An individual who has been living such values will be conserving mental energy. Any work done by him will be excellent. Higher and nobler values of life will integrate your personality. Wrong values will bring about disintegration. A disintegrated personality cannot cope with problems or properly meet situations as they come. Once you are integrated, nothing disturbs you. You are able to handle any situation with calmness.

So, friends, in the world of constant change, you must learn to keep your balance. This balance will come from your mental quality. The quality of mind is determined by the values of life. If you hold on to healthy values of life, nothing can disturb you. Under all circumstances, you will be at the top of the world, ruling over and controlling the

“ So we can say that ethical and moral principles have to be followed in every profession. An individual who has been living such values will be conserving mental energy. Any work done by him will be excellent. Higher and nobler values of life will integrate your personality. Wrong values will bring about disintegration. A disintegrated personality cannot cope with problems or properly meet situations as they come. Once you are integrated, nothing disturbs you. You are able to handle any situation with calmness.

The quality of mind is determined by the values of life. If you hold on to healthy values of life, nothing can disturb you. Under all circumstances, you will be at the top of the world, ruling over and controlling the situations, smiling away through the bumps of life. Life itself becomes a sport, a game to be enjoyed at all times. ”

situations, smiling away through the bumps of life. Life itself becomes a sport, a game to be enjoyed at all times.



What is the purpose of money except for the maintenance of one's body?

The greatness of material wealth is evanescent, charming at start but sorrowful at the end. On the contrary, the wealth arising out of the realization of Truth is everlasting, uniformly beautiful and Blissful.

--- Swami Tapovanam (1889 – 1957)

With Best Compliments from

**HIMANI SWAMI AND SOWMYA (SHOUMO) MITRA
SIONA AND SIVIA**

MEENA RAI AND NAKUL GUPTA

SHASHI BALA AND PRABHU DUTT KUKREJA

**SHILPA AND RAJESH GADODIA
HARSH AND YASH**

SURABHI AND AMIT

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९-२२ ॥

*ananyas cintayanto mam
ye janah paryupasate
tesam nityabhiyuktanam
yoga-ksemam vahamy aham*

*But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on
My transcendental form-to them I carry what they lack and
preserve what they have. SBG CH. 9 V.22*

Krishna, An Ambassador of Peace

Sadhu T L Vaswani

In exquisite poetic language Sadhu Vaswani recounts the story of the Krishna's diplomatic efforts with the Kauravas to secure some land for the Pandavas after their long forest life and year in hiding. The diplomacy ultimately fails, leading to the Mahabharata war

Krishna is a man of peace. And to Hastinapur he goes, in behalf of the Pandavas, as an ambassador of peace. Blessed are the peace-makers: but they shall be persecuted : yet therein lies their honour. Duryodhana persecutes Krishna. Duryodhana even makes an attempt, which proves futile, to arrest Krishna. But Krishna quails not: Duryodhana cannot touch him. His Light cannot be quenched. It is the Light of the City of God!

Krishna arrives at Hastinapur. A council of war is sitting there. Krishna prays for Divine Help in his mission of Peace. Krishna goes to the palace of Hastina. He finds

Sadhu T L Vaswani : Sindhi Philosopher, Educationist & Spiritual Master

To many thousands around the world, Sadhu T. L. Vaswani is a name synonymous with reverence for all life. Born on November 25, 1879, in Hyderabad Sind, Sadhu Vaswani was the living embodiment of an unsullied love that knew no bounds, an all-embracing love that included all mankind, animals and all creation.

Sadhu Vaswani re-worded the wisdom of the Rishis. He taught that all religions are true, that each had a value of its own. He taught that in all the saints and prophets shone the One Light. He asked all to turn away from creeds and dogmas to the Religion of Life, the Religion of Self-realization, the Religion of God-consciousness, the Religion of the One Spirit who is in all races and religions, prophets and saints. He was an eloquent prophet of unity.



With Best Compliments from

ANJU, RUPESH & ARUSH KUMAR

HIRANAND PUNJABI

KAMLESH & RAJENDRA GOUR

MEENA LAKHYANI

NAGINLAL MODI & FAMILY

RAKSHA, KAMAL, MUNISH, ARYAN & DHRUV BAWA

RUKMANI & KISHINCHAND SAPRA

SUCHETA & BHAGWAN KALAMKAR

SUMAN, PARVEEN & TEJAS

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

ye tu dharmamritam idam
yathoktam paryupasate
sraddadhana mat-parama
bhaktas te 'tiva me priyah

"Those who follow this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engage themselves with faith, making Me the supreme goal, are very, very dear to Me."

SBG.12/20

that in the palace a council of war is in progress already. Krishna stands up to address the assembly. Krishna says:—

“Mighty king! Noble Dhritrashtra! I come as an ambassador of peace: I bring a message of peace and love: I come to reveal a new Law of life, the Law of brotherhood, sympathy and love.

“I ask thee, mighty king, to forbid this war of friends and kinsmen. Bharata is, of all the nations of the world, the best: and the great ones of Bharata are far-famed for wisdom, virtue and sympathy.

Thou, O mighty king! art the Father of thy people! would not see thy name sullied by the sin of injustice and cruel wrong!

“Noble Dhritrashtra, thy sons, the Kauravas, have given way to unholy anger and revenge : they refuse to give their kinsmen even a portion of the land which belongs to them.

“Mighty monarch! Know where injustice is inflicted upon the people, ill fares the land : a plague sweeps the earth, as the comet fires the sky, and a civil war breaks out.

“Noble Dhritrashtra! if the impending war is not averted, whole nations will bleed to death. Thou lovest, I know, thine ancient Aryan race! Then stretch out thine hands over thy restless sons: restrain them! It is not yet too late. I promise to pull the sons of Pandu into the paths of Peace: it is for thee to control thy sons and make them obey thee in this hour of Bharata’s crisis!

“Brave is Duryodhana and Yuddhishtra is a son of righteousness. Let each rule his kingdom. And if the two are at peace, both will grow from more to more! Heroic are the sons of Pandu and their armed forces are strong. If they and the

“ **Mighty king! Noble Dhritrashtra! I come as an ambassador of peace: I bring a message of peace and love: I come to reveal a new Law of life, the Law of brotherhood, sympathy and love.**

Heroic are the sons of Pandu and their armed forces are strong. If they and the Kauravas stand united and guard this great Land of Bharata, not even Indra may prevail against it. Think of the heroes you have in the two camps. Bhishma is unconquerable : Drona s a mighty leader : Karna is an unmatched archer : Kripa is unequalled in valour : Bhima is terrible to face in fight: Yuddhishtra is a lover of Dharma : Arjuna is matchless. If they all stand united, this land of Bharata will shine as the First in all the world. If they all stand united, a new race of heroes will arise!

”

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“But if peace, O mighty king! is spurned, these ancient walls will echo the wails of widows. Will the sons of Pandu be slain? They are dear to thee and thy heart will be sad. Will the Kauravas be found on the blood-soaked plain? Thy heart will be smitten with agony.

“Reflect, thou man of many winters! Reflect on the love thou hast given to the 5 Pandavas ever since the righteous Pandu left his throne! Take them back into thy bosom: be a father to them once more! They have charged me to give thee their message. They say: “For years we lived like orphans in the night: at last the radiant dawn awakes! Be to us even now a father. Help us, if we faint!”

“Noble Dhritrashtra! Krishna pleads for

With Best Compliments from

Amazing
Simple

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

From whom all beings come into being, and by whom this whole universe is pervaded, by worshipping HIM through the performance of his own natural duties, man attains the highest perfection.

MOKSHA SANYASA YOGA 18.46
AMAZING SIMPLE GITA

NIRANJANAN AND FAMILY

BALAJI IYER

MR SRIDHAR & FAMILY

PREM MANU BHASKARAN

MRS SMITHA AND MR ANUJ MATHUR

peace, and Krishna prays for blessings on you all ! Lead not thy people to slaughter: slay not thy kinsmen. Keep peace and depart not from Righteousness: for thou hast not many years on earth. Let thy closing years be clean and free from blood and sin!”

In Krishna’s words is the voice of the Spirit that reaches the heart of Dhritrashtra, and he sighs heavily and his eyes are filled with tears. Then speaketh Bhishma:—”O king! You cannot win. Listen to these living words of mine. I trained Arjuna. There is not his equal among the warriors. Krishna and Arjuna are resistless : they are the conquerors : you cannot win. Listen not to Duryodhana : follow your own heart: for in the heart is the throne of the King of kings!”

Then speaks Dhritrashtra:- “Duryodhana, my beloved son! ‘End this strife! Do not cast the black shadow of death and sorrow on the last years of your aged parents. Simple is the heart of Krishna: wise is his counsel: resist it not : be reconciled to Yuddhishtra: let the Kurus and the Pandavas be strengthened in bonds of love!”

But Duryodhana is sinister and silent. Up he rises in anger and speaks to Krishna:—”Chief of Dwarka! You hate me and you secretly love the Pandavas. My father and Bhishma, Vidura and Drona are all in secret compact with you. Shall I bow the knee to the homeless Pandavas? We are so

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”

many : the Pandavas and their friends are so few. But even if I lose, dying on the battlefield, I have no fear : for the golden gates of swargaloka are open to him who dies bravely fighting on the battlefield. Indraprastha will never be Yuddhishtra’s again. My father shall be the king of undivided Bharata. The Pandavas ask for a small portion of the Land : they shall have neither town nor village, mart nor hamlet. No! I shall not give them the space of even the point of a needle!”

Krishna returns to the Pandavas. All hope of peace hath perished. Duryodhana is a man of the mind, not the spirit. The mind weighs and measures : the spirit sees and speaketh out of the heart. Preparations begin for a terrible conflict. Kurukshetra is the beginning of Bharata’s tragedy. Fates overpower the vision of the Rishis and India falls to dust!



With Best Compliments from

Amazing Simple Gita

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥

Every such being - glorious, brilliant and powerful - know that
to be part manifestation of MY glory.

VIBHUTI YOGA 10.41
AMAZING SIMPLE GITA

MEDHA ACHARYA

MRS SEETHA & MR SUBRAMANIAM

ANIRUDH & ANANYA

KAMYA & KABIR SOMESHWAR

SIDDHARTH & RUBEN TULI

Why Do We Worship the Lord?

Swami Tejomayananda

Why do we worship the Lord? People often think that if they worship the Lord, there will be no problems or sorrows in their lives. However, even sincere devotees and worshippers have to face difficulties in their lives. People wonder what the use of worship and prayer is, if they still have to face problems every day.

We do not know the reason for each and every thing that happens in our lives. Our life is guided by the law of karma and some of our karmas result in painful experiences. However, your state of mind determines how you receive it and whether you become sorrowful or not. The primary aim of worship is to fill our hearts with devotion for the Lord. When the heart is filled with devotion, the umbrella of the Lord's grace protects and shields us from sorrows, whatever be the external situation.



H H Swami Tejomayananda has been the Global Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide from 1993 to 2016, a position accorded to him in after Swami Chinmayananda attained Mahasamadhi. If Swami Chinmayananda served the cause of Vedanta with his service, knowledge and pioneering qualities, Swami Tejomayananda completed that with his natural attitude of devotion. This is richly and abundantly evident in his talks, his singing, and his demeanour.

Swamiji has also been awarded the Padma Bhushan to recognise the work of distinction and exceptional achievement in the field of spiritualism and social work.

With the blessings of Guru Parampara, on the 19th of January 2017 Swami Tejomayananda passed the "Guru Seva Padak" (baton) of being Global Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, to Swami Swaroopananda who is committed to take the Mission forward in the same spirit of love and dedication.

With Best Compliments from

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥

Knowledge is better than practice, meditation is better than knowledge, renunciation of fruits of action is even superior to meditation; for peace immediately follows from renunciation.

**BHAKTHI YOGA 12.12
AMAZING SIMPLE GITA**

ESHA AGNIHOTRI & KSHITIJ AGNIHOTRI

MR RAJIV MAYEKAR

MRS KAMINI SURI

SMT AND SRI VISHNU RAO IDUPUGANTI

MR SITARAM, MS VAISHNAVI AND MS VARSHINI

MR SHANKAR KANDARPA & FAMILY

GITA BHAKTA

GITA BHAKTH

Bhakti - A Unique Sadhana

In *Bhakti Sastra*, it is said that a person in distress can pray to God for relief. If you want prosperity, you can pray to Him; if you want knowledge, you can pray for that. The compassionate Lord says, "If you have any problem, come to me; don't go to anyone else." If your son or daughter has some problem, and instead of telling you, goes to the neighbour's house for help, would you like it? In the same way, the Lord says, "If you have any desires, express it to me; don't stretch your hand before the world."

Thus, devotion, or *bhakti*, is that spiritual practice or *sadhana*, by which a devotee gains and attains God. There is something unique about the beautiful practice of *bhakti* that we should pause to examine. In this world, to get or succeed in anything, we have to exert some effort, which is called practice, or *sadhana*. Yet, once our goal is reached, the practice utilized to reach that objective is abandoned! For example, to cross a river, one needs a boat. While onshore, the boat is unnecessary. Similarly, you take medicines to get rid of sickness. As soon as you are well again, your first thought is to give up the very medicine that cured you. Would you feel sad or miss your course of antibiotics after an infection is healed? It is obvious that when there is an objective (*sadhya*), we resort to practice (*sadhana*), the means to achieve it. Once the *sadhya* becomes actualized (*siddha*), the *sadhana* itself becomes redundant.

However, *bhakti* is a special *sadhana* where the practice and feeling of devotion keeps growing even after the devotee gains the Lord! Earlier, to the devotee, *bhakti* was the *sadhana* undertaken to attain God. After the devotee finds God, *bhakti* becomes his very life! The sheer joy of such devotion, *ananda*, keeps growing in the heart of

“ However, *bhakti* is a special *sadhana* where the practice and feeling of devotion keeps growing even after the devotee gains the Lord! Earlier, to the devotee, *bhakti* was the *sadhana* undertaken to attain God. After the devotee finds God, *bhakti* becomes his very life! The sheer joy of such devotion, *ananda*, keeps growing in the heart of the devotee. A person once asked such a devotee. "Are you not bored to be devoted like this all the time?" The devotee inquired in reply, "Would you ask a fish if he is bored to stay in water always?" Just as water is life-giving to the fish, so is devotion life-giving to the devotee... ”

the devotee. A person once asked such a devotee. "Are you not bored to be devoted like this all the time?" The devotee inquired in reply, "Would you ask a fish if he is bored to stay in water always?" Just as water is life-giving to the fish, so is devotion life-giving to the devotee.

The primary purpose of all worship and devotion is to grow in love for the Lord. *Bhakti* alone is our main goal. Further, when we worship the Lord, we express our gratitude for all the things He has given us in plenty. When someone gives us a gift, a wrist watch for example, we thank the person. But we forget to thank Him who gave us the hands. We have received all our physical, mental, intellectual abilities from the Lord and it is our duty to thank Him and express our love and gratitude through worship. The Lord does not expect any worship from us. When we worship the Lord, we meditate on the virtues of the Lord and slowly begin to imbibe them.

Furthermore, devotion gives boundless bliss to the devoted. What is the best way to practice such overflowing devotion? The continued remembrance of the name of the Lord alone can easily inspire contemplation. This is the technique used by the great devotees since the beginning of

With Best Compliments from

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः
यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्

9.26 Whoever offers ME with love, a leaf, flower, a fruit, even water, I accept that which has been offered with a sinless mind.

9.27 What you do, or eat, or sacrifice, give, or do penance, offer it all to ME.

RAJA VIDYA RAJA GUHYA YOGA 9.26&27
AMAZING SIMPLE GITA

GEETHA BHAKTH

time. Just as a sweet delicacy induces a craving, just as a sweet melody begs for an encore, the beautiful sweetness of the Lord's name leads us to start first unconsciously repeating it.

The power of the divine name can liberate the ardent praying devotees, and they in turn can free others from worldly cares.

In this world, we find that some people are *samartha*, or capable, but they are not compassionate. A beggar once asked for some clothes or food from a rich man, who said, "Go away. There is nothing here." The beggar retorted, "Then why are you sitting there? Come along with me!" The rich man is capable of helping, but has no *karuna* or compassion. Quite often we say, "I feel so much for you, but I am sorry, I can do nothing." The Lord is capable and also compassionate.

When the devatas and asuras were churning the milky ocean and poison came out, Lord Siva alone was capable of taking it. Interestingly, Lord Siva asked his wife Parvati for permission before consuming the poison! The poison made His throat blue, and hence He is also called Nilakantha. This incident shows Lord Siva's prowess and compassion.

If we worship Lord Siva and say '*Nilakaṅṭhāya namaḥ*', some of His virtues should become part of us also. Another name of the Lord is Trilochana or Tryambaka, the three-eyed one. We should understand the significance of the three eyes. As the Lord of the universe, He presides over the karmas and gives us the results of our actions – *karmaphala-dātā*. While doing so, He must be just; hence one of His eyes is the eye of justice. But the justice must be tempered with love and

“ Lord Siva has Gangaji on his head; that means He keeps His head cool. While facing difficulties in our lives, we should learn to remain cool. Around His neck, Lord Siva wears a snake which is poisonous, but at the same time, He has the moon on his head, which showers cool nectar. The pairs of opposites like joy and sorrow, victory and defeat are a part of life. Through it all, we must remain calm and composed.. ”

compassion, which is represented by the other eye. In order to balance the justice and compassion, the eye of wisdom (*jñāna*) is needed. Parents also need three eyes to handle their children! They must not be unduly harsh, but use compassion and wisdom while disciplining their children.

Lord Siva has Gangaji on his head; that means He keeps His head cool. While facing difficulties in our lives, we should learn to remain cool. Around His neck, Lord Siva wears a snake which is poisonous, but at the same time, He has the moon on his head, which showers cool nectar. The pairs of opposites like joy and sorrow, victory and defeat are a part of life. Through it all, we must remain calm and composed.

We can go on singing the glory of the Lord, but they can never be exhausted. We will end with a simple sloka:

*tava tattvaṁ na jānāmi kīdṛśo'si maheśvara,
yādrśo'si mahādeva tādrśāya namo namaḥ.*

Oh Lord, I do not know Thy infinite nature. Whatever Thou art, to Thee my obeisance!

I invoke the grace and blessings of Lord Siva and Mother Parvati on everyone, wherever they may be.



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Krishnam Vandey Jagad Gurum



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JAI SHRI KRISHNA & JAI SHRI GURUDEV

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनम् च।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५-१५ ॥

sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanam ca |
vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyo
vedāntakṛdvedavideva cāham || 15-15||

*I alone reside in the hearts of all beings and from Me emanate memory,
wisdom and also their loss; I am verily that which is to be known by the Vedas;
I am the author of the Vedanta and I am the knower of the Vedas.*

SBG 15/15

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How is Our Destiny Made?

Swami Swaroopananda

We make our own destiny. There is a law of nature -- which our rishis discovered in ancient times and which Newton discovered later -- that for every action there is an equal reaction. You can also therefore say that for every reaction, there has to have been a preceding action. Therefore, all the things happening to us in the present are obviously the reactions or results of our own actions done in the past. You cannot say why is this happening to me. It has to be the result or reaction of your own action done earlier.

What if something really bad or really good is happening to me now, and I feel I have done nothing earlier to deserve it?

Let us say something really bad is happening to you in the present. One of three things could apply. First, you may not remember the relevant wrong action you did in the past. Second, you may remember your relevant past action, but you don't realise that the action was wrong. The reaction doesn't just depend on the physical action, but also on the motive and the timing behind the action. For example, you may have sowed sweet pea seeds using all the right manure and with all good intentions -- but if you sowed the seeds in May when you should actually have sowed them in October,



In an era rife with scepticism and confusion about matters spiritual, Swami Swaroopananda is a rare voice that blends authenticity with accessibility; theory with self-practice; logic with heart.

Swamiji requires no introduction to Singapore. A welcome visitor since the 1990s, he has captured the respect and affection of thousands not only in the Lion City but across the world, and his tremendous work in bringing out the essential wisdom and underlying unity of all religions has garnered him a place among the vanguards of self-development philosophy.

Formerly the Regional Head of Chinmaya Mission Australia, United Kingdom, Middle East, Africa and Far East, and Director of the Chinmaya International Residential School in Coimbatore, Swami Swaroopananda has now been bestowed by Swami Tejomayananda the privilege to serve as the Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide.

With Best Compliments from



George Romney
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श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्द्यानं विशिष्यते।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम्॥

śreyo hi jñānamabhyāsājñānāddhyānaṁ viśiṣyate |
dhyānātkarmaphalatyaḡastyāgācchāntiranantaram ||

*Better indeed is knowledge than practice; better than knowledge
is meditation; better than meditation is the renunciation of the
fruit of action; peace immediately follows renunciation*

SBG. 12/12

then obviously you will not get any flowers. An action is thus judged by all three things -- the way it is physically done, the motive behind it and the timing of it.

Finally, you may have done the relevant past action in a previous life and it is having its reaction now. All actions have different time frames for fructifying. For example, if you do the action of throwing a glass tumbler on a hard floor, it will have a reaction in less than one second -- in the form of broken glass. If you do the action of sowing the seed of a redwood tree, it will have a reaction after 500 years -- in the form of a giant redwood tree. Thus, every action has its own time frame for fructifying. You may have done an action in a previous life that is fructifying now. You may also have done actions in previous lives that are yet to fructify.

What is the logical basis for the concept of rebirth or reincarnation?

Let us say that at a particular point in time, two babies are born. One is born healthy and into a very wealthy family. The other is born crippled and into a very impoverished family. Both the babies have been born into widely differing circumstances. What are these differing circumstances the results or reactions of? Every effect has a cause. Since the two newly born babies have obviously done no actions in their present lives to beget their respective circumstances -- obviously they must have done something earlier. And those earlier actions can therefore only have taken place in a previous life, and the results of those actions are fructifying now.

You may say that it is just a matter of chance that one baby is born rich and healthy and the other poor and crippled. But are God's laws that whimsical? The whole universe functions on the basis of certain rational laws. Nothing happens by chance. Everything is subject to the scientific law of action and reaction. Maybe we haven't discovered

“ **Thus, every action has its own time frame for fructifying. You may have done an action in a previous life that is fructifying now. You may also have done actions in previous lives that are yet to fructify.**

Life is a continuum. The present lifetime is just a tiny experience in the continuous journey of the soul. Memories of previous lifetimes are stored within us. But our minds are so clogged with desires and stresses of the present, that we are unable to tap our deep memories of the past. Forget remembering past lives, do you even remember what you had for dinner four days ago? ”

what the action behind a particular reaction is. But the fact that there must have been an action cannot be disputed

You may also say that one baby is born healthy and one is born crippled because of the way their respective genes are. But again the question would arise that, why was one baby put into a position where it inherited good genes and the other baby put into a position where it inherited bad genes? They must be the reactions of some preceding actions.

Some of our actions done in various earlier lifetimes -- which we do not remember -- may yield their results in this life. Similarly, some of our actions in this life may only yield results in various future lives. Isn't this unfair?

Life is a continuum. The present lifetime is just a tiny experience in the continuous journey of the soul. Memories of previous lifetimes are stored within us. But our minds are so clogged with desires and stresses of the present, that we are unable to tap our deep memories of the past. Forget remembering past lives, do you even remember what you had for dinner four days ago?

Those people who have truly calmed their minds can remember their past lives. Many such cases have been documented. Many spiritually evolved people -- having made their minds quiet -- can dig into their past lives.

I must add that in a way, not remembering our past lives is also a natural blessing. Our minds

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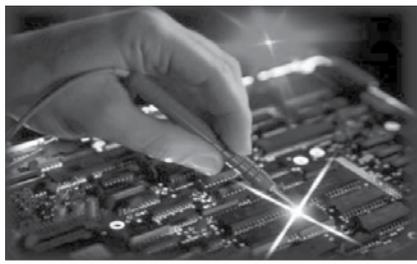
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are so chaotic even with whatever memories we have of this lifetime -- imagine our condition if we could remember thousands of past lives as well.

Please could you explain how exactly our future is made?

Past actions are already done, but present actions are totally within our control. Therefore, we have considerable leverage over our future. Swami Chinmayananda used to say: "Leave aside your regrets of the past and anxieties for the future, and focus intelligently on the present." This is the best way of ensuring a

“ Past actions are already done, but present actions are totally within our control. Therefore, we have considerable leverage over our future. Swami Chinmayananda used to say: "Leave aside your regrets of the past and anxieties for the future, and focus intelligently on the present." This is the best way of ensuring a positive future. Plato said: "Take charge of your life. You can do with it what you will. Will it." ”

positive future. Plato said: "Take charge of your life. You can do with it what you will. Will it."



Come on Mind
Come on, Mind, let's go steal-
You and I together-
All Shiva owns- Mother's feet,
If we can carry them off.

But if they catch us
In that watchful house,
That would be the end of the body.
They'd tie us up in Kailasa.

Don't forget your guru's advice
If we get in; we'll wound Shiva
With an arrow of devotion,
Then grab those feet and run.

- Ramprasad Sen

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& Family*

Be like a Bee

Swami Vimokshananda
President, Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore

The Bhagavad Gita forms part of the great Indian Epic, the Mahabharata. The words of this “song celestial” have flowed from Bhagavan, Sri Krishna Himself. The Gita chanting is generally preceded with what is known as “Gita Dhyanam” - nine introductory verses in praise of Bhagavad Gita. It is customary to recite the meditative verses (*dhyana shlokas*) before beginning the study of Srimad Bhagavad Gita proper. The poet-devotee, who composed these nine verses, has charmingly explained the purpose, principle and the practice of the Gita in these meditative verses.

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजममलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कटं
नानाख्यानककेसरं हरिकथासम्बोधनाबोधितम्।
लोके सज्जनषट्पदैरहरहः पेपीयमानं मुदा
भूयाद्भारतपङ्कजं कलिमलप्रध्वंसि नः श्रेयसे ॥ ७ ॥

pārāśaryavacaḥ sarojamamalaṁ gītārthagandhotkaṭaṁ
nānākhyānakakesaraṁ harikathāsambodhanābodhitam ।
loke sajjanaṣaṭpadairaharahaḥ pepīyamānaṁ mudā
bhūyādbhāratapaṅkajaṁ kalimalapradhvaṁsi naḥ śreyase ॥ 7 ॥

May this lotus of the Mahabharata, born in the lake of the words of the son of Parashara (Vyasa), sweet with the fragrance of the meaning of the Gita, with many stories as its stamens, fully opened by the discourses on Hari, the destroyer of the sins of Kali, and drunk joyously day by



Swami Vimokshananda is a senior Monk of the Ramakrishna Order. Presently he is the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore.

He was initiated into spiritual life by Swami Nirvananandaji Maharaj in 1970. He took his monastic vows in 1981 from Swami Vireshwaranandaji Maharaj.

From 2007 to 2014 he was the President of the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa in Durban and took over as President of Singapore Ramakrishna Mission in 2015.

Swami Vimokshananda regularly conducts scriptural classes on Gita, Upanishads and Puranas. He is deeply interested in promoting Vedanta as a suitable tool for the modern ways of Life. He also facilitates a deeper understanding among various sects of Hinduism. He is well versed in English, Tamil, Hindi and Bengali.

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Yad-yad vibhūtimat sattvam
śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat-tad evā'vagaccha tvam
mama tejo 'mśa-sambhavam

Whatever it is that glorious,
prosperous or powerful in any being,
know that to be a manifestation
of a part of my splendour

Bhagavad Gita 10/41

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day by the six-legged bees of good men in the world, become the bestower of good to us. –Gita Dhyanam, 7.

Vast and deep

In the above seventh verse, the poet-devotee stresses the utmost importance of the knowledge contained in the Mahabharata. He says that the Gita is like a full-blown lotus, grown in the vast lake of words dictated by the son of the Sage Parashara, thereby meaning Sri Veda Vyasa (author of the Mahabharata). The significance of not saying the name of Vyasa but indicating him as son of Parashara lies in the wonderful combination of wisdom of the Rishi with practical sense of a fisher woman, Satyavati who was the mother of Vyasa. Sage Vyasa, like his father Parashara, had a broad, vast knowledge of the Vedas and like his mother, Satyavati, who would go deep into the river to catch fish, also went deep into the meaning of the Vedas.

Petals and fragrance

The full-blown lotus has an extremely sweet fragrance and many soft petals. The insight of the Gita is said to be the fragrance and the varied stories and sub-stories that form the elaborate Mahabharata, the petals. The lotus is full blown by the speech of Lord Sri Krishna, who is verily Hari Himself.

The poet-devotee further says that in this world noble men joyously drink, day by day meaning again and again, the nectar issuing from the lotus flower like “a six-legged bee”.

The drink and the drunk

A bee continues its unending search for nectar from many flowers. But it is the flower that is most beautiful and exuberantly filled with sweet honey that attracts it the most. Likewise, we have a number of scriptures. Of them, Srimad Bhagavad Gita, which forms part of the world’s largest epic,

“ if we want to obtain the knowledge of the Gita, superficial study is not enough. Merely chanting the Gita may give us a sense of peace; a little more study may lead us on a good path to enjoy the blessings of a noble life. But only a deeper study can provide the knowledge of Atman (Soul) which is the real nectar of the Gita. Like a bee, we must go deep - meditate deeply on each verse of the Gita. This will light up the lamp of knowledge that is within each of us. Mahapurush Maharaj, known as Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna once said, “... You must meditate on them. Then, only will you assimilate them. Hari Maharaj [Swami Turiyananda] used to meditate on each verse until he had mastered it.”

”

the Mahabharata, contains that nectar which makes the learner go beyond birth and death.

The insight that the Gita provides in controlling our life’s destiny is unparalleled. The Gita gives us wonderful courage to deal with the many challenges that life poses. In order to gain the rich experience that the Gita enumerates, noblemen - men of character - searching for the true meaning of life come to study the Gita

The poet-devotee of the meditative verses compares a noble-minded person with the untiring bee. Bees, unlike other insects or birds, go much deeper into flowers. They go to the very source.

So it is clear that if we want to obtain the knowledge of the Gita, superficial study is not enough. Merely chanting the Gita may give us a sense of peace; a little more study may lead us on a good path to enjoy the blessings of a noble life. But only a deeper study can provide the knowledge of Atman (Soul) which is the real nectar of the Gita. Like a bee, we must go deep - meditate deeply on each verse of the Gita. This will light up the lamp of knowledge that is within each of us. Mahapurush Maharaj, known as Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna once said, “...You must meditate on them. Then, only will you assimilate them. Hari Maharaj [Swami Turiyananda] used to meditate on each verse until he had mastered it.”

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Think not that ye are creatures of clay.

**Ye are greater than your bodies, - greater, too than the empirical ego,
the ego of appetites and desires.**

Ye are heirs of Imperishable Life.

Therefore it is that you cannot rest in the finite life.

The soul's spontaneous gravitation is towards the Spirit.

"Thou God madest us for Thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

Sadhu T L Vaswani

Legs that lead

Furthermore, the poet-devotee has used the words “six-legged” when describing the bee. This also has a profound significance. Merely being noble may not be sufficient to understand the inner meaning of the Gita. Perhaps the man who is only “two-legged” has to acquire another “4 legs” in order to grasp the inner meaning of the words that flow from Lord Sri Krishna’s lips.

What then, are the “six-legs” that a noble man has to possess? They are discrimination, detachment, devotion, deep yearning, deliberate effort and divine knowledge,. Once a person of noble character possesses these “six-legs” he will be able to hold onto the slippery petals and drive himself deep into the nectar of inner meaning. Therefore, a study once or twice is not enough. “Again and again” one must devotedly pursue the study so that the bad samskaras - mental impressions

“ **What then, are the “six-legs” that a noble man has to possess? They are discrimination, detachment, devotion, deep yearning, deliberate effort and divine knowledge,. Once a person of noble character possesses these “six-legs” he will be able to hold onto the slippery petals and drive himself deep into the nectar of inner meaning. Therefore, a study once or twice is not enough. “Again and again” one must devotedly pursue the study so that the bad samskaras - mental impressions - that are gained from birth to birth can be removed by continuous study of the Gita.** ”

- that are gained from birth to birth can be removed by continuous study of the Gita.

Thus the poet-devotee concludes in this verse of Dhyana Shloka on Srimad Bhagavad Gita, propounded by the Lord Himself, is great, bestows welfare and removes all the impurities that are born of this age (Kali Yuga).



Swami Vivekananda says: “Gita is the best commentary we have on the Vedanta philosophy - curiously enough the scene is laid on the battlefield, where Krishna teaches this philosophy to Arjuna; and the doctrine which stands out luminously in every page of the Gita is intense activity, but in the midst of it, eternal calmness. This is the secret of work.”

Ay, if there is anything in the Gita that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence, of Krishna’s teaching — “He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the Self by the Self, and thus he goes to the highest goal.”

-- Swami Vivekananda

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सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

santuṣṭaḥ satataṁ yogī yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ |
mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ ||

*The Yogi who is ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled,
is of firm resolve, with mind and understanding given up to Me,
he, My devotee, is dear to Me.*

SBG. 12/14

Greatness of Exposing & Listening to Bhagavad Gita

Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

Divulging the secret

Krishna has divulged the greatest spiritual secret of Oneness, emphasizing that the sincere seeker or the earnest devotee must abandon all plural religious or spiritual (secular) considerations: "Leave all prescriptions, however much they may relate to good or bad, virtue or vice, do's or don'ts. And hold on to the One." This was the summary statement he made in this regard. In understanding and applying this dictum, we should not forget the scene and its compulsions, which led to Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna.

Arjuna's last-minute warfield crisis

The war cries had already been raised in Kurukshetra. Discharge of arrows was the only act to commence. It was then that at Arjuna's behest, Krishna drove his chariot and stationed it right in front of Bheeshma and Drona. That was sufficient for Arjuna to crumble mentally and intellectually.

It was a confrontation, unprecedented in every way, unthinkable too by any standard. Can any human mind think of killing one's own beloved grandfather and most respectable teacher? At the same time, the war and all its consequences had necessarily to be faced. Wherein lay the solution?

Krishna had to, however, find an answer. He was never given to failure. If there is a problem, it must have a solution too. War is not a new



Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha is a renowned exponent of Vedanta. He has been guiding numerous seekers on the path of Self-realization, transforming their life into one of joy and fulfilment.

Swamiji's rational interpretation of Bhagavad Gita, Sreemad Bhaagavatam, Upanishads and other spiritual texts, coming from his experiential depth and mastery of Self-realization, inspires seekers with the touch of transcendental knowledge.

Dedicating his life for the welfare of mankind, he has been disseminating with rare clarity, practicality and openness the spiritual wisdom of Vedanta to seekers all over the world for more than 50 years.

Swamiji presents Bhagavad-geeta as an 'Administrative Gospel', which, even today, is extremely important for inculcating excellence in people engaged in any field of activity.

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episode in human life. Like birth and death, war too is quite in the nature of life's events. As long as people find a cause for fighting, and an occasion comes up for it, war cannot be ruled out?

It became a crisis, because Arjuna had to confront the Grandfather and Teacher, who even in the war-front, were loving and blessing him for victory! In the absence of enmity, can war ever be? But it was, it is, a reality.

To think of killing such venerable men was impossible for anyone. Arjuna's spirits sank, and he began to lament about the sinful consequences. Krishna had to console him, instil in him the ultimate vision of human life, imbuing strength, clarity and resolve, to fight confidently. It was an out of the way event. But does not one face many a conflict in this world? For all of them, there must be a scriptural as well as rational human solution.

How assurance appeases frightened mind

For a fearful and suspicious mind, what except a full-fold assurance from someone trusted, dear and near, like Krishna, would work? Thus, he divulged the greatest Truth of human life and the world.

"Nurture the thought of Oneness, which is the ultimate Truth of existence; and in that light and confidence, leave all kinds of plural notions, however great and edifying these may be." This is an assurance coming from Krishna, not only to Arjuna, but to every seeker.

Remember the close relationship between the two. The distressed Arjuna looked to Krishna for relief. And Krishna had been speaking to him for quite a while. From the talk, Arjuna should have known how deep, vast, penetrating and benevolent Krishna's vision was. They were already close friends and brothers-in-law. Now they had become a faithful disciple and a benevolent Teacher - a new bond, rare in the human world!

It is in such a background that Krishna divulged the summary truth of human life. But he adds quite emphatically five more verses, as a safeguard for what he has just now disclosed. In a way, these also represent the *phala-śruti* (resulting benefit) of the entire dialogue, which is a full-fledged spiritual exposition, to be studied, understood and followed by seekers in particular

and others in general.

idaṃ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana na cāśūrūṣave vācyam na ca māṃ yo'bhyasūyati .. (18.67)

This gospel is never to be instructed to one who is not austere, not a devotee, not aspiring to listen, or who is skeptic of the Supreme.

Expose Geetā to the deserving

Krishna is clear that whatever he has said is not for all and sundry. It is specially meant for those, who have the grace and sublimity of an austere life. They should be **humble and discreet** enough to understand that there is something deeper than what the senses bring in the form of perceptions and delights. The real treasure for human life is hidden within, in the mind and the heart. Intelligence, which alone can seek wisdom and its treasure, is the means to access it.

The one who recognizes this fact, or believes it, **cannot but be fond of austerity and devotion**. Either he may opt for them willfully, or may take to it due to hereditary influence. In the presence of an austere grace alone, the dialogue of Bhagavadgeetā will have its destined appeal and reward.

Krishna emphasizes that no benefit will accrue by thrusting the message on any one. Only to those with the right aspiration or longing, the message need be divulged or imparted. Willingness to receive and absorb the truths is very important. With that the right measure of humility must also be.

Anyone who does not have sufficient regard for spiritual wisdom and Knowers and Teachers, should not be brought within the orbit of the dialogue. Let them be at a safe distance. Krishna has his distinct elegance in saying that he is not hankering after imparting the message to one and all. Those who need it earnestly are alone the **fit recipients** for it.

Spiritual instruction is for the humble and virtuous

Shankara puts it clearly in Vivekacūḍāmaṇi: the Knowers are so fulfilled, that though merciful to the core, they do not go out of the way to preach



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- 9.30 pm - Temple closes for the night

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- 8.00 am - 10.30 am - Satyanarayan Katha and Havan
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- 12.00 pm - 12.30 pm - Pravachan
- 12.30 pm - 12.35 pm - Ekatagan and Hanuman-Chalisa chanting
- 12.35 pm - Aarti followed by Prasad & Preetibhoj

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the Soul-wisdom anywhere and everywhere. After all, it is the greatest wisdom and only those who can receive, absorb and be enriched by it need be told about it.

The Knower is truly a friend, a benefactor, for those who come with humility and seek his instruction and guidance (*bandhuḥ ānamatāṃ satām* - śloka 33). One has to seek refuge under the Sadguru in all fondness and devotion. Only then the Knower interacts with him, to bestow enlightenment.

This means that spiritual instruction is not meant for the bad, wicked, cruel and unloving. Spirituality is the crowning fulfillment of human life. It will be fitting and harmonious with those given to noble canons of virtue, righteousness, restraint and moderation. The ultimate truth should not, in any way, be a ground for licentiousness in any matter.

Kathopanishad, from which Krishna has drawn substantially in this dialogue, makes the point very clear that spiritual wisdom is meant for the deserving. Yama's words are quite specific:

*nāvīrato duścaritānnāsānto nāsamāhita: .
nāsāntamānaso vā'pi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt*
.. (Kathopanishad I.ii.24)

Whosoever refuses to eschew viciousness, whoever lacks composure, is not integrated in regulating his senses, or is agitated mind's urges, cannot accomplish this by mere sharpness of knowledge.

Fondness and readiness empower spiritual learning

The seeker must have a mind that is ready to absorb the subtle teaching. To that extent, he should be free of undue sensory indulgences. He must also have a moderated personality and behaviour.

Supreme Truth is not something to be grasped merely by one's intellectual sharpness. Nor is it a matter for academic study alone. It is true that intelligence helps in understanding the domain of the Self, by absorbing the words of wisdom from the Knower. But it should be followed and strengthened by sublimity and restraint of the senses, mind and will.

Krishna's rational and philosophical exposition carries all scriptural relevance and consequent sanctity and sublimity. His words conform to the land's cultural heritage. His teaching extols the traditional bond between the Teacher and the disciple. He also clarifies how great, unique and rewarding the dialogue is. Exposing it to true devotees and seekers, by itself, becomes a full-fledged means to gain merger with the Supreme:

*ya imaṃ paramaṃ guhyaṃ
madbhakteśvabhīdāsyati .
bhaktiṃ mayi parāṃ kṛtvā
māmevaiṣyatyasaṃśaya: .. (18.68)*

He who disseminates this most profound Truth to my devotees, performs the best devotional offerings to Me. By that, he reaches Me, no doubt.

Greatest spiritual secret

Here too, Krishna uses the words '*paramaṃ guhyam*'. It means, the message carries a high level of spiritual secrecy or profundity, because it frees the mind from all the usual tension and entanglement. It authorizes one to leave all plural distracting thoughts, without worrying about their sinful nature or otherwise, and take to the idea and inspiration of Oneness.

In this way, **it liberates even the most sinful person** and bestows absolute redemption (ref: 4.36, 9.30). Thus, in seeking and gaining redemption, the wicked is at par with the virtuous. Is there seemingly a grave contrast? However, this is the fact, the truth. Only, the wicked must be ready to eschew wickedness for ever.

Krishna is particular that while imparting the Bhagavadgeetā message, one must have unflinching devotion to the Supreme. Devotional weddedness and loyalty alone empower one to impart the message. Imbibed from such a one alone, the words will have the ineffable touch of divinity and inspiration. And the seeker will be led to pursue the teaching with tenacity and purpose. For such an exponent, there is no need for any other *sādhanā*, help or blessing. The fondness and dedication towards what he does, will enable him to attain the Supreme.



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Krishna says something more to show how great is the pedestal of such a one, who is committed to the exposition of the great message in Bhagavadgeetā:

*na ca tasmānmanuṣyeṣu kaścinme
priyakṛttama: |*

*bhavitā na ca me tasmādanya: priyatara bhuvi
| | (18.69)*

Among the humans, there is none who loves the Supreme better than he does. Nor will there be anyone on the earth dearer to the Supreme than him.

Geetā exponent dearest to Krishna

Among all the humans, none will be dearer to the Supreme than such a rare, excellent Knower-exponent, who is able to reveal the spiritual wisdom of the dialogue. The Soul-gospel will remain hidden or unknown, unless it is brought to light by one who has realized its worth and utility. If and when a seeker is able to pursue the teachings and realize the Supreme Truth, the only real task before him is to expose it with irresistible fondness to humanity, helping as many people as possible to have a redeeming touch of the Soul.

Such a mission of dissemination is invaluable by all standards. Its worth and elegance are infinitely more than any kind of material wealth or bequest. One to bequeath such an inestimable treasure, must first possess it in abundance.

The exposition of Bhagavadgeetā has to be verily done by Knowers and Seers.

Krishna says there is none greater than such an exponent, who devotes his life for the mission of imparting spiritual message, especially of Bhagavadgeetā. Nor one greater will ever be born. This means **the highest task** and mission for a pious, noble, righteous person is to **imbibe the spiritual wisdom** and dedicate himself wholesomely to its dissemination.

To complete the benefits of learning, realizing and imparting the gospel, Krishna adds:

*e ca ya imaṃ dharmyaṃ saṃvādamāvayo: .
jñānayajñena tenāhamiṣṭa: syāmiti me mati:
.. (18.70)*

I am also pleased with him who performs the Jñāna Yajña, the study of this precept, in the form of our dialogue. This is my considered view.

Studying Geetā most rewarding jñāna yajña

To study the dialogue, which is extremely righteous, noble and spiritual, like any other book of knowledge, is itself a full-fledged jñāna yajña. Krishna has already pointed out that jñāna yajña is loftier than dravya yajña (material sacrifices). Also, it is a fact that all kinds of rituals and ceremonies will have their fulfillment only in wisdom or jñāna (4.33).

Jñāna or viveka is the goal. The seeker must note that any kind of ritualistic addiction, however promising or adorable the rituals may be, will only hinder and delay the dawning and growth of viveka, discrimination, the core of spiritual wisdom and elevation. Krishna has been emphasizing this all along (2.45, 6.44, 7.23, 9.25).

Viveka implies stern indifference to all kinds of rituals, which promise worldly prosperity or posthumous rewards like heaven. The seeker should have the depth of discrimination to discard all such temptations and eulogistic statements.

Do not, therefore, seek any other means like *yāgas* and *yajñas* enjoined by Vedas. Be focused on the study of Bhagavadgeetā. Be given to reflection and contemplation on its message. That will be the most **rewarding pursuit** for you. The intellectual pursuit is the highest in human life. This will please the Supreme the most. Leave all other cravings and involvements.

Rightly exposed Geetā appeals to all

What more? To study the message in essence, to realize it in all spiritual detail and expose it well – all these are indeed rare. At the same time, it also implies that when rightly exposed, people will be able to listen to the gospel and be rewarded.

Any pious person will like to listen to the exposition. Such an attunement has its own merits and effects. It offers nourishment to the mind and heart, as it did for Arjuna. It also caters to the intelligence, because of its strong rational notes. It is equally philosophical, appealing greatly to the pious as well as secular hearts and minds.

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Many, therefore, will come and listen to the gospel. What is the merit and blessing of such listening? Does it help one in any way? Not all will have the time and ability to read and understand the dialogue on their own. But they have the earnestness and interest to devoutly listen to the talks and expositions. Is there any benefit and reward for it?

Krishna has clear views on this also:

*śraddhāvānanasūyaśca śṛṇuyādapi yo nara: /
so'pi mukta: śubhānllkān prāpnuyāt
puṇyakarmaṇām || (18.71*

Also, whosoever listens to this discourse with attention, and is free from envious distractions, becomes liberated. He too attains the auspicious worlds of the meritorious.

Even listening to the Bhagavadgeetā dialogue and its message is highly rewarding. It takes away the dross of the mind, enriches one with holiness and

virtue, which, in turn, will make him deserve the highest attainment.

What does this mean? Even those, who are given to rituals, should take to listening to Bhagavadgeetā exposition. That will itself bestow what the Vedic rituals eloquently promise. In that way also, listening to as well as reading Bhagavadgeetā is very relevant and rewarding.

See how beautifully Krishna pacifies, encourages and exhorts people to become spiritually oriented. It is admirable to note how Krishna, Vyasadeva, and the epic authors, present their thoughts before the readers. This is where our epics stand distinct, as an ennobling and elevating literature. They involve the readers so well that their minds and hearts get purified, the intelligence becomes sharp and discreet, resulting in a process of inner refinement.

Hariḥ Om Tat Sat.



Let them jeer or cheer me;
Let anybody say what he likes;
Let good persons worship me with flowers;
What can any one of them gain I being pure?

If the world talks ill of me
My heart shall harbour no ill-will:
If am a true worshipper of God
Can ashes leave a stain on a mirror?

.....

To learn the scriptures is easy,
to live them, hard.

The search for the Real
is no simple matter.

Deep in my looking,
the last words vanished.

Joyous and silent,
the waking that met me there.

-- Lalla Ded (Kashmiri mystic)

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The Meditative and the Active

Swami Amritageetananda Puri

Some devotees ask, “What can I do for Amma?” It is heartening to hear this question. Generally, people think only about what they can get instead of what they can give. The word ‘go-getter’ refers to a person who is smart enough to get whatever he wants wherever he goes. In contrast, the question “What can I give?” comes from a more mature and evolved person.

“What should my sadhana (spiritual practices) be?” is another question devotees ask. The answer to this question must come directly from the Guru. The sadhana that Amma prescribes for Her children may vary from person to person. She knows which sadhana can purify a particular sadhak (aspirant) by removing his or her inherent negative tendencies and prarabdha (results of actions done in the past). To different people, Amma recommends meditation, mantra japa (repeated chanting of a mantra), archana (chanting of a litany of sacred names), bhajan (singing of devotional songs), seva (selfless service), and charitable activities.

Here’s a piece of beautiful advice on what should be done by whom:

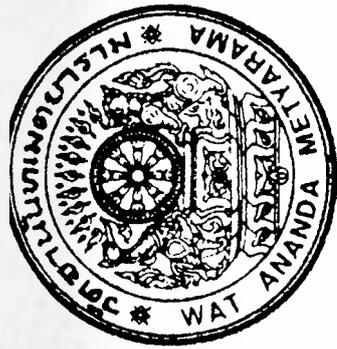
*dvau ambhasi niveshtavyau gale baddhva drdhaam shilaam
dhanavantam adaataaram daridram ca atapasvinam*

There are two types of people who ought to be pushed in deep water with heavy stones tied to their body: one who does not donate in spite of being rich, and the other who does not work hard, though poor.

(Mahabharata, verse 53,365)



Swami Amritageetananda Puri is one of Amma’s (Mata Amritanandamayi) senior monastic disciples. He joined the ashram in 1986 and received initiation into sanyas in 1994. Swami is well-versed in Hindu scriptures and is one of the acaryas (scriptural teachers) in Amritapuri. Some of the most popular bhajans from the ashram have been written and scored by him. At present, he is the sanyasi-in-charge of Amma’s ashram in Bengaluru, India.



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For the rich, doing charitable deeds is recommended as a spiritual practice, whereas for a poor person, tapas (austerity) is recommended. What type of tapas one can do depends upon the type of mind and body one has. All types of sadhana are important, but the proportion varies from seeker to seeker. One can learn how much of each to do only from a Guru.

Devotees can be broadly divided into two: meditative and active. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna:

*loke'smin dvividhaa nishthaa
pura prokta mayaanagha
jnanayogena saankhyaanam
karmayogena yoginaam*

In this world, there is a two-fold path, as I taught before: the path of knowledge for the meditative type, and the path of action for the active type. (BG 3.3)

Note that Lord Krishna says, "dvividhaa nishthaa," i.e. a two-fold path (singular), and not two paths (plural). This means that Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga are two stages of the same path. Karma Yoga comes first, and it brings about purification, steadiness and concentration of mind. Then comes Jnana Yoga, by which one realizes one's innate nature as divine consciousness.

But some people erroneously see the two as distinctive paths. Of these, some go straight to the jnana marga (path of knowledge) without first going to the karma marga (path of action). They make little or no progress because their minds have not been purified by karma. Others stick to karma, refusing to move on to the jnana marga. Such people sink deeper into bondage. The right approach takes one to karma yoga first and then to jnana yoga. Only one who has purified himself mentally through karma yoga can go deep into meditation. Only those who meditate deeply can perform actions efficiently. Therefore, karma yoga and jnana yoga are complementary.

The main sadhana for reaching the human

“**The sadhana that the Guru prescribes is like medicine and diet. When the doctor prescribes a particular regimen of medicine and diet, we stick to it. We must be just as particular, if not more, about following what the Guru says. Some devotees become upset, thinking that the Guru has given others more. This is caused by erroneous thinking. A few years ago, a devotee told me, “Swamiji, Amma has not understood my capacity. She has given me very few responsibilities!” Unhappy, he wanted to be entrusted with more responsibilities. By Amma’s grace, I somehow managed to convince him that Amma knew what was best for him.**”

goal, i.e. Self-realization, is dhyana (meditation), which leads to jnana, the realization of our real nature as divine consciousness. All other sadhanas, like mantra japa and archana, are supporting sadhanas.

Generally, people give a lot of importance to human effort, and either ignore or give no importance to divine grace. But a true aspirant realizes as she progresses in her spiritual life that divine grace alone takes one closer to the Goal, and that even effort is impossible without divine grace.

The sadhana that the Guru prescribes is like medicine and diet. When the doctor prescribes a particular regimen of medicine and diet, we stick to it. We must be just as particular, if not more, about following what the Guru says. Some devotees become upset, thinking that the Guru has given others more. This is caused by erroneous thinking. A few years ago, a devotee told me, “Swamiji, Amma has not understood my capacity. She has given me very few responsibilities!” Unhappy, he wanted to be entrusted with more responsibilities. By Amma’s grace, I somehow managed to convince him that Amma knew what was best for him. Some complain, “My Guru has given me too much work. I’m not able to meditate like others, who get more time to do so!” This grievance is unfounded. Whatever the Guru has entrusted to the disciple is sadhana that will best expedite her spiritual growth. In the early days of my ashram life, I had to conduct class-

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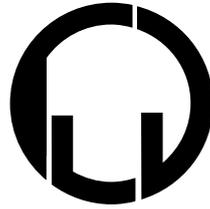
वसुदेव सुतं देवं कंस चाणूर मर्दनं
देवकी परमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगत् गुरुम्

vasudeeva sutam deevam kamsa canura marddanam
deevaki paramanandam krshnam vandee jagat gurum

*My salutations to Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva,
the destroyer of kans and chanur, the Supreme Bliss of
Devaki, the Teacher of the Universe*

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es for ashram residents and feed the cows as well! If a disciple is allowed to choose her own sadhana, she is likely to reinforce her personal likes and dislikes, which will lead to greater bondage. A wise disciple never says, "Guruji, I don't want this. I want only that!" Instead, she will say, "Guruji, whatever you choose for me is best for me!"

The Dakshinamurti Stotram speaks about the Guru thus:

*nidhaye sarva vidyaanaam
bishaje bhava roginaam
gurave sarva lokaanaam
dakshinamurtaye namah*

I bow to Dakshinmurti, the abode of all learning, the Physician to all those afflicted with the disease of worldly existence, the Teacher of all. (4).

The Guru is described as "*bhishaje bhava roginam*" – the doctor who heals the patients suffering from the disease of bondage and suffering. The Guru is our spiritual doctor, who knows the best

“

...I bow to Dakshinmurti, the abode of all learning, the Physician to all those afflicted with the disease of worldly existence, the Teacher of all....

The Guru is described as "bhishaje bhava roginam" — the doctor who heals the patients suffering from the disease of bondage and suffering. The Guru is our spiritual doctor, who knows the best medicine for healing our spiritual maladies. Such a doctor is divine: "nidhaye sarva vidyaanaam." She never makes a mistake either in Her diagnosis or prescription of medicine. ”

medicine for healing our spiritual maladies. Such a doctor is divine: "nidhaye sarva vidyaanaam." She never makes a mistake either in Her diagnosis or prescription of medicine.

May Amma bless us with the purity of mind and clarity of vision to understand Her. May She bless us with increasing faith and devotion so that our spiritual practices become a joyful journey to the goal of human life, Self-realization.



She's Playing in my heart
She's playing in my heart.
Whatever I think, I think Her name.
I close my eyes and She's in there
Garlanded with human heads.

Common sense, know-how-gone,
So they say I'm crazy. Let them.
All I ask, my crazy Mother,
Is that You stay put.

Ramprasad cries out: Mother, don't
Reject this lotus heart You live in
Don't despise this human offering
At Your feet.

-- Ramprasad Sen

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The Gita's Wisdom of Life

Dada J P Vaswani

The very opening chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is named Vishada Yoga or the Yoga of Depression. Arjuna is depressed. He is in deep vishada, deep anguish. Is not anguish of the soul the first step in spiritual life? When awakening is about to dawn upon the human soul, does it not cry a cry of anguish:— ‘What is the meaning and purpose of life? Why am I here? Whither am I moving?’ In this state of depression, out of the loneliness of our heart cometh the cry of Jesus:— “My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?”

God never forsakes His own. The soul has to pass through the stage of vishada (depression) in its onward march. For pain is the great teacher of mankind. Under its wings are souls nurtured and strengthened. ‘Lonely must thou be, O seeker!’ said Sadhu Vaswani in one of his most inspiring talks. “The soul would not attain to the rainbow stage of evolution, if the eyes would have no tears. As the broken earth drinks in rain, so the broken heart drinks in the true wisdom of life. Arjuna’s heart must break in some grief, before it can receive the illumination of the spirit. When the heart breaks, the ‘ego’, the “I” is annihilated. The wisdom of God shines in the impersonal. Arjuna is not yet become impersonal. He is entangled in moha. He confounds moha with love. Arjuna forgets that true love never shrinks from duty, however unpleasant the duty be.”

When a man is lost in moha, do not condemn him. But reveal to him the light. For moha is darkness: and darkness is dispelled by light. The



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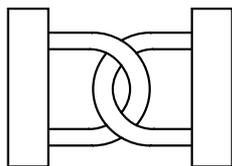
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Our Motto: Performance, Not Promises

way out of moha, sentimental attachment, is reflection. And the second chapter of the Gita is named Sankhya Yoga or the Yoga of Reflection or Knowledge. Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to reflect, to think, to reason with him. "Let us reason together, O Arjuna!" says Sri Krishna. For the true teacher is never impatient with his pupil. The teacher would have the pupil understand things for himself.

Arjuna places his doubts and difficulties before the Master. In answer to them, Sri Krishna says:— "Arjuna, know thyself!" Arjuna's difficulties would be solved, his doubts would be resolved, in the day he knows himself, his real Self, his true Self. Arjuna, you are not this perishable body! You are the Imperishable Atman! The body is but a garment which you have worn during your present earth-incarnation. The body is but an instrument through which you have to do your God-appointed work, to fulfill your divine destiny.

You are not the physical body: you are not a machine. Within you are infinite energies of the Spirit. Unleash them,— and no power on earth can pull you down! Within you is the Atman. Learn to go within. Within you, it is true, are passions and cravings and appetites. But they are not a part of you. They are but particles of dirt which have clung to you, as you have moved on in your journey from shore to shore. Passions do not belong to you: nor do virtues. Your virtues are a product of your vanity. Above virtue and vice must you rise, if you would touch the Atman, your true Self! Arjuna, know thyself!

Centuries later, this teaching was voiced by Socrates in ancient Greece. Lifting up his voice, this great Rishi and Yogi of the ancient world, said to the young men who flocked around him:—"Know thyself!" For, a man may know a million things about the world around him, but if he does not know himself, his real Self, he has known nothing.

“ **In the Gita, the Master indicates to Arjuna what his Self, real Self is. In Sri Krishna's words is a breath of the Spirit. In the Master's words is courage blended with compassion. And as Arjuna listens to them, the veils are withdrawn from his eyes and recollection comes to him,— of his real Self, the Atman that he truly is. And Arjuna who, but a little while ago, lay in the slough of despond, is filled with new strength and courage to fight the battle of life.**

Sri Krishna's call is to the battlefield. For action is not to be spurned: action is to be performed sacramentally. Much of our action, however, is glorified selfishness: it drags a man to a bottomless abyss. True action is unselfish, dedicated action. The message of the Gita is the message of the dedicated life. ”

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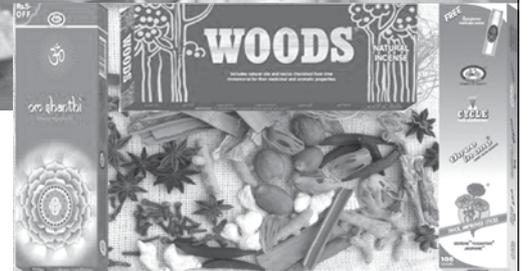
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Let me close with Sadhu Vaswani's words:— "The Gita calls us to life which is neither inaction nor the foolish pursuit of gains and prominence, what the world calls 'greatness'. If thou wilt serve the Kingdom of the Atman, thou must not lose thyself, in the game of greatness. In loneliness is thy strength. So freed from the tyranny of the outer, the tyranny of desires, of pride and self, and growing in reflection, in meditation and prayer, thou wilt unfold thy inner powers in service and sacrifice."





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Scott Teitsworth



The Hidden Aspects of Devotion

A radically new and innovative investigation into the hidden secrets of the popular verse on devotion in Bhagavad Gita (9.26)- “Patram Pushpam Phalam Thoyam...”. Chapter 9 is called “Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga”, literally the “Yoga of Royal Secrets”.

H He who offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that do I accept as being offered with devotion by one who makes the right effort.

Greetings to the Gita Vani family! This year I’m sharing my comments on verse 26 of the Gita’s ninth chapter:

He who offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that do I accept as being offered with devotion by one who makes the right effort. (BG 9.26)

All scriptures are filled with symbols. Part of the pleasure of studying them is in decoding the symbols and making them relevant and meaningful to our present life. Unknown to most casual readers, another graded series is presented here in veiled form, offering an arboreal image of increasing maturity in the devotee. Its significance is universally missed, a literal reading being the norm. We are given a botanical symbol for brahmacharya, for walking the path of the Absolute, which is traditionally depicted as having four distinct stages.

This is a perfect example of a sublime teaching that is obscured by the accretion of puerile interpretation and practice. Because it has been taken literally for centuries, if not millennia, commentators look at the parade of simple folk trustingly placing a flower on the altar as being endorsed by the Upanishadic rishis. So they need look no further for the meaning of this verse. After all, it’s a common practice to put devotional objects on altars! But to the wise, any effort to understand intelligently is just as or more meaningful than placing a banana in front of a statue, which has to be the most basic and perfunctory relation with the Absolute possible. Let’s take a look at what Krishna is really conveying, in a superlative metaphor.

Reproduction is an eternal, vertical factor in living beings. A leaf has no reproductive elements per se, but it takes in nourishment

Scott Teitsworth is a lifelong student of Indian philosophy and an editor of books written by the Gurus of the Narayana Gurukula. He and his wife Deborah Buchanan have an ashram in Portland, Oregon, USA, where they have presented in-depth classes on the Gita and Narayana Guru’s works for nearly 40 years.

Scott’s first book, ‘Krishna in the Sky with Diamonds’, is a detailed commentary on Chapter XI of the Gita. His second book, ‘The Path to the Guru: The Science of Self-Realization According to the Bhagavad Gita’, covers the first two chapters in detail. He also has two audio talks on spiritual development: ‘Coming Back to Ourselves: Finding Authentic Direction in the Chaos of Being’; and ‘Liberating Ourselves: Attaining Personal Freedom to Release Creative Potential’. More information may be found at his website, Nitya Teachings: <http://scottteitsworth.tripod.com>.

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सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनम् च।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५-१५ ॥

sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanam ca |
vedaīśca sarvairahameva vedyo
vedāntakṛdvedavideva cāham || 15-15||

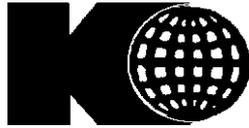
I alone reside in the hearts of all beings and from Me emanate memory,
wisdom and also their loss; I am verily that which is to be known by the Vedas;
I am the author of the Vedanta and I am the knower of the Vedas.
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that leads to the development of the ability. So the leaf is a very early—call it virginal—stage in the reproductive process. Next the flower, the explosion of intricate beauty that inspires hearts everywhere. The sexual or erotic aspects of life are symbolized by the flower. Out of such youthful exuberance comes the mature fruit bearing the seeds of immortality, a blueprint for the next generation. When the essence of the fruit is extracted from the pulp, the final refinement is known as juice or water. This symbolizes wisdom stripped of all its material trappings and extraneous factors, in other words, its ideal or essential meaning. To put it baldly, the reproduction in question is the reanimation of wisdom through a well-examined life. We begin life in ignorance and develop wisdom during its course, as in Bergson's reversal of Newton: "The universe is a machine for making Gods." Four broad stages of the development are poetically epitomized here as leaf, flower, fruit, and juice.

A brahmachari is initially like a leaf, taking in nourishment in the form of wisdom from the preceptor and storing it in their brain tissues. When enough of this stimulating energy has been taken in, the student begins to "flower." Like a civilization in flower or the flowering of an art form, this means an outburst of creative enthusiasm combined with a dedicated effort to actualize the new forms. When the flower of burgeoning awareness is pollinated with inspiration, it begins to develop into a fruit, which is the stage when other beings can begin to take nourishment from the brahmachari. All the hard preliminary work is coming to fruition or culmination, and "by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7.20. Actually, Matthew 7 is a worthwhile companion read to this verse.) When the fruits are perfectly ripe, their natural tendency is to fall on the ground and spread their seeds, to start the process anew. Here in this symbol, the fruits are gathered and pressed for their juice, where they can ferment into the "wine" of spirit. Others can sip the nectar for many years after, and so partake of the same spirit directly themselves. In other words,

“ Krishna is not asking for simple offerings to be made at religious altars, he is saying that in whatever stage of maturation the seeker may be, he accepts the sincerity of their feelings over their degree of advancement. A simple child is endeared to the Absolute exactly to the same extent as an enthusiastic neophyte or a wizened pundit. What matters is their attitude, not their sophistication. It's beautiful to put a flower on the altar, but right understanding gives it meaning. ”

the student must become the teacher, so that the wisdom lineage can continue.

Krishna is not asking for simple offerings to be made at religious altars, he is saying that in whatever stage of maturation the seeker may be, he accepts the sincerity of their feelings over their degree of advancement. A simple child is endeared to the Absolute exactly to the same extent as an enthusiastic neophyte or a wizened pundit. What matters is their attitude, not their sophistication. It's beautiful to put a flower on the altar, but right understanding gives it meaning.

This is the correct attitude for the Absolute to have, since it is always neutral. Each person receives out of it what they put into it, plus the mysterious blessing of divine beneficence to add some negentropy to the system. It's a harmonious feedback loop.

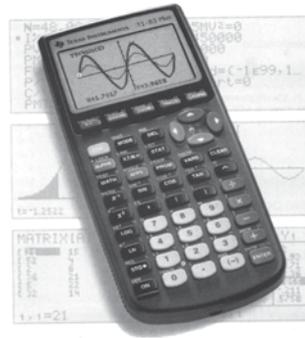
Rabindranath Tagore might have had the symbolism of this verse in mind when he penned, "The leaf becomes flower when it loves / The flower becomes fruit when it worships."

Amusingly, a religious sect or denomination has grown up at many points where the symbolic language of the Gita has been taken literally. This is one such verse. Placing a flower on an altar dedicated to the God Krishna has a widespread currency. If done with perfection it is a unitive act, which automatically puts the devotee in contact with the Absolute in whatever form is most dear to them. Accompanying thoughts such as "This is a statement of my faith," "I am worshipping Krishna now," or "Krishna says this is the thing to do," all vitiate the immaculate beauty of the gesture.

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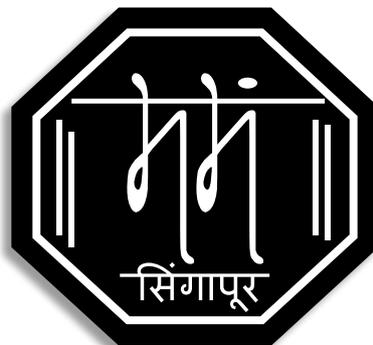
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We might laugh at such foibles as taking symbols literally, except that it is nearly ubiquitous, and vehemently defended by the “faithful” everywhere. For instance, many people insist that the Bible must be taken literally. Even though doing so means Jesus literally said that he spoke in parables, the parables are to be taken at face value. Therefore the image of seeds being strewn around, with some landing on rocky, unfertile soil where they wither and die, while others land on well-prepared, fertile soil and flourish, is really just about agriculture. It does not, it cannot imply, because the Bible doesn’t literally say it, that words of wisdom, which are the seeds of intelligence and are spread by spiritual teachers, are comprehended by those who have prepared their minds to understand, but they fall on deaf ears in those who have more mundane interests. Literalists are one more version of the rocky soil where words of wisdom expire unheeded.

We should not be surprised that ancient texts rely more heavily on nature-based metaphors than is the practice today, since people lived much closer to nature in those days. Neil Douglas-Klotz,

“ **Placing a flower on an altar dedicated to the God Krishna has a widespread currency. If done with perfection it is a unitive act, which automatically puts the devotee in contact with the Absolute in whatever form is most dear to them. Accompanying thoughts such as “This is a statement of my faith,” “I am worshipping Krishna now,” or “Krishna says this is the thing to do,” all vitiate the immaculate beauty of the gesture.** ”

in his book *The Hidden Gospel*, examines the Aramaic roots of Biblical language, which relies heavily on agricultural allusions. The original word used for good means ripe, and the word translated as evil means unripe. This takes the heavy sting out of Biblical diatribes as they have come down to us, with their thick barricade between the saved and the damned. So-called evil just needs more time to ripen. It is in no way barred from becoming good, given enough sunlight and nourishment. Viewing life like this teaches us to be patient with the unripe people among us, instead of blasting them literally or figuratively. We should lend them a hand rather than offering them a fist. This Biblical ideal bears a close resemblance to the present verse, where the Absolute is endeared by whoever approaches it, in whatever stage of development they may be.



When my mind was cleansed of impurities,
like a mirror of its dust and dirt,
I recognized the Self in me:
When I saw Him dwelling in me,
I realized that He was the Everything
and I was nothing.

.....

I saw and found I am in everything
I saw God effulgent in everything.
After hearing and pausing see Siva
The House is His alone; Who am I, Lalla.
-- Lalla Ded

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Rajesh Anand



Glories of the Gita

Before coming to realise the importance of Bhagavad Gita, many of us would have a question that, though there are operating and maintenance manuals for every machine, appliance and gadget but where is the manual for our lives. Bhagavad Gita resolves this predicament once and for all. In Bhagavad Gita we find the perfect manual which answers all our questions and resolves all our problems. In the 700 verses Lord Krishna has unfolded the most sublime, pragmatic, pristine and confidential knowledge which is so amazing, yet elusive.

Many of us who have studied Business Management are familiar with Organisational Behaviour theories such as Maslow's Need Hierarchy, Herzberg's Hygiene-Motivation, Victor Vroom's Expectancy, FIRO-B, Transactional Analysis etc. These are wonderful concepts to know and apply.

But do they resolve our doubts and answer our questions fully?

One theory based on constitutional psychology by Sheldon even suggests that it is the body features that govern the behaviour e.g a fat person (endomorph) is lazy but jovial while a lean person (an ectomorph) is intelligent but neurotic.

However, no motivational theory can match the wisdom contained in the 12th chapter of Bhagwad Gita.

Similarly, every nation in the world is striving for peace for their citizens but the conflicts never seem to diminish.

On the other hand Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 2.71:

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्मुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥
*vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān
pumānśh charati niḥsprihaḥ
nirmamo nirahankārah
sa śhāntim adhigachchhati*

Rajesh Anand is the Co-Founder and Life Trustee of BIJHAR (Singapore). He is also an avid student of Bhagavad Gita.

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states the perfect peace formula: That person, who gives up all material desires and lives free from a sense of greed, proprietorship, and egoism, attains perfect peace.

In this verse, Shree Krishna lists the things that disturb one's peace, and then asks Arjun to give them up.

- Material desires: The moment we harbor a desire, we walk into the trap of greed and anger. Either way, we get trapped. So the path to inner peace does not lie in fulfilling desires, but instead in eliminating them.
- Greed: Firstly, greed for material advancement is a great waste of time. Secondly, it is an endless chase. In developed countries, very few people are deprived of enough to eat and wear, and yet they remain disturbed; this is because their hankering is still unsatisfied. Thus, those who possess the wealth of contentment possess one of the biggest treasures of life.
- Ego: Most of the quarrels that erupt between people stem from the ego. Mark H McCormack, author of What They Don't Teach You At Harvard Business School writes: "Most corporate executives are one giant ego, with a couple of arms and legs sticking out." Statistics reveal that a majority of executives, who lose their jobs in the senior management level, do so not because of professional incompetence, but because of interpersonal issues. The way to peace is not to nurture and increase pride, but to get rid of it.
- Proprietorship: The feeling of proprietorship is based upon ignorance because the whole world belongs to God. We came empty-hand-

ed in the world, and we will go back empty-handed. How then can we think of worldly things as ours?

Lord Krishna has even touched upon our food and has classified them so well in the 17th chapter.

आयुःसत्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्विकप्रियाः ॥

Persons in the mode of goodness prefer foods that promote the life span, and increase virtue, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, succulent, nourishing, and naturally tasteful.

कद्वसुलवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥

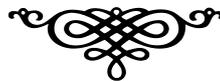
Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, very hot, pungent, dry, and chiliful, are dear to persons in the mode of passion. Such foods produce pain, grief, and disease.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥

Foods that are overcooked, stale, putrid, polluted, and impure are dear to persons in the mode of ignorance.

In a nutshell, Bhagwad Gita's glories are beyond words.

(Article inspired by Bhagwad Gita - The Song of God by Swami Mukundananda)



- That birth, that deed, that mind or that word of the people which is conducive to and acceptable for service of Sri Krishna is worth its name.
- The greatest benefactor is he who can enlighten us with the knowledge of God thus removing our age-long gloom of ignorance.
- Intelligence cannot be purified without devotion to God. By severe austerities those having come near liberation are hurled down by their lack of devotion to God.
- Those- who are extremely proud of their learning, ancestry, lineage, wealth etc., find Mercy of God unattainable to them for ever.

--- Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

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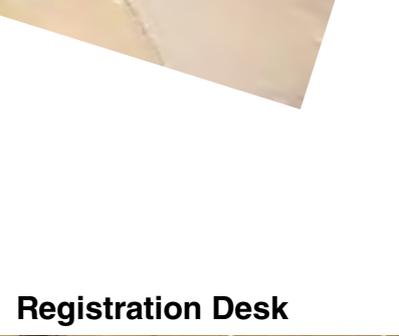
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Judges Evaluation



Prize Winners



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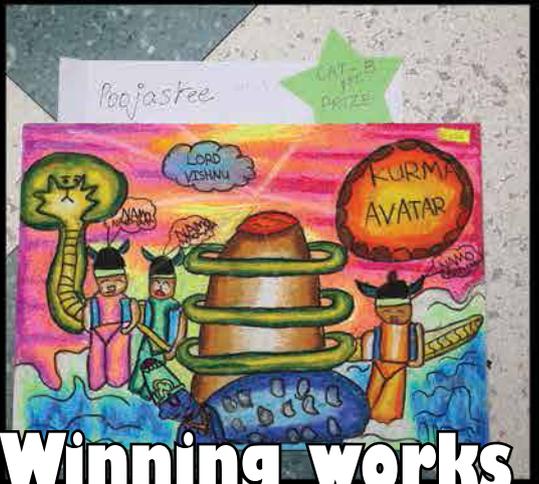
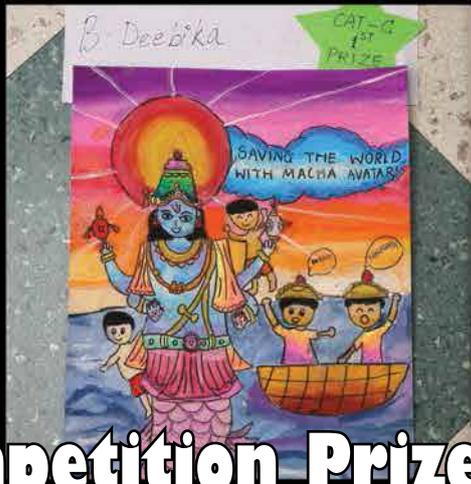
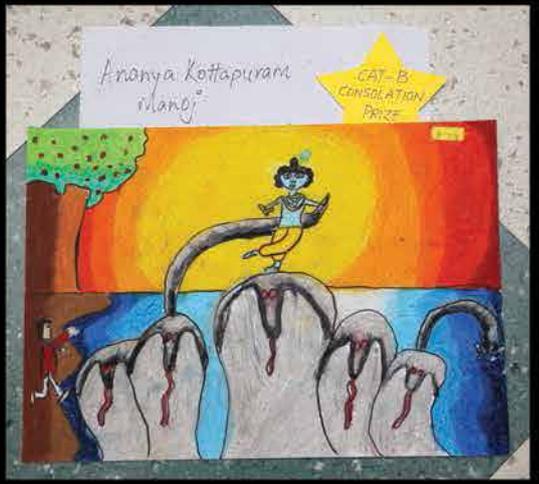
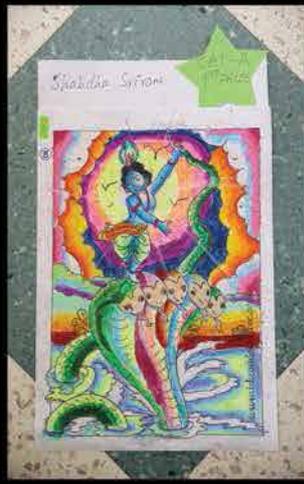
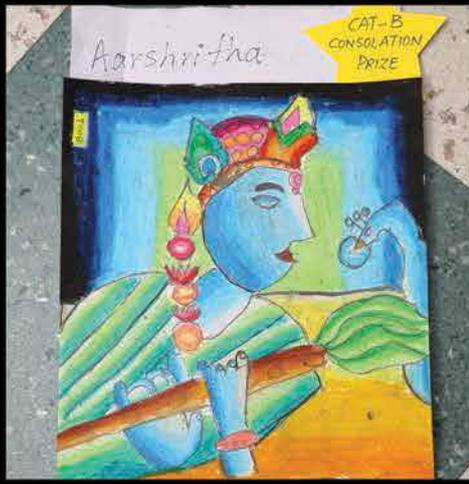
Participants



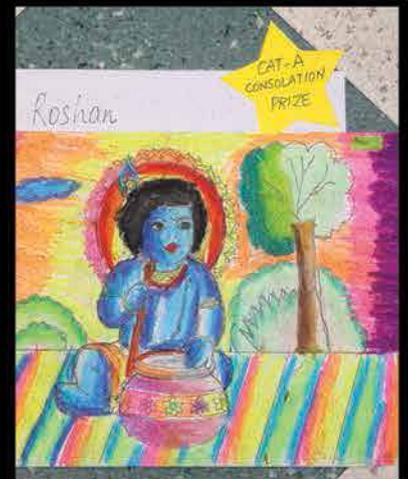
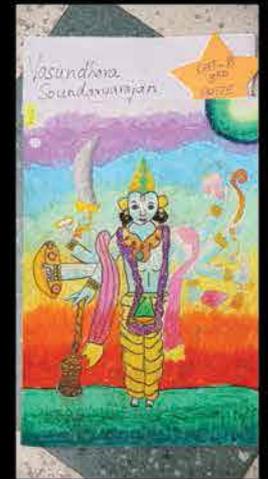
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Gita Jayanti Memories





Dr Ananda Reddy

The Supreme Secret of the Gita

The Gita is one scripture which has brought humanity to the present state of evolution. This scripture was an incident in the Mahabharata and Sri Aurobindo describes it as one of the four greatest events in history. The first event was the siege of Troy, the second was the life and crucifixion of Christ, the third was the exile of Sri Krishna in Brindavan, and the fourth the colloquy between Arjuna and Sri Krishna at the battle of Kurukshetra. These are the four events that have really shaped human events and culture. The siege of Troy created the Greek culture, Christ from his cross civilized Europe, and Sri Krishna from Brindavan created the great tradition of Bhakti, and the Gita as Sri Aurobindo and the Mother put itit has helped humanity in its uplifting of its own consciousness, but it has not yet fulfilled its full function. And the Mother adds that with Sri Aurobindo's interpretation written in *Essays on the Gita*, it has acquired a new force and consciousness useful for the future of humanity.

Dr. Ananda Reddy, the Director of Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Puducherry and Chairman of Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad, is a speaker and writer known for his command over Sri Aurobindo's vision and thought. He has dedicated his life in reading, writing and, speaking about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother across the world.

He is an acclaimed scholar and speaker in the integral thought of Sri Aurobindo and has given workshops in various Centres and Universities in India, Europe and America. Along with being a scholar of Sri Aurobindo's thought he has done in-depth study of Indian Culture, Indian and Western Philosophy, Literature, Social thought, Yoga and Spirituality.

He has been honoured with two awards for his scholarship in Sri Aurobindo: (1) Sri Aurobindo Puraskar, given by Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata., 2004 and (2) Auro Ratna Award, Overman Foundation, Kolkata, 2013.

The Gita has come down to us through generations as a source of knowledge and inspiration. But what exactly is the greatness of the Gita? There are several ways of looking at it: first I would like to put the Gita in its historical perspective. Through that you will be able to appreciate its importance not only on the level of its teachings, but a new and different dimension is being added to the Gita. To begin with I will briefly trace the spiritual history of India. This will be in the context of Indian Spirituality.

There are three stages of India's spiritual history. The spiritual history starts like the Gangotri at a point. And from that point it comes down like the Ganges before it meets the Bay of Bengal. As it comes down it widens and covers more and more space from the mountains to the planes. And it is not only that the devolution is there but it is beneficial to the people living near the Bay. This image is exactly how Indian Spirituality devolved. There is a kind of devolution, (devolution means coming down from above and as it comes down it covers a larger space).

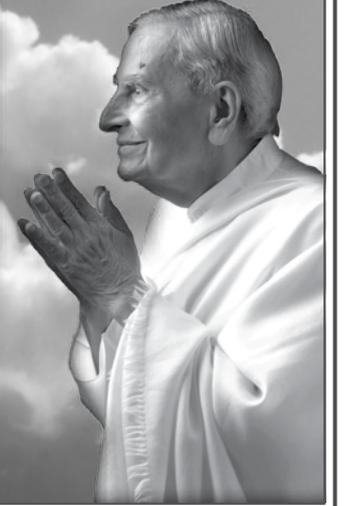
In the first stage we start with the Vedas, they were the first stage of Indian spirituality. The four Vedas had a purpose, and that was to connect the outer man with the Gods. All the Vedas – Rig-veda, Sama-veda, Yajur-veda and Atharva-veda – were focused in different ways on connecting the common man with the gods. The Vedic Rishi had realized that there was one supreme Brahman and that all the gods Varuna,

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In a beautiful text in the Gita,
Krishna calls attention to
two things we must do,
if we are to respond to Reality
and live the life of a free man.

The two things are –
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sarvasya cāham ḥṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtirñānamapohanam ca
vedaīśca sarvairahameva vedyo vedāntakṛdvedavideva cāham



I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory and knowledge.
All the scriptures lead to me; I am their author and their wisdom.

|| 15.15 ||

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Mitra, Agni, etc. are gods manifesting different aspects of the Brahman. They intended to bring to the common man the sense of a higher god, a higher Being beyond man. Not many cultures have given us this idea, it is only the Indian culture that started with this concept that man is not the highest being upon earth. There is beyond him a greater Being called Varuna, Mitra, Indra – there are thousands of names.

The importance was to give a sense that man is part of a higher Being – what is called Brahman. They said we are all children of Immortality. Look at that inspiring phrase compared to the modern definition that we are all Homo sapiens or social animals in evolution. If you tell a child that you are a very weak student and if you tell the same child that you have great possibilities – what kind of changer happens in the child's psychology? He will get depressed or be inspired according to what he is being told about himself. This is why the Vedas give the positive image of mankind: that we are the children of Immortality.

They awakened in man a great aspiration towards the godhead. To have this outer connection with the gods they had the mantras, ceremonies, etc. How else could man be connected to the gods? One of the best ways was through ceremonies. Starting in the morning, there were pujas for all aspects of daily life and at each step we were to be thinking of the Supreme Divine. When a child was born the father of the child would whisper in its ear, *Tat twam asi*, 'You are that'. That was the first sound wave that went into the child, *Tat twam asi*: meaning that you are actually the Brahman. These are the great foundations of Indian culture. It was not just the naming ceremonies – we had always a ceremony at each stage of life to remind us of the Divine. That is why there are so many ceremonies in India right from birth to death. The time of marriage, childbirth, the time when the lady gets pregnant – there are hundreds of different ceremonies. But they were all conducted in the name of the gods.

In the present days, on anybody's birthday you exchange gifts: you even write your name and price so when your child has a birthday you will receive an equal exchange-gift! That is the level we have come down to! And the more we lavishly celebrate and the bigger the

cake is we think our son will be more respected and accepted. On the contrary we are nurturing material values in our child. What we are doing is feeding the child with false values. And what about the neighbour who cannot afford to give his child a big party? That child will despair thinking he has no money so his human worth is less. That was never the case with Indian culture: on birthdays one first went to a temple. That was what we do at the Sri Aurobindo ashram. When the Mother was there in her physical body, we went to Her and she gave us a beautiful card written in her own handwriting and a beautiful bouquet of flowers. And each one went to get a touch of the Divinity. As the Mother explains, our birthday is the one day in our life when our soul is closest to the Divine. It has got that direct contact with the Divine, that is the special benediction or grace of the Divine on the individual on his birthday. So instead of it being a day of deep contact with the Divine, we have gala parties and our connection is with our friends and the material world. This is the opposite trend we have taken in modern times: anti-spiritual, pro-material.

When we revert to our Indian culture we have to get back those values. These were the ceremonies, the mantras, this is the purpose, and for this the language used by the Vedic rishis was symbolic language. That is why we may know a good bit of Sanskrit but we will not understand the Vedas. Because it is symbolic, that was the age of the Vedas. And these Vedas had come as a revelation. After a few centuries the ceremonies became important and we lost the real meaning and experience of the Vedas. So we call a Brahmin for a puja, run short of time, and tell him to hurry up with the puja because we have another appointment. We have lost the entire meaning because of pressure of time, pressure of this and that. The outer ceremony alone remained losing the inner meaning. So Indian spiritual culture and civilization was at cross roads – India would have become a common materialistic country.

But fortunately, at that time, came up the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the very first synthesis of Indian spiritual knowledge. They saw the danger that Indian culture is forgetting its experience by only doing ceremonies without the true experience. They got rid of the ceremonies in order to save Indian spirituality. They went back to the pure experience and

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knowledge of the Vedic Rishis and they revived the Vedic experience and connected the outer man to the Supreme Brahman. The language was metaphysical, that means no more symbolic language but a language which is more or less philosophic. This philosophic language was easier to understand than the symbolic language and yet it was not all that easy. This is the second level of the spiritual devolution. At the same time it is the first synthesis of Indian spirituality, the intuitive mind.

Then came the Shastras, the illumined mind. They brought in a conventionalism in their thought. What was given by the ceremonies and metaphysics they built into rule and regulation. Shastra is a convention, the language is ordinary, not at all metaphysical. Out of this came the schools of Indian philosophy. This is where there is the mental mind and the language is rational and logical. The devolutionary process proceeds from Revelation to Intuition and then to Illumined mind ending with the ordinary mind. What we are seeing is that from a great height knowledge is descending level by level until it comes to the level of the mind ending in the Indian Schools of Philosophy. These schools not only taught the knowledge of the Upanishads but each one gave a path to mukti, liberation. Liberation is the focus of all the schools of Indian philosophy. In Western philosophy the emphasis is on concepts alone and not on experience-concept. Only the Indian philosophies taught how to liberate oneself from ignorance.

This is the tendency of the devolution of Indian spirituality as it came down from the Vedas to the Indian schools: it was the emphasis on the mental consciousness. The way to higher realizations was through mind. There were meditations, ceremonies, etc. etc. but it was basically the mind of man that was being developed. But man is not just mind. Man has got a heart, the emotions. From the mental level we go to the second level the life plane.

The second stage of Indian spiritual history is the stage of life. The best expressions of this stage are the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. They are the knowledge of the Upanishads given to us through social values and individual characters. We think of Sita and Rama, Draupadi and Arjuna as symbolic figures, ideals, models in front of us. Modern students find their

models in pop stars or multi billionaires. But in ancient India a conscious Indian knew the Ramayana and the Mahabharata either through their readings or through plays and songs. This was how the spiritual culture developed in India through a living value system of dance and song and story telling.

What do we understand by Indian spirituality? What are its basic tenets? There are three basic tenets: Reality as one - There are thousands of gods in India but all are aspects of the one Supreme. This is the fundamental experience of Indian spirituality.

The second tenet is that there are many paths to the Supreme. Other religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, etc. may not accept this tenet. It is only a true Hindu realization that can declare that all paths lead to God. As Sri Ramakrishna said: as many people so many paths. Only the Indian vision has given this magnificent vision of freedom. In spiritual democracy no other country is greater than India. What the western world has given is social democracy and what India has given is spiritual democracy. Spiritual democracy is far more necessary to man's integral growth. It is not the social democracy of women's liberation etc, which though necessary at a certain stage of man's evolution is the ultimate one; it is the inner growth towards the Divine that is much more important.

The third tenet or the concept of atman in man. That means the Supreme One is in man as the atman. He is there in each one of us; we don't have to go to heaven or paradise to find Him; we can find the Divine within each one of us. This was the great concept that was given basically by the Gita.

It is in the Mahabharata that the Gita is given. Many scholars theorized that the Gita was merely an addition to the Mahabharata and that it was not an integral part of the Mahabharata. The Gita from the point of view of spiritual history, is the second synthesis of Indian spirituality. When there were dozens and dozens of schools of philosophy there was a complete division amongst them and the spiritual experience was getting divided. There was a possibility of losing the Indian spiritual experience of oneness. That is when the Gita came in as the second great synthesis. The first were the Upanishads, which saved India's spiritual heritage. The second time

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उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ६-५ ॥

One must deliver the self by detaching his mind from the material world and not allow it to degrade him, because the mind can be the friend and also the enemy of the jivatma.



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it was the Gita that saved it. This is why Gita is historically important; it is the saviour of Indian spiritual culture.

It saved and synthesized according to Sri Aurobindo the three great secrets. The first is about the self in man or the Atman in man. The Gita emphasises that there is this atman within man which cannot be burned or drowned or cut. There is this eternal Atman within man, which is one with the supreme Truth. The great secret is about the three Purushas. This is the most fundamental teaching of the Gita – the concept of the three Purushas. We had in the Upanishads the concept of the Akshara and Kshara Purushas. In the Upanishads there is the story of the two birds sitting on a branch of a tree. The one sitting on the lower branch is eating of the fruit of the tree and enjoying it while the bird on the higher branch is only looking at the other bird and enjoying it. That is where we have the Kshara Purusha, the personal or the mobile, and then there is the Akshara Purusha, the impersonal or the immobile. In philosophical language they would be the mutable and immutable. The tree itself is the Purusha. This is the Uttama Purusha and it is beyond Kshara, and the Akshara.

Why has the Gita given us these three concepts? When we discuss the Gita we talk about detachment of desires etc, etc. What I would like you to understand is how they are linked to these metaphysical views? If Kshara Purusha means this world, then all of us are bound in a way to this Kshara purusha. That means we have lost ourselves in this world of activity, the world of Prakriti. So, if we only believe in the Kshara Purusha and if we do not believe that there is the Uttama Purusha or the Supreme then we have only Karma Yoga. Those of us who only believe in the Kshara Purusha would be practicing Karma Yoga only. If you believe only in the Akshara Purusha, in the impersonal divinity, then that would be the practice of Jnana Yoga. But the Gita speaks of the Uttama Purusha. It is this that is most important because without it we would not have had Bhakti Yoga.

Now you understand the importance of this three: Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Jnana-Yoga. In Karma Yoga works is emphasized but it is not works alone, but doing the works in a particular manner, with detachment to the fruit of works. This is doing karma and if we stick to doing

only duty, then we are bound to become corrupt. But if we keep to Sri Krishna's advise of doing one's duty with detachment to the fruit of your labour, then a higher dharma leads our life. And then there is a second condition: detachment not only to the fruit of works but at a later stage to work itself. Detachment from works mean to think that Nature or a higher Force is doing the work. If I think that "I" am doing the work then that is absolute ignorance. The real doer is Prakriti, and in spite of us things are getting done. You can get detached from works when you get the experience within you that it is some higher divine consciousness which is working through you. You can continue to be the doer but with an experience that there is a higher divinity.

The third level is when you are no more the doer. In the first level you are the doer, then you are an instrument and in the final stage you are a channel. That is the highest or in the Mother's language you are the child. This is the real Karma-Yoga of the Gita. If you have detachment of the fruit of your works then corruption cannot come in. If you are doing your work for the sake of the Supreme Purushottma, then the whole attitude to life and work changes drastically. As the Mother would tell us, do what you want, think what you want, feel what you want, but do it as if she were in front of you. So she says we have to be the doers thinking that we are doing it only for the Divine.

The Divine knows how to work through us even with our weaknesses. Not even Arjuna, was perfect; he had many defects. He put down his Gandhiva and said he wouldn't fight. He thought if he didn't fight, Kurukshetra war would come to an end. But Sri Krishna could have picked up anyone from the Pandava army and get his work done. The individual is not important. And we have the great *ahamkara* or ego thinking that only it can handle the situation and without it nothing can happen. Once this ego submits itself to the Lord, it can be the greatest instrument in the world. The ego in Arjuna is transformed and the second time when he picks up the Gandhiva it is done with a new vision granted by Lord Krishna, we see what a change is there in Arjuna's attitude; he now becomes an instrument. When we pray to the Lord "Let me be thy instrument; use me as your instrument, I am a simple teacher but whatever teaching I am doing let me manifest

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your consciousness". What a wonderful thing our work would be, all this violence and suffering would not be there, because we would be responsible as instruments. That is a supremely high consciousness, when your ego is lost, when you don't call yourself "Professor" or "Dr.", you are simply referred to by your given name. That means that you have become completely like the flute which is hollow within letting Sri Krishna play upon the flute. The flute is a symbol of the emptiness of the being. If we can be emptied of that ego, he will play upon us and each one of us will play a beautiful raga.

That is the symbolism of Krishna's great flute call. It is a call which strikes the psychic, awakens the inner being towards the Divine. It is also a message indicating that he can use anyone that can get rid of the ego from within. Be as empty and blank as the beautiful reed. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy we say that the highest an individual can become is to be a child of the Divine Mother -- develop childlike simplicity, childlike openness, and childlike dependence on the divine. There is a very false concept in the West that if an individual depends on God then he becomes dependent. We are taught to be the children of the Divine. Sri Ramakrishna gives a magnificent example when he says that one could be like a baby monkey or a kitten. The difference is that the baby monkey grips its mother; it grips it tight and doesn't let her go. Whereas the kitten, it doesn't do anything. It is just there relaxed and the mother cat picks it up and gives it shelter or takes it here and there to give the baby the necessary protection. That is the absolute surrender of the baby kitten. The Mother would say become that kind of child, dependent on the Divine. This is the true concept of Karma Yoga.

Next when we take to Jnana-Yoga, we know that it is based on the two Purushas. That is the essence of Jnana-Yoga. We know that there is the Uttama Purusha or Purushotma beyond this Kshara and Akshara.

Now we go to the third secret, the guhyatamam. That is the greatest secret and most often quoted:

*Sarvadharmān parityajya
māmekam śaranam vraja
Aham twām sarvapāpēbhyo
moksayisyāmi mā śucah.*

But that is not the last secret, the real one lies in another sloka of the Gita. Where the Lord says,
*Manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mām namaskuru
Mamevaisyasi satyam te pratijāne priyo' si me*

If you want to understand the Gita in its essence, look into these two verses. Normally, in Indian tradition, people often quote this verse of the Gita: *Sarvadharmān...* And then you abandon all dharmas, ... you don't come on time to work because the Lord said *Sarvadharmān!!* Now a days the Gita is even a textbook for Management courses. It should not be for the managers or the school teachers or politicians; it is meant for management of man. So, before we can follow the injunction of *Sarvadharmān..* we have to realize this,

*Manmanā bhava madbhakto
madyājī mām namaskuru
Mamevaisyasi satyam te
pratijāne priyo' si me*

*Sarvadharmān parityajya māmekam śaranam vraja
Aham twām sarvapāpēbhyo moksayisyāmi mā śucah.*
(Become My-minded, My lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me, to Me thou shalt come, this is My pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to Me. Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve).

"In brief, the meaning of these two slokas is self-surrender. To the extent that one can make his surrender to Krishna, the Divine Force comes down into his body by the grace of the All-Merciful, delivering him from sin and conferring on him a divine nature. This self-surrender has been described in the first half of the sloka. One has to be *tanmanā*, *tadbhakta*, and *tadyājī*. *Tanmanā* means to see Him in every being, to remember Him at all times, to remain in perfect felicity, being aware of the play of His power, knowledge and love in all works and events. *Tadbhakta* signifies union with Him founded on an entire faith and love. *Tadyājī* means offering of all works big and small as a sacrifice to Krishna and being engaged in doing rightly regulated action to that end, by giving up egoistic interests and the fruits of work.

It is difficult for a human being to make a complete self-surrender, but if he makes even a little effort then God Himself gives him assurance,

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becomes his guru, protector and friend and leads him forward on the path of Yoga. *Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*. Even a little of this dharma delivers one from the great fear. He has said that it is easy and delightful to practise this dharma. And in fact it is so, yet the result of the total consecration is an inexpressible joy, purity and acquisition of power. *Māmevais-yasi* (to Me thou shalt come) means the human being will find Me, will live with Me, will acquire My nature. In these words the realisations of *sādrśya*, God-nature, *sālokya*, living with God, and *sāyujya*, identification with God are mentioned.

One who is free from the bondage of the three essential modes of Nature has indeed acquired *sādrśya*, the nature of God. He has no attachment yet he works; delivered from all sin, he becomes an instrument of Mahashakti and delights in every action of that Power. *Sālokya*, habitation with God, can be realised not only in the Brahmaloaka, abode of the Brahman, after the fall of the body but in this very body. When the embodied being plays with the Lord in his heart, when his mind is thrilled by the knowledge coming from Him, when the intellect constantly hears His words and is conscious of His impulsion in each of his thoughts, this indeed is living in a human body with the Lord. *Sāyujya*, the identification with the Lord, can also be achieved in this body. The Gita mentions 'living in the Lord'. When the realisation of the Divine in all beings becomes permanent, when the senses see, hear, smell, taste and touch Him only, when the being becomes accustomed to live in Him as a portion, then there can be the identification even in this body. But this consummation is entirely the result of an askesis (practice of discipline).

However, even a little practice of this dharma gives great power, unalloyed joy, complete happiness and purity. This dharma has not been created only for people with special qualities. The Lord has said that the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya, the Sudra, man, woman and all beings of inferior birth can come to Him by adhering to this dharma. Even the greatest sinner, if he takes refuge in Him, is quickly purified. Therefore, every one ought to follow this dharma. In the temple of Jagannath no distinction is made on account of caste. Yet the crowning glory attained through this dharma is in no way less than the

supreme state indicated in other religions." (Sri Aurobindo, Bengali Writings, p. 79-80)

At all points of time, of space, of thought, of feeling remember me and offer. The two most beautiful words in Yoga are "remember me and offer". That can be done to any lord we have in our mind, it doesn't matter who it is but if we can remember and offer that is the highest thing. And that kind of offering will lead you to that verse, "... *māmekam śaranam vraja Aham twām sarvapāpebhyo moksayisyāmi mā śucah*". That is not just a verse, it is a spiritual secret; it is the greatest grace of the Lord. *I will take you through all sin, do not worry; mā śucah*. That is the secret of all secrets: we can abandon ourselves to the Lord, without worry. Remember that if we have the faith, the courage to really abandon ourselves to the Divine all can be done. But, the truth is that we may read the Gita every day but we do not have the courage to surrender to the Divine. We do not have the required faith, the needed love. That is why this verse *Sarvadharmān* ...is only quoted but if we can start practicing this verse in our life it will be the beginning of a great spiritual life. It is this verse that has thrown open a new phase in Indian spirituality: 'Take refuge in me alone'. 'That' 'Me' is within you, so try to surrender yourselves to 'Me' within. I am with you within, not in the outer institutions. With that single sloka a new wave of Bhakti was created.

This is the second stage of the devolution in Indian spirituality. This stage starts with the Gita. There was now a new contact established between man and the psychic, or the soul. The purpose of the Gita is to establish a connection between you and your atman. Until now the Vedas had established a connection between you and the gods outside. The Upanishads focused on the link between you and the supreme Brahman. The Gita emphasized on the connection between you and the Divine within. The Lord said "I am there within, one doesn't have to do different kinds of meditation; only pray to the Lord with your heart!" And there was born a Mirabai who sang to the Lord; there was born an Andal who praised the Lord and there were born thousands of saints in India. And as if by magic temples sprouted up in every corner of India. The temple is an outer representation of this body. The Lord had indicated that he is within man and so there came up beautiful temples representing

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सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

sarvadharmānparityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja ।
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ ॥

**Abandoning all duties,
take refuge in Me alone,
For I shall liberate you of all sins,
- grieve not
SBG. 18/66**

the body and the centre of the temple was the Lord. So there was this Bhakti movement that came in connecting man to his inner psychic being. This was a phase that lasted for more than one thousand years.

In this second stage we have also got the Tantra. This was a very important element; it came to the fore much later and it is probably the greatest Yoga of India. Its greatness is in its daringness. Tantra is that great Yoga which has taken up the challenge of transforming the lower vital of man, that is why I call it the most daring Yoga, the most dangerous. They, the Tantric yogis must have thought, "Why should it always be the atman, the Brahman or the beautiful and loving image of God? We human beings have our defects; why not correct our defects?" Tantra came out with the great challenge of correcting the defects as well as to purify and transform our lower impulses.

Indian spirituality came down from the supreme levels of the Mind to the supreme depths of Life, and at this point there was a break. When there is too much Bhakti, there is a disbalance. The power of the mind was lost and along with it the vital energies of India were sapped. This is when the foreigners invaded the country. Sri Aurobindo would tell us that the foreigners invaded and controlled India not because she lacked strength but because her original thinking power dwindled. Most people leaned towards bhakti, emphasized on temple worship etc and the intellect was left high and dry. It got truncated and without the power of the mind, man's life becomes very weak. People started becoming sannyasins – every eldest son became one. A kind of ascetic value entered life. And there were the great philosophers who encouraged this ascetic tendency and the daily vigorous life was neglected. This kind of negativism impacted the country. This left the doors open for foreign powers -- Moghuls, British, French and Portuguese. Because we had rejected life to such an extent that there was a kind of vengeance that invited the foreign countries who have a strong vital, and who were downright materialistic. It was as if Nature brought in these countries and cultures so that India reawakens. That was the reason for this long period of foreign rule. In the historical perspective this period of vacuum

was necessary because India had become otherworldly.

However, spirituality, until it comes to the level of the body, it is not really fixed. All great Avatars have come, but have we changed? We have the great epics, classical Bhajans, where we can go into a trance for a long time but when we return home we are the same human beings. What this means is that until a truth is etched out in the physical, another thousand years may pass but we will remain the same human beings. It is to instill the Vedantic truth in the physical consciousness that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother took birth. Now you see, historically, where Sri Aurobindo stands. He is not one more Yogi, one more Rishi, or one more Guru. He is that evolutionary being who has come down to manifest what the Vedic Rishis had dreamt of, and that was to etch the Vedantic truths in the body so that the Vedas may become a living reality of life. So Sri Aurobindo took up this tremendous challenge of the transformation of the physical. Without the body getting the new spiritual values, without the body transforming itself, our life would be eternally fruitless. This will take time, it has been thousands of years since the Vedas were written. So what the Mother and Sri Aurobindo have come to do will take time. But until and unless that is done, nothing is achieved. This is why it was inevitable that Sri Aurobindo came because it must be a divine incarnation that must take up the work.

Thus Sri Aurobindo's coming is not a chance coming. As Sri Aurobindo told one of his disciples that Sri Krishna is there in his Ashram, and it is his work that is being done. And in another letter he says that by surrendering oneself to the Divine you reach the Divine. If you surrender yourself to Sri Krishna it is the same as surrendering to Sri Aurobindo. There is a kind of continuation of the work that was started by Sri Krishna. But for the present modern times we need something more. The Gita spoke of the individual perfection. The Lord told Arjuna that you take up the Gandhiva and become my instrument. He was speaking about an individual perfection. But today the modern times are the times of a collectivity. We have evidence of it with the world wide web. We cannot think of an individual salvation. So Sri Aurobindo came to

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speak of a collective Yoga which is relevant today and also necessary for the future.

Secondly, in the Gita the concept of evolution is not there at all. This is again very important for modern times because evolution means a progress of mankind. Man is not the last rung of evolution. Sri Aurobindo speaks of evolution and of the next man. Sri Krishna spoke of the perfection of this man. But Sri Aurobindo speaks of the coming of the next man, called the superman.

Thirdly, the concept of the Mother is not there in the Gita. Because Gita belongs essentially to the tradition to the Vedanta; it doesn't speak of the Mother or the Shakti, it speaks only of the Purusha and the Purushottama. But this concept of the power of the Divine Mother which came from the Tantra, is very essential for any sadhana and Yoga. And especially for the next species beyond man, for the Integral Yoga, the most essential element is the Divine Mother.

One more element we need to keep in mind: the evolution of the Avatars. Each of the Avatars represents a higher step in human evolution. For example Sri Rama represents the mind, the ethical mind; he brought in the concept of the ideal man. Sri Krishna represents the Overmind. In Sri Aurobindo's terminology we have different levels of mind, the highest is Supermind, then follow Overmind, Intuitive mind, Illumined mind, Higher mind, and mind. From different levels of the mind, different works were written. If Sri Rama gave us a higher ethical mind, Sri Krishna brought the higher Overmind. Beyond Overmind is the Supermind. In 1926, on 24th November was the siddhi day when the descent of the Overmind took place in the body of Sri Aurobindo. That means there was a complete identification. Sri Krishna descended into the body of Sri Aurobindo as it were; Overmind got merged with Sri Aurobindo. That is why perhaps Sri Aurobindo says that if you surrender yourself to Sri Krishna, it is as if you were surrendering yourself to him. And it is the same Sri Krishna who guided Sri Aurobindo in the Alipore jail. Right from the beginning he had a great relationship with Sri Krishna, but in 1926, Sri Krishna merges himself with Sri Aurobindo. And then the door was opened when Sri Aurobindo brought in this consciousness of the Supermind. That is why we say Sri Aurobindo is the harbinger

of the supermind, and is continuing the work that Sri Krishna started.

On the political level, Sri Krishna had worked for the unity of the country, to make it into one united nation. But today the barriers of the nation and nationality have been thrown overboard, and the nations are moving slowly towards one world. Around 1914, Sri Aurobindo wrote about this concept of human unity. Sri Krishna had spoken of one united country, but now Sri Aurobindo speaks of one united world. There is, as if, a great step beyond the Gita.

It seems that in every manner Sri Aurobindo seems to have gone a step beyond the Gita because it is required for modern times. The Gita is an eternal force but it has to be enlarged. The charma of the Gita is that it does not fight shy of enlarging itself. Unlike many other Scriptures that are bound to time and space and do not want to change, the Gita has this tremendous courage to shed off its old skin and bring out a new and fresh body. The Gita is that wonderful scripture which with every age has shed off the old and began anew. That is why it is so powerful, eternal and relevant to every time-period, and so many people have been able to interpret it. But now with the interpretation of Sri Aurobindo the Gita has suddenly taken up a new body. The new body called *Essays on the Gita*; it is no more just the Bhagavad Gita but the Bhagavad Gita reinterpreted by the new consciousness representing our times – Sri Aurobindo. So if you read *Essays on the Gita* you will see a completely new understanding. It is as if the Lord Krishna is saying "This is what I had meant". This is what is necessary for tomorrow's world. This is where Sri Aurobindo comes in.

Following the Gita we can venture into *Savitri*. *Savitri*, while fulfilling what the Gita said, makes the Gita more relevant to us in modern times. It is not a consciousness of putting the Gita back, but recognizing that there is a beyond to the Gita. The eternal truth is the same, from the Vedic times to the present. But on the level of practicing of the Gita we have Sri Aurobindo's interpretation. That is why I started by saying that the Gita has brought humanity to the present level. But from the present level to the next future, it is *Savitri* which will usher in the new species of Supermankind. ■

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Dr Vijayalekshmy Ravindran



Ashaantasya Kutah Sukham?

Where is happiness to the one who has not discovered peace within?

FAll beings in the creation are on an incessant journey in search of happiness. But only the human beings who are naturally endowed with the discriminating intellect are able to seek lasting happiness unlike the lower beings who seek only temporary happiness. However, how many of us, human beings, have a clear idea about what happiness means and where to search for it. Generally, we take it for granted that satisfying our sensual cravings brings us happiness. But that happiness is short lived until the next craving sets in. Therefore man spends his energy, time and resources in satisfying these cravings for food, dwelling place, clothes, wealth, power, reputation and a variety of sensual interests until he is always busy, tired and exhausted. There is no time and energy for introspection to find out what real happiness is and how to attain real happiness.

In the second chapter of Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna describes a Man of Steady Wisdom, *Sthitaprajna*, To us, ordinary humans, the description of *Sthitaprajna* is very inspiring and appealing; but to most of us it remains as an utopia, impractical and impossible. Hence Sri Krishna comes down to our level and makes us see the state we are in.

*“Naasti Buddhirayuktasya,
Na Chaayuktasya Bhaavanaa,
Nachaabhaavatah Shantih,
Asaantasya Kutah Sukham?”* (BG 2.66)

“There is no wisdom (*Buddhi*) in a fickle minded (*Ayukta*) person, There is also no proper understanding (*Bhaavanaa*) which aids meditation, To the unmeditative, there is no peace (*Shanti*), Where is happiness (*Sukham*) to the one who has no peace?”

The sequence of steps to attain *Sukham* (Happiness) from our present state of *Ayukta* (Fickle mindedness) are clearly given in

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this verse. From the state of *Ayukta* to *Yukta*, thence to the state of *Bhaavanaa*, thereafter through the practice of *Bhaavanaa*, reach a state of *Shaanti* and finally *Sukham*.

1. The state of *Ayukta* (Fickle mindedness)

It is not difficult to understand the state of *Ayukta* (uncontrolled mind) since most of us are, or at least were, in that state. Sri Krishna compares the uncontrolled mind to a rudderless, captain-less ship on the high seas tossed between the rocks of one's likes and dislikes, successes and failures, gains and losses. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa compared the uncontrolled mind to a drunken monkey, who is also bitten by a scorpion.

Mind is nothing but a constant flow of thoughts and its very nature is to rush out towards objects of desire (*Kaama*) in the outside world. Once it attains the desired object, it craves for more and also gets entangled in efforts to preserve what it succeeded to procure. This produces what the learned teachers call attachment (*Sanga*). On the other hand if it fails to get its desires fulfilled, there arises anger (*Krodha*) which in turn leads to delusion (*Sammoha*). Then, the deluded mind forgets itself (*Smrtivibhrama*) and behaves like a moron by losing its discriminating faculty (*Buddhinaasa*). This leads to total destruction of the personality.

Sri Krishna explains this ladder of man's downfall thus:

*"Dhyaayato Vishayaan Pumsah
Sangasteshupajaayate,
Sangaat Sanjaayate Kaamah
Kaamaat Krodhobhijaayate,
Krodhaat Bhavati Sammohah
Sammohaath Smrtivibhramah,
Smrtibhramshaat Buddhinaasho
Buddhinaashaath Pranashyati."*

(BG 2.62 & 63)

This is the nature and fate of a fickle mind (*ayukta*).

2. How can an *Ayukta* (uncontrolled) mind become *Yukta* (controlled)?

- The first step is to observe the mind, by standing aside, and realise the state

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of agitation that one is in, futility of the endeavours undertaken by the fickle mind and the danger that is about to befall or has already befallen.

- If this elementary principle is understood, one becomes a *saadhaka*, one on the path of redemption. The first thing that one can do is to reduce the QUANTITY of thought flow by teaching the mind not to run after trivial and transient objects of pleasure. This needs willpower and discipline. Once the mind has learnt to be reasonably obedient, one can change the QUALITY of thoughts by DIRECTING them to something more noble and permanent. Various practices of prayer (*Bhakti*), study (*Jnana*) and service (*Karma*) done in a proper selfless attitude can help at this stage.
 - With the control of quantity, quality and direction of thoughts, the mind starts to experience advancing states of calmness. This mind is ready to take off its flight to higher realms and we can call this mind as *Yukta* (controlled or channelized).
- ### 3. How can the *Yukta* (controlled) mind progress to the state of *Bhaavanaa* (proper apprehension of the Truth, a meditative state)?
- It is not very difficult for a mind that is focussed and polarised to be guided to discover the source of permanent happiness or bliss.

- At this stage one discovers that the source of permanent happiness lies within and that there is no need to go outside in search of happiness.
- One is, at this stage, able to do his worldly activities with a sense of detachment and dedication, not for getting any reward or recognition, but out of the overwhelming calmness and love within. Whether acting in the world outside or sitting in meditation, one tries to focus on the source of real happiness and this is the state of *Bhaavanaa* (proper apprehension of the Truth).

4. *Bhaavanaa* (Proper apprehension of Truth, a meditative state) to *Shanti* (Peace).

- The meditative mind having stabilised on the source of Bliss experiences expanding horizons of peace and love. At all times, at all places and under all circumstances, one gets stabilized on that Supreme 'Isness' (*Sat*), Awareness (*Chit*) and Bliss (*Ananda*) - all powerful, all pervading, all comprehending, all compassionate and all loving - within and beyond.
- Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita, teaches and demonstrates to Arjuna that one should feel oneself as part of the WHOLE and never separate from IT. This profound mind alone can experience 'Peace that

passeth all understanding'. Understanding is intellectual, while peace is beyond our outer and inner equipments of perception.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in a humorous way tells us that we always cry, "I Want Peace". Remove that I, the Ego and the want, the Desire, and what remains is Peace. We are basically embodiments of Love and Peace, and we are fragmented into pieces (from peace to pieces) by our Ego and Desires.

5. *Shanti* (Peace) to *Sukham* (Happiness, Bliss)

- Only when one experiences peace constantly like the smooth and unbroken flow of a stream of ghee can one experience the state of supreme Happiness. No more effort is needed at this stage. It happens and it has to happen by itself.

Sri Krishna in His infinite wisdom and compassion has chosen to teach us through the 66th verse in the second chapter of Bhagavad Gita, the steps to this great journey by using the negative terms such as *Ayuktasya*, *Abhaavayatah*, and *Asaanthasya* to indicate to us that we need to wake up from this negative slumber - *Uttishtata, Jaagrata, Praapya Varaan Nibodhata!!*

Jai Sai Ram

SRI KRISHNAAYA PARASMAI BRAHMANEH NAMAH



The spiritual verbiage often obscures the heart of the matter, which is the clear seeing of what is present, here and now. In the recognition of presence-awareness, as it is, it is clear that all talk of 'awakening versus liberation', 'levels of understanding', 'embodying the understanding; 'going deeper', not to mention all forms of practicing, striving and seeking, only arise from a lack of clarity and are not ultimately real. They only arise at the level of conceptual thought, when the essence is not understood.

Teachers who uncompromisingly point to the essential understanding and refuse to support any conceptual positions, even spiritual ones, are comparatively rare. They are like bright mirrors that reflect your own true nature without the least distortion. In some sense, you experience this by the amount of clarity you feel and how clearly the understanding unfolds for you. With this kind of uncompromising pointing, your understanding is swift, powerful and lasting. You see profound changes in how you view and experience life. You no longer need to wait for the next awakening, the next book, the next satsang or the next retreat in order to 'get it'. There remain no unanswered questions and doubts. You no longer struggle with conditioning, getting and losing it, falling back into ignorance, dealing with unresolved states and so on.

From the start, you are shown that: 'It is your own being and awareness. You know it already. It is just recognizing this. There is nothing more to know beyond this'.

-- John Wheeler in "Awakening to the Natural State"



Dr Varsha Santhosh

Mind Your Mind

A healthy mind - an Ayurvedic perspective based on Sanatana Dharma.

Has anyone given a thought to where is mind located in our body ? For that matter what is this mind after all ? Where do those various emotions arise from – heart or brain? Why does physical comfort delights the mind? Why does mental sadness affect physical plane ? Is mind a Jnanendriya or a Karmendriya ? What is mental health? What is the link of our individual mind to the cosmic mind ? and so on and so forth. If questions like these intrigue you, read on – Mind through eyes of a Sanatanist Ayurveda Doctor.

Dr Varsha Santhosh's journey with Ayurveda started 25 years ago in Pune University which lead her to Arya Vaidya Chikitsalayam in Coimbatore, where she was "Head In charge" of in house hospital and International Ayurveda Academy for 16 years. She has travelled to various prestigious Universities from Brazil to Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Her radio show on the island's only Hindi Radio for past two years has made her popular because of her easy to use Ayurveda philosophy & tips and her very simple advices.

Currently Dr Varsha Santhosh is a senior physician in Ayush Ayurvedic Pte Ltd (146, Race Course road). She has proved her skills in successfully treating rare cases like Hidradenitis Suppurativa, Interstitial Lung disease etc.

It amused me and made me ponder deeply one day, amidst so much fitness awareness and diet conscious intellectual crowd these days, why there is rise in disorders like diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases et al for that matter why there is so much mental anguish in spite of everyone carrying home sufficient food and pay packet. The answer was lying in Charaka Samhita –

“मनः शरीरयोः तापः परस्परमनुव्रजेत् ।
आधाराधेयभावेन तप्ताज्यघडयोरिव ॥”

In the growing importance of physical fitness one has conveniently discounted the fitness of mind, not realizing that mental fitness is main reason for physical fitness, exactly like what Charaka says in above verse. The mind and Body are closely associated and the analogy given here is of heated ghee and its container – “When ghee is hot (mind), it also heats the container (body)”. To drive home the point of mental fitness nothing can be more familiar than our very own Arjuna's despondency, his mental confusion lead him to agony to the extent that his throat was parched, body began

to sweat, his bow slipped off his hands, body went limp, skin started burning and he couldn't continue even standing leave aside performing any action:

*sīdanti mama gātrāṇi
mukhañ ca pariśuśyati |
vepathuś ca śarīre me
romaharṣaś ca jāyate ||
gāṇḍīvaṃ śrāmsate haśāt
tvak caiva paridahyate|
na ca śaknomy avasīhātum
bhramatīva ca me manah||*

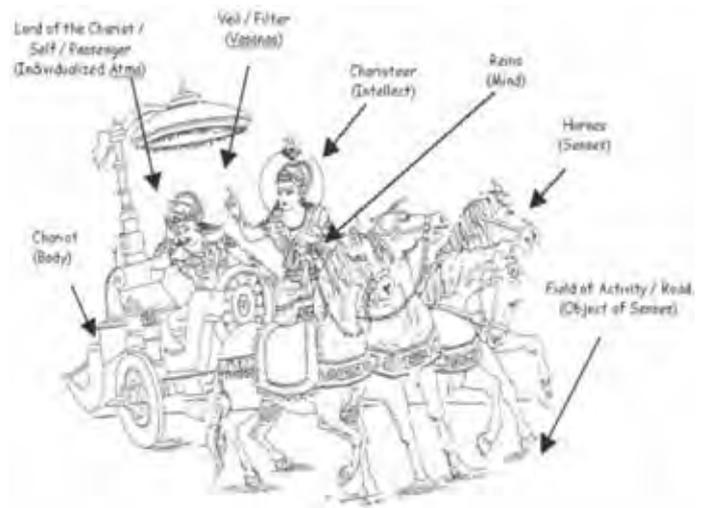
(BG 1.29,30)

Emotions have a lot connections to the body: like anger, leads to High blood pressure, anxiety to cardiovascular diseases, fear to diarrhea, grief to fever, *Kama* (desires) to skin and eye diseases etc. These are not just classical references to show psychosomatic disorders, but these are often our very own experiences.

When we say we are very cautious and aware of what we eat, we are trying to nourish only the gross body, have you anytime given a thought that what and how you eat determines your mind (to a good extent)? The gross food strengthens your body and essence of that food strengthens your mind. These days food devoid of *sattvik* aspects like pure ghee, whole milk, wheat, rice etc and full of *tamasic* and *rajasic* aspects like meat, cheese, soya (tofu), salad et al what essence of food is left for nourishing our minds?

Keeping this background let us enter the business of minding our minds. See the image of the chariot (from Gita imagery) below.

It is '*Svabhava*' of the mind is to go out with various sense organs to enjoy. More the "*Vasana*" to reach out the various sense object more the impact on agony of the mind. Unless our Intellect holds on and controls the mind, it will be spilt and split all over the assorted sense objects. Only an Intelligent Charioteer will know how to hold the reins (mind) to steer the horses (senses) so that the chariot (body) is taken to it's destination. Okay, these days no one goes on a chariot, imagine you are driving your car, and suddenly you lose your steering control – we call that the car is skidding, it requires a certain skill to maneuver the car that is skidding, to bring it to a halt. Exactly like senses skidding over the sense objects and mind helplessly going behind



it dragging the chariot uncontrollably.

Ah! Did I hear you say you can't give up your sizzling chocolate brownie or that double cheese Pizza, or are you trying to explain me that your penchant for branded clothing or latest gizmos is "the cool" modern necessity to stay at par in your peer?

How often have you said " No one understands me!" ? Ask yourself a question now, have YOU understood your 'SELF' ?

The day that understanding of your "SELF" dawns that's the day others will really understand you as a 'realized soul'.

Amrithabindu Upanishad says, "*Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha moksha-yoho.*" Mind is the ONLY reason for person's bondage or liberation.

The only way to come out of this illusion is the Knowledge of the Self.

Vasanas or thoughts cover up our experience of the infinite when our attention is turned outward. Vivekachoodamani beautifully describes this as ball falling from flight of stairs. If the mind is not turned inward, it will turn outwards, it has nowhere else to go and it cannot keep quiet.

What is mind - Anyhow?

- "*manyate nyayate anena iti manah!*": Through which one can gain knowledge is mind.
- "*Sukhadyupalabdhihi sadhanam indriyam manah!*" (Tarka Sangraha): That indriyam which is instrumental in perception of *sukha* (pleasure) etc emotions is known as Mind.

Where is it's location ?

Vibhu manah!: Everywhere in the body (no specific spot)

We have one reference in Bhel Samhita that it is situated between palate and skull and one reference saying mind is located in heart.

“ When a person goes against one’s intellect it is called “Pradnya Aparadham”, and that is the basic cause of all diseases, example, when I know I am diabetic, I still can’t resist sweets when it comes in front of me, I know smoking is injurious to my health still I insist to smoke, I know getting up early in morning gives mental clarity (sattva vardhan) still I prefer to sleep through my morning and become more tamas so on and so forth. To have discipline a minimum effort is needed whereas the rest of the things comes damn effortlessly. ”

What are it’s Guna and Dosha?

Mind is *Sattva Pradhana* and has *rajas* and *tamas* as it’s doshas.

It means on it’s own Mind is pure and has clarity but often it is clouded by various external reasons leading to a pendulum like swinging from aggression to inertia.

Also mind does get influenced with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *kapha*.

How to get rid of these Doshas / negativities that cloud the mind?

“ *Dhi Dhairya AtmaVidnyanam*
ManoDoshoushadham Param”

- Ashtanga Hrudayam

Viveka Buddhi (discrimination power), Courage and Self Knowledge are THE BEST (*param*) medicines to alleviate mano dosha – factors that cloud the mind.

How to analyse the different mental levels ?

(As described by Pathanjali)

1. *Kshipta* : a completely distracted mind.
2. *Vikshipta* : those who have no control over their mind. They cannot concentrate mind.
3. *Mudha* : That mind which remains in a state of stupor is called *mudha*.
4. *Ekagra refers* to those who have a concentrated mind and can concentrate well.
5. *Niruddha* describes those whose mind is completely under their control. They have trained their mind perfectly and can use it as they wish.

What are the causes of mental diseases ?

Ichcha (likes) :- Excitement, sorrow, perturbed mind, desire, greed.

Dweshha (dislikes) :- Anger, fear, inactivity due to fear of failure, finding faults with others, intolerance to other’s prosperity, aggression due to other’s qualities.

Why a person would insist to fall sick ?

“ *Dhi Dhruti Smruti Vibhrashtha*

Karma Yat kurute Ashubham!

Pradnya Aparadham Tam Vidyaat sarwa dosha prakopanam!!”

When a person goes against one’s intellect it is called “Pradnya Aparadham”, and that is the basic cause of all diseases, example, when I know I am diabetic, I still can’t resist sweets when it comes in front of me, I know smoking is injurious to my health still I insist to smoke, I know getting up early in morning gives mental clarity (*sattva vardhan*) still I prefer to sleep through my morning and become more tamas so on and so forth. To have discipline a minimum effort is needed whereas the rest of the things comes damn effortlessly.

Why mind runs so effortlessly outward to the sense objects ?

Answer is simple: desperate for water in a desert how one falls for a mirage and follows it like wise desperate for happiness one follows the sense objects. Swabhava, natural tendency, is to flow in the direction with certain conviction which comes effortlessly.

Shama: controlling the mind from running after sense objects.

Dama: Controlling sense organs, so that the sense objects may not enter the mind And both of these need a super effort. If not it crystallizes into a desire and all of us know how in Gita Chapter 2 the seven steps ladder fall is described:

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsah
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah
kāmāt krodhobhijāyate
krodhād bhavati saṁmohah
saṁmohāt smṛtivibhramah
smṛtibhramśād buddhināśo
buddhināśāt praṇaśyati (BG 2.62,
63)*

“ it has clearly mentioned about natural physical urges that should NOT be controlled or deliberately provoked like sleep, hunger, thirst, tears etc, 13 of those and mental urges even if they arise which should BE controlled deliberately like Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Matsarya (jealousy), Irshya (competition), Lobha (greed) etc 6 of those.. ”

When our real nature is forgotten, there is a deep and precipitous fall. Hence renounce, reject and refuse all the idle ramblings of the mind. Cry ‘halt’ to the wandering mind.

What has Ayurveda offered to halt the wandering mind ?

“Prevention is better than cure” Since it’s first chapter from any samhita Ayurveda has always ordered a *Code of discipline* certain daily practices – Dinacharya, (what time to get up and a sequential order of how to do what following what, starting from contemplation, evacuating bowels, brushing teeth etc to *Ratricharya* – how to end the day) certain seasonal practices – *Rutucharya*, every season, *ahara* food regimen changes along with *Vihara* – activity, certain moral code of conduct – *Sadvritta*, (which is similar to *Yama* and *Niyama* we see in Ashtanga Yoga), and above all it has clearly mentioned about natural physical urges that should NOT be controlled or deliberately provoked like sleep, hunger, thirst, tears etc, 13 of those and mental urges even if they arise which should BE controlled deliberately like *Kama* (desire), *Krodha* (anger), *Matsarya* (jealousy), *Irshya* (competition), *Lobha* (greed) etc 6 of those. It’s called *Adhaaraneeya vega* and *Dhaaraneeya vega* respectively. And my personal favourite is *Achar Rasayanam*, tonic for the behavior. In this there is detail explanation of do’s and don’ts starting from necessity to speak the truth to maintain our integrity to not indulging in excess food sleep and sex.

Does Ayurveda mention about any mental diseases that we see in modern times?

YES. Not only it covers the modern aspect but it is even more deeper as comes out it fool proof

detailed therapies as well. From Depression to Bipolar to Schizophrenia and more like even Addiction, Split personality for that matter even Epilepsy is described in great details. There are different set of medicinal preparations that are prescribed internally along with series of external therapies and needless to say mani, mantra homa etc (wearing certain talisman, chanting certain mantras, performing various homas etc.) are also a part of deeper Psychological therapies.

But as I said before, it’s easier to prevent than to treat.

When we have no discipline in our routine these days how can we still follow the prevention path?

We are extremely good at giving reasons as to how we are unable to follow, because we flunk at the very first step of getting up early in morning and that kinda puts us off to follow the rest. Instead focus on what is possible – choosing right kind of words while talking making sure you are polite enough and hold no hatred or grudge toward anyone, not uttering harsh, hurting words or a lie, be truthful, don’t compete or be jealous starting from siblings extending it to neighbours, friends and then office mates, choose right kind of traditional food (definitely not those latest diet fads high protein low carb etc.)

Once we have zipped this part – that is our mouth – both as *karmendriya* – action organ of speech and *Jnanendriya* – sense organ as taste, half the battle is won.

Then other half is won by spiritual practices, LEARN GITA, and then eventually graduate to higher texts like Upanishads. But before that make sure you have an altar at home and light an oil/ghee lamp morning and evening (not tee light), chant simple mantras and stotras initially before you learn Gita chanting.

Eventually it's going to be your journey to understand your 'self'.

One drop of water cannot form clouds, ocean does...
One tree cannot stop clouds, forest does...
One individual cannot pass bills, majority in parliament can...
So on and so forth.

“ focus on what is possible – choosing right kind of words while talking making sure you are polite enough and hold no hatred or grudge toward anyone, not uttering harsh, hurting words or a lie, be truthful, don't compete or be jealous starting from siblings extending it to neighbours, friends and then office mates, choose right kind of traditional food (definitely not those latest diet fads high protein low carb etc.). ”

But all that starts at individual smaller self, ultimately it's the total mind that influences, exactly like if our friends are satsangis we begin to chant gita and get intoxicated with HIS name

and if our friends are hard time party goers we enjoy our dancing under altogether different intoxication, now our mind has to mind whether we want spiritual intoxication or spirit intoxication.



Your own little body too is full of mysteries and dangers, yet you are not afraid of it, for you take it as your own. What you do not know is that the entire universe is your body, and you need not be afraid of it. You may say you have two bodies: the personal and the universal. The personal comes and goes, the universal is always with you. The entire creation is your universal body. You are so blinded by what is personal, that you do not see the universal. This blindness will not end by itself - it must be undone skilfully and deliberately. When all illusions are understood and abandoned, you reach the error-free and perfect state in which all distinctions between the personal and the universal are no more.

Who was born first, you or the world? As long as you give first place to the world, you are bound by it; once you realize, beyond all trace of doubt, that the world is in you and not you in the world, you are out of it. Of course your body remains in the world and of the world, but you are not deluded by it.

The pure mind sees things as they are - bubbles in consciousness. These bubbles are appearing, disappearing and reappearing - without having real being. Each bubble is a body and all these bodies are mine.

You see yourself in the world, while I see the world in myself. To you, you get born and die, while to me the world appears and disappears. Our world is real, but your view of it is not. There is no wall between us, except the one built by you. There is nothing wrong with the senses, it is your imagination that misleads you. It covers up the world as it is with what you imagine it to be - something existing independently of you and yet closely following your inherited or acquired patterns.

-- Nisargadatta Maharaj

Dr Charles Chow



The Bhagavad Gita Applied to Business

Bhagavad Gita is a concise compendium of ancient Indian philosophy that basically explains relationships. The conversation documented between Arjuna (representing ordinary men and women) and Krishna, the supreme personality of a Godhead, focuses on dharma (duty) between individuals and society. As illustrated in Diagram 1, Arjuna, although stationary, continues to move as long as the chariot is in motion. For Arjuna, this is action in inaction.

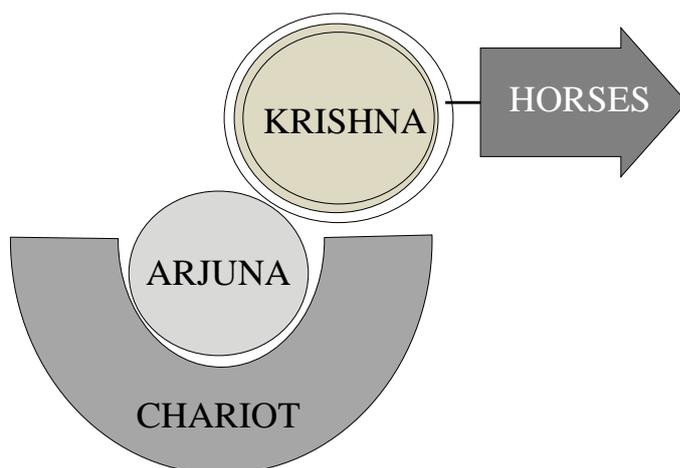


Diagram 1: The Bhagavad Gita Illustrated

VALID FOR BUSINESS

Application of The Gita to business is valid because every registered business entity is a legal person with rights and obligations like any matured human individual. Likewise, business is about relationships with focus on the customer. Profitability in sustainable growth ensures business

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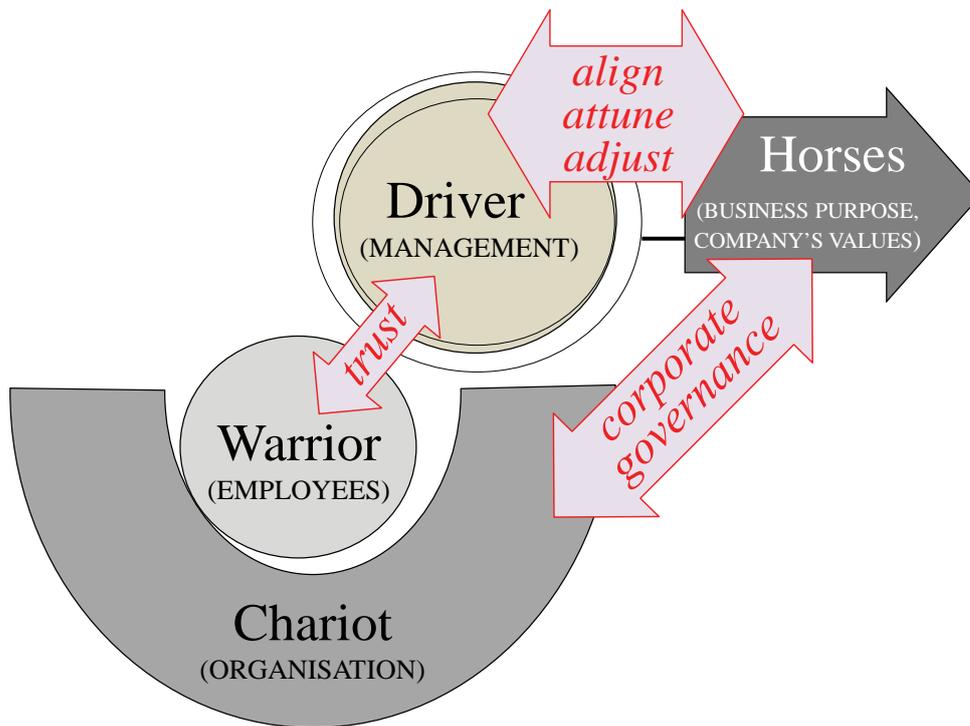


Diagram 2: The Bhagavad Gita Applied to Business **THE GREATEST SECRET**

survival. There are also non-profit businesses (i.e. charities and volunteer welfare organisations) as well as not-for-profit entities that channel all profits made at the end of a financial year into social benefits. Diagram 2 illustrates a business entity. The chariot represents a business organisation and the employees are warriors with the management as chariot driver. The business purpose and company values are like horses that propel the organisation forward.

To thrive, the key feature between employees and management is trust. Corporate governance is vital to ensure compliance of a business with the organisation's mission and vision. Most importantly, the management needs to align, attune and adjust business practices with established company values in order to accommodate changing trends in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) situations.

To align means the business practices are suitable with regard to training and certification, acceptable in terms of conforming to local laws and traditions and also feasible within the resources available and possible. To attune means to innovate and change before such practices become irrelevant or redundant. Lastly, to adjust is to include prudence and the "high touch" that is usually not budgeted into our common "high tech" endeavours.

Out of the total 700 *shlokas* (verses) in eighteen chapters, The Bhagavad Gita's Chapters 12 and 15 are the shortest with only 20 *shlokas*. The former explains devotion while the latter captures the greatest secret. In India, since ancient days, Chapter 15 has been recited before taking food as a prayer by the Brahmins. This chapter describes the extra faculty required of a spiritual seeker, i.e. the "Eye-of-Wisdom" that cannot be developed but instead discovered only through purity of intentions. This is the initiation into real consciousness which is *Krishna consciousness*.

KRISHNA (KRSNA) CONSCIOUSNESS

It is an illusion to think that man is the centre of the universe and our bodies are our real selves. Krishna consciousness means becoming free from this illusion and to maintain a devotional relationship with the Supreme Being Himself, KRSNA. When all the energies of the senses become concentrated as a unified mental mode directed to a Supreme Being, the resultant state of mind is called *bhakti* (devotion).⁴ This is considered the fifth *Purushartha* (proper goals for living), besides *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure) and *moksha* (liberation).⁵

In Bhakti Yoga, as illustrated in Diagram 3, man and the Divine are two separate entities. Every person has an individual consciousness called the *at-*

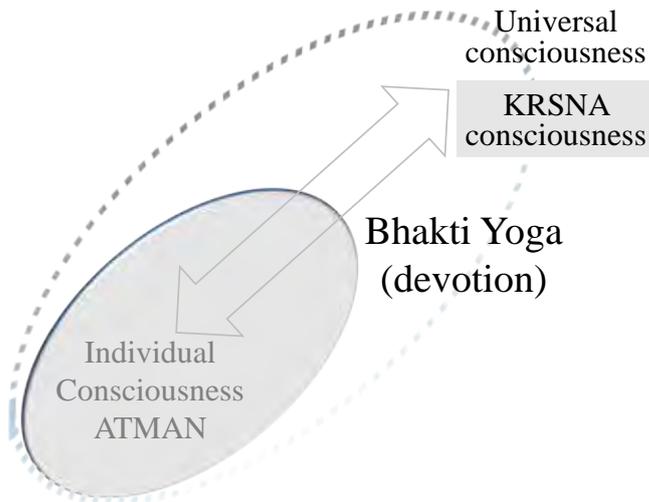


Diagram 3: KRSNA Consciousness in Bhakti Yoga

man. This has neither birth nor death and is never killed when the body is killed. (Gita 2:20) At death, the *atman* abandons the old body and takes on a new one like a person changing garments. (Gita 2:22) Applied to business, this feature is similar to an organisation’s reputation like the aroma in branding and the company’s status that reside in the perception of others.

On the other hand, the universal consciousness in Diagram 3 refers to a Supreme Being. To some, Krishna is not just another deva but rather the source of all incarnations⁶, as *Bhagavan svayam*⁷ (one without a second) with purifying and liberating effects for devotees and to grant relief from all miseries in life.⁸ There is no business equivalent for this religious perspective.

However, universal consciousness from another perspective is akin to “Zeitgeist”. Etymologically from German, translated as spirit (“Geist”) of our time (“Zeit”). This includes business cycles and business trends like safer and smarter connections in the “internet of things” as aspired in Industry 4.0.

Although separate, the individual is sustained by the grace of the Divine. According to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (www.Krishna.com), true success in life comes only by understanding reality and our place within it. To have the courage to acknowledge and accommodate this divine connection is liberation (*moksha*) as an individual. Likewise to always align, attune and adjust to changing trends ensures business survival.

These are dynamic features compared to mere passive adaptation in order to blend with changing circumstances like a chameleon.

EKAM ADVITYAM (one without a second)

An alternative interpretation of this link between an individual and universal consciousness (*Brahman*) is illustrated in Diagram 4. The premise for Advaita (non-dual) Philosophy is *ekam advityam* which means one without a second.

The universe is deemed to comprise two realities. One being *purusa* (the spirit) and the other *prakriti* (the manifestations) in the form of *gunas* (inherent tendencies) comprising *sattva* (synergistic and divine), *rajas* (full of energy and dynamic) and *tamas* (lethargic and dull). Their interaction would define the character of any entity.

Through a series of philosophical analyses undertaken in *Drg Drsya Viveka*⁹, it has been estab-

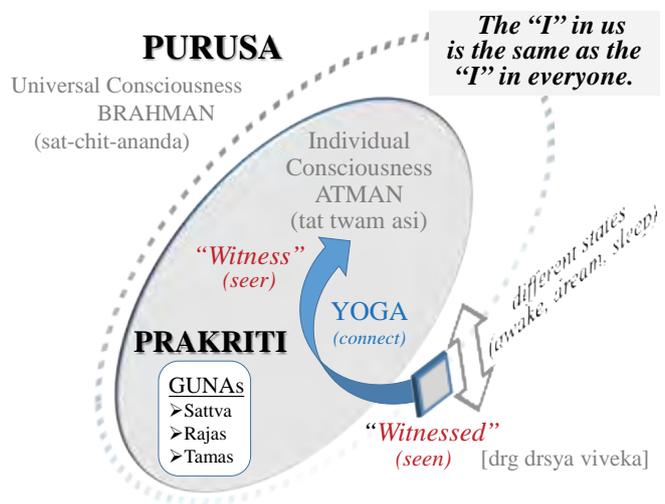


Diagram 4: Universal Consciousness in Advaita (non-dual) Philosophy

lished that the Self is real and the body is an illusion in any state, i.e. awake, dreaming or asleep. This Self is actually linked to the universe as *sat-chit-ananda*¹⁰. “Sat” is that which never changes, i.e. truth or existence, “cit” refers to consciousness, and “anan-

da” means bliss. Therefore, *sat-chit-ananda* means existence-consciousness-bliss. In essence, the “I” in us is the same as the “I” in everyone.

In order to help individuals realise this, the practice of *yoga* is recommended. This includes regular meditation and silent retreat to “reboot” a clogged-up or clouded connectivity. Due to different individual inclinations through the *gunas*, such practice can be directed from the *jnana* (knowledge), *bhakti* (devotional) or *karma* (service) perspectives. These are different paths within the same journey.

This Self-realisation is summarized in Sanskrit as ‘*tat twam asi*’ i.e. you are that. It presents The Bhagavad Gita in a spiritual instead of religious dimension.

LIMITATIONS

The above two illustrations of universal consciousness (i.e. Diagrams 3 and 4) are incomplete. They only represent two extreme ends of a spectrum that have multiple shades like:

- *Shuddhadvaita* – the Self is only a part of the Universe, although the same.
- *Vishishtadvaita* – the Self is part of the Universe, yet different.
- *Dvaita of Madhvacharya* – the Self is the servant of the Universe.
- *Acintya Bheda Abheda* – the oneness is inconceivable between the Self and Universe.

In addition, in business every participant is a person with a position. There is a distinction between the “Self” as a person (e.g. an engineer) and the “Self” of a position (e.g. chairman at a meeting). Application of Chapter 15 in this case would depend on the inherent knowledge of the individual. Doing what needs to be done, e.g. to provide technical inputs as a professional engineer is different from getting a second opinion on the same matter as the chairman. However, the link to universal consciousness can best be described in Gita 2:47 (*nishkama karma*), i.e. to focus on the process instead of the rewards. There is inaction in action.

CONCLUSION

The key difference between “action in inaction” and “inaction in action” is Self-realisation. The former

goes with the flow while the latter flows blissfully on the go. The Bhagavad Gita is about the spirituality of relationships and can be applied to business. Chapter 15 is the shortest yet the most compact for comprehension.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Swami Chinmayananda, *The Holy Geeta*, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Mumbai 2002, p.973.
- 2 Gita 15:10 in Swami Tapasyananda, *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai 2010, p.571 and also Swami Dayananda Saraswati, *Bhagavad Gita, Home Study Course*, Volume 8, Arsha Vidya Research and Publication Trust Chennai 2011, p.101.
- 3 His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-Gita As It Is*, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, California 1983, p.231.
- 4 Summarised from *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Skandha III, Chapter 25, Verses 32-33 translated by Swami Tapasyananda, *Srimad Bhagavata, The Holy Book of God*, Volume One, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai 1980, p.258.
- 5 Swami Tapasyananda, *Srimad Bhagavata, The Holy Book of God*, Volume Three, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai 1980, p.1.
- 6 His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Canto 1, Chapter 3, Text 28 in www.prabhupadabooks.com, SB1.3 retrieved on 23 February 2017.
- 7 Swami Tapasyananda, *Srimad Bhagavata, The Holy Book of God*, Volume Three, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai 1980, p.13 and also His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Canto 1, Chapter 3, Text 28 in www.prabhupadabooks.com, SB1.3 retrieved on 23 February 2017.
- 8 His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Canto 1, Chapter 3, Text 29, in www.prabhupadabooks.com, SB1.3 retrieved on 23 February 2017.
- 9 *Drg Drsya Viveka* by Adi Sankaracarya commented by Swami Tejomayananda, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Mumbai 2013 and *Drg-Drsya-Viveka, An Inquiry into the Nature of the ‘Seer’ and the ‘Seen’* by Swami Nikhilananda, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata 2006.
- 10 Earliest mention of this compound word is in verse 3.11 of Tejobindu Upanishad. Source: Hatttanga-di, Sunder (2015), *Tejobindu Upanishad* (PDF in Sanskrit), p.8 retrieved on 12 January 2016.



Prakash Kamanat



Infinite Strength and Fearlessness – the Essence of the Gita

Swetaswatara Upanishad addresses human beings as “*Amritasya Putrah*” - Children of Immortality!

The four Mahavakyas (sacred scriptural dictums) “*Tat Twam Asi*” (Thou art That) from Chandogya Upanishad, “*Aham Brahmasmi*” (I am Brahman) from Brihadaranyakam, *Prajanam Brahma* from Aitayeya Upanishad or “*Ayamatma Brahma*” from Mandukyam are classical examples of the repeated assertion of Hindu Scriptures about the Infinite Power and Divinity hidden in all men and women.

The real scope of spiritual practices in Hinduism is to manifest that Infinite Divinity within, thereby enabling us to cut asunder the limitations we place on ourselves. This can be achieved by following any of the available paths suitable to our temperaments. Sages and Saints realized this wonderful truth and lived accordingly without allowing weakening limitations gripping and crippling them. They lived the life of fearlessness and divine strength and power.

Nevertheless, among us, it is not uncommon to see even men of high intellectual caliber behave as if they are no different from the ignorant lot.

Prakash is a Life member of Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore. He is a keen student Sri Ramakrishna / Swami Vivekananda thoughts and Indian philosophy in general.

Faced with dilemma, many lose discriminatory power and character. The result is delusion, fear, suffering and lethargy leading to total failure in facing the complex realities of life.

Arjuna, the accomplished royal hero of yore, once in his life had to become a typical ambassador of such a deluded state! It is a well known fact that that Bhagavan Sri Krishna's Gita injected a new vigor in Arjuna and made him realize his folly; and made him again aware of the true infinite power and thus he re-discovered the fearless valor within him to face up the challenge to win the war of life.

Although there are seven hundred verses in the Gita, the third verse in the second chapter has a unique charm. This verse is considered by Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) as the most effective medicine given by Sri Krishna to remove such a demeaning despondency in Arjuna. This is the verse, the Lord used as a whip to give a wake-up call to Arjuna! Before going through what Swami Vivekananda says, let us first have a look at the verse itself:-

*Klaibyam Maasma gamah Paartha
Naitat tvayi upapadyate
Kshudram Hridaya daubalyam
tyaktvottishtha Parantapa
Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha! It is not
worthy of you; shaking off this mean
faint-heartedness, ARISE, O scorcher of foes!-
(BG 2.3)*

Now let us see how Swami Vivekananda comments on this simple verse²:

In order to remove this delusion which had overtaken Arjuna, what did the Bhagavan say? As I always preach that you should not decry a man by calling him a sinner, but that you should draw his attention to the omnipotent power that is in him, in the same way does the Bhagavan speak to Arjuna.

Naitat-twai-upapadyate - "It doth not befit thee!" "Thou art Atman imperishable, beyond all evil. Having forgotten thy real nature, thou hast by thinking thyself a sinner, as one afflicted with bodily evils and mental grief,

*thou hast made thyself so - this does not befit thee!" - so says the Bhagavan: "Klaibyam ma-sma-gamah Partha -Yield not to unmanliness, O, son of Pritha". There is in the world neither sin nor misery, neither disease nor grief; if there is anything in the world which can be called sin, it is this - 'fear'; know that any work which brings out the latent power in thee is *Punya* (virtue); and that which makes thy body and mind weak is, verily sin. Shake off this weakness, this faint-heartedness! *Klaibyam ma-sma-gamah Partha!**

If you, my sons³, can proclaim this message to the world -*Klaibyam ma-sma-gamah Partha Naitat-twai-upapadyate* - then all this disease, grief, sin and sorrow will vanish off from the face of the earth in three days. All these ideas of weakness will be nowhere. Now, it is everywhere - this current of the vibration of fear. Reverse the current; bring in the opposite vibration, and behold the magic transformation! Thou art omnipotent - go, go to the mouth of the cannon, fear not.

Hate not the most abject sinner, look not to his exterior. Turn thy gaze inward, where resides the *Paramatman*.

Proclaim to the whole world with trumpet voice, "*There is no sin in thee, there is no misery in thee; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise, awake and manifest the Divinity within!*".

If one reads this one sloka, "*Klaibyam Ma-sma-gamah Partha Naitat-twai-upapadyate Kshudram Hridaya-daurbalyam tyakta-utthishta Parantapah*", one gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one Sloka lies imbedded the whole message of Gita.

Swami Vivekananda's intention was to bring the lofty principles enshrined in the Gita to the knowledge of the masses to enable them to solve the riddles of everyday lives and to mitigate the sufferings human race. To him, each and every verse in the Gita is important including those seemingly simpler and clear

verses. According to him, the Gita is not just for scholarly metaphysical debates in monasteries or the topic of arm-chair philosophical musings alone. He wants every one of us to apply the teachings of the Gita to upgrade our lives. For him, it is the most practical tool available for mankind to reach that goal.

The magic effect of the assertion of the latent power and goodness in a suffering person by another person is graphically illustrated in the lives of many in human history. An interesting example is an event in the life of the celebrated American Inventor, Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931).

One day, as a small child, Thomas Edison came home from school and gave a paper to his mother. He said to her, "Mom, my teacher gave this paper to me and told me only you are to read it. What does it say?"

Her eyes welled with tears as she read the letter out loud to her child... *"Your son is a genius. This school is too small for him and does not have good enough teachers to train him. Please teach him yourself."*

Many years after Edison's mother had died he became one of the greatest inventors of the century. One day he was going through a closet and he found the folded letter that his old teacher wrote his mother that day. He opened it...

The message written on the letter was, "Your son is mentally deficient. We cannot let him attend our school anymore. He is expelled."

Edison became emotional reading it and then wrote in his diary..... *"Thomas A. Edison was a mentally deficient child whose mother turned him into the genius of the century."*

That unique heroic mother - Ms. Nancy Matthews Elliot (1810-1871) did not wait for his son to drop down to the pit of despondency but boldly decided to reverse the process! She simply told him that he was a genius! That bold emphasis in the latent power and goodness in anyone, even in a mentally disabled one, is the core message of the Gita! Swami Vivekananda says, this message of hope, fearlessness and

power within us is enshrined in verse 3 of chapter 2.

Dwelling on the same verse, Swami Ranganathananda (1908- 2005) writes in his commentary on the Gita:

I had to deal with a very close friend, a Principal of an Engineering College, a noble minded person, highly respected by all the teachers and students, when I was in Karachi. He got a nervous breakdown. His condition was like that of a baby, absolutely no strength, no energy, no courage. He couldn't meet anybody. He won't go to college; he remained at home. I took him in the car to the Engineering College, made him sit on the Principal's chair and told him: "you run the college; you are such a great soul, so noble....."

As soon as I left, he also left and came and sat in his house. He could not meet anybody. But after six months, everything changed. All strength came back. That was just like a cloud coming over the sun, a temporary cloud. The real man came out again. The same wonderful work went on. He built and developed two more Engineering colleges in India. Later on, he passed away peacefully.....In social relations, you can do two things to each other: either destroy one's confidence, or increase that self confidence.....Speak of his or her great achievements; that will immediately make him or her feel, '**I can, yes I can**'....This is how Sri Krishna is dealing with Arjuna, 'stand up', face up to your problems, don't become weak.

Thus Sri Krishna in the past and Swami Vivekananda in the recent history gave clarion calls to the human race to wake up from negativity, fear and slumber to realize the infinite positive strength within each of us. This is the message we need to learn repeatedly until we manifest our Divinity within.

We need to emphasize this message of hope and fearlessness as the essence of the Gita for an all-round development of human beings. Bhagavad Gita in general and this verse

in particular needs to be taught with priority when we teach future generations on the basics of practical spirituality.

The world of today is too eerie due to the rise of several psychological issues including depression in spite of the increasing economic development worldwide and the comfort born out of this progress. The rat-race coupled with the cut-throat competitions to secure and establish a place in the ever-changing world of name and fame adds fuel to this fire. As such, the Message of the Gita is needed now more than ever to cure this rampant malady.

Rituals, ceremonies, dos-and-don'ts of religious practices will undergo changes according to the time, regional or ethnic variations and adaptations. But the message of Infinite strength and fearlessness of Srimad Bhagavad Gita enshrined in this verse will remain as the nectar for the afflicted human race without changes forever!

References:-

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2. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda- Volume IV, Pages 108, 109 and 110. July 1998 edition; "Thoughts on the Gita"
3. Swami Vivekananda is addressing his monastic disciples here as 'my sons', who were at that time the newly joined monastic novices in Alambazar Math in 1897. This is from the Math Diary as published in the Complete Works.
4. Volume 1, "Universal Message of Bhagavad Gita, An exposition of the Gita in the light of modern thought and modern needs" – Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata. By Swami Ranganathananda. Pages 90, 94



“Your expectation of something unique and dramatic, of some wonderful explosion, is merely hindering and delaying your Self Realization. You are not to expect an explosion, for the explosion has already happened - at the moment when you were born, when you realized yourself as Being-Knowing-Feeling. There is only one mistake you are making: you take the inner for the outer and the outer for the inner. What is in you, you take to be outside you and what is outside, you take to be in you. The mind and feelings are external, but you take them to be intimate. You believe the world to be objective, while it is entirely a projection of your psyche. That is the basic confusion and no new explosion will set it right! You have to think yourself out of it. There is no other way.”

- Nisargadatta Maharaj, in “I Am That: Talks with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj”

Lakshmi Chandrashekar Subramanian



The Invaluable Gift of Gita Chanting

My little maroon Bhagavad Gita book by Gita Ashram is one of my most precious childhood items. I have travelled internationally with it, marked it up with pencil for pronunciation, placed it at Lord Krishna's altar, and poured over it in times of pain and confusion. Starting at age 10, it has been a constant companion and that is because of the Gita chanting competitions that I took part in as a child. At first, it seemed like something I did because my parents wanted me to. But over time, the Gita chanting experience transformed me, provided me with philosophical and spiritual insights, and today I reminisce the profound value of it by writing this article.

Confidence Builder

In 2001, as a 12 year old, I took part in the Global Gita Chanting competition conducted in Mumbai as part of the Chinmaya Vishwa Sammelan 50th anniversary celebrations. At that time, I had just won the Gita Jayanti chanting competition in Singapore, and Swami Mitrananda of Chinmaya Mission, one of the judges at the competition, blessed me and said, "go for the world cup," as he gave me the first prize. I felt a surge of confidence and inspiration, like I was part of a larger Gita movement, and that I had something to offer. Thus I started training in Chapter 11 with my three gurus: my mother Smt. Padmini Chandrashekar, my Chinmaya Yuva Kendra teacher Smt. Ranjini Rao, and Swami Brahmananda of Chinmaya Mission, whose Gita Chanting cassettes I used to religiously listen to every day. Eventually I had memorized all 55 verses of the chapter, and was ready for the regional competition in Singapore. With Lord Krishna's grace, I

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won and was able to represent Singapore at the World Cup!

The Mumbai Gita Chanting competition was a different game altogether, with children from all parts of the globe. Again, I felt a sense of kinship with my fellow Bhagavad Gita enthusiasts. Competition aside, we were all part of the global Gita chanting group, and I made many friends there. Although I didn't win that round, the experience was exhilarating and worth every moment of hard work. I later recognized that the competition was a means to an end, the end being my continued interest in the chanting of the Bhagavad Gita.

Spiritual Companion

In my first year of college in the US at age 18, my first time away from home, I received the news of the unexpected passing of my dear grandfather in Pune. I was shocked, shaken, heartbroken. That was the first time I grappled with the concept of death. As I heard about my parents braving the devastating news, I turned to the Gita for strength and She did not let me down. I felt alone while dealing with the loss, but I read and re-read Verse 20 from Chapter 2:

na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyam bhutvā bhavitā vā na bhuyah
ajo nityah sāvato 'yam purāno
na hanyate hanyamāne sarire

The Atma is neither born nor does it die at any time, nor having been it will cease to exist again. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Atma is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

I must have chanted the verse hundreds of times, and I eventually felt the required strength to handle the news. Chanting the verse was a reminder of the Gita's message; in this case, that the soul has no birth or death, and that knowledge brought me solace. It also put into practical perspective all that I had learnt through the Gita lectures I attended with my family over the years.

Devotion & Dedication

Gita chanting taught me how to attach myself to a higher goal while detaching from a more mundane pursuit; in very everyday terms, how to practice chanting rather than just being glued to the TV after school. I learned to be a visionary in my own small way, to work towards a greater ideal that seemed beyond me.

Over the years, the Gita has taught me the value of even-mindedness, integrity in thought, word and action, the sweet satisfaction of selfless actions, as well as how to think (or not to think!) about the fruits of action. What I now realize is that while learning how to chant these deeply profound verses, the meaning of what we chant subconsciously enters our awareness. I remember when I was a little girl learning the verses, one way for me to memorize them would be to read the meaning. The translations provided under each verse would paint a narrative, which I would use to remember the verses. Today, those very translations come back to me in times of need.

When I went for my undergraduate degree in the US, I took Hindi as one of my subjects as I wanted to learn the Devanagari script. And till today I am so grateful for that decision! I excelled in the class and enjoyed every lesson. I felt like I was reconnecting with my Gita chanting self that I thought I had left back home in Singapore. It grounded me, and felt "right."

Cultural Heritage

Today when I encounter a Sanskrit stotra, I approach it with enthusiasm and self-assurance. I look forward to reading the meaning and try to connect Sanskrit words with their English counterparts. If I recognize any words without relying on its English translation, I revel in the meaning of the beautiful word. Sanskrit is truly a deva bhāṣa, and one that holds special significance to me because of my childhood memories associated with chanting the Gita. It is my cultural heritage that I actively immerse in every time I chant a verse or flip through my dear Gita book. Having learnt how to chant the Gita, next I look forward to reading the great commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita by luminaries such as Swa-

mi Vivekananda, Swami Chinmayananda, and Mahatma Gandhi.

I would like to express gratitude to all those who have given me this invaluable gift of chanting Lord Krishna's soulful song, the Holy Gita. I am indebted to my parents and teachers who have instilled in me the love for the Gita. My request is that all parents and children actively engage in the annual Gita chanting

competitions organized by the dedicated Gita Jayanti team, because this is a precious gift that has long-lasting impressions.

May Lord Krishna imbue His transformative words in and through us, so we may actively live the wisdom in the world around us! May Mother Gita unfold Her glorious meaning to us every time we approach Her with love and reverence!



When you wake up in the morning, consciousness dawns. In this state of being conscious, you perceive a body, mind and world. These are appearances only, not what you are. To identify oneself with any of those appearances gives rise to the notion of being a separate person, self or individual entity. This is the cause of all seeking, suffering and doubts. Being conscious is a state that comes and goes. In sleep, unconsciousness or death, the experience of being conscious subsides. So it is clearly a transitory state. However, before you awoke and became conscious of anything else, including the fact of being conscious, you were there. Consciousness happened to you who were there to experience it. Your original, fundamental position is prior to consciousness. This "prior to consciousness" identity that you are cannot be named at all. From this unnamable, non-conceptual source, which is your original, innate nature, arises the sense of conscious presence. This is also the sense of being, the experience that "I am", or the bare fact of knowing that you are. This is the first appearance or experience upon your original state. Within this consciousness state emerges the mind, the body and the entire world of appearances. Little can be said about your original state because it is clearly beyond all concepts and even prior to consciousness. Some pointers that have been used are: non-conceptual awareness, awareness unaware of itself, pure being (beyond being and non-being), the absolute, the unmanifest, noumenon, cognizing emptiness, no thing — to name only a few. This non-conceptual awareness or being IS what you are. It is pure non-duality or unicity in which both subject and object are merged. Just as the sun does not know light because it IS light, so you do not know your original nature (as an object) because you ARE THAT. It is forever beyond the grasp of concepts and subject-object knowledge. Yet it is entirely evident and inescapable as that in you (which is you) that allows you to say with utter certitude "I am" and "I know that I am". Even when those words subside, you ARE. Even when the consciousness that knows those words subsides, you ARE. Consciousness is the light of creation. But you, as the unnamable source, are the primordial awareness, being or no thing (call it what you will) in which consciousness comes and goes.

-- John Wheeler in "The Natural State"



Sneha Shashi Kumar

Being a Witness, to the movie called “LIFE”!

What if we can simply sit back and WONDER? Have you ever observed a pomegranate carefully? Now let us peel off the skin to get the pomegranate seeds and if I ask you to re-package it similar to the way it was packaged when taken from the plant, would you be able to? Okay, now have you ever observed a rose flower (any flower for that matter)? Have you observed, the carefully arranged petals that form that flower? Isn't it beautiful? Every flower, fruit, bird, plant or any creature that you take is so unique that we can't but admire the power behind all this! You may call this God, divine, Krishna, Jesus, Allah or give it any name. And if we take a deeper look, we are all a part of this divine phenomenon similar to the branches that form a part of a 'tree'. Do you still have a doubt in what I am saying?

Well, yes the doubt is still prevalent and hence we see them springing up not just in the form of external conflicts but also in the form of what I call the state of “utter mental poverty” which results in depression and other related diseases. Most of these arise when we overlook that power which runs the entire show called “life”.

My spiritual Roadmap

I am going to talk about few of the scriptures that have had a profound effect in my life. Before leaving India to Singapore in 2012, I was given a copy of the Bhagavad Gita by my father and I still remember his words “People will come and go in your life, situations may change but if you find yourself stuck in any situation, you may take any shloka from the book, go deep into it and derive the juice out of the words from the shloka and you will never fail to find a way out and grow out of the challenges that life throws upon you.”

For people who have had a glimpse of the Bhagavad Gita

Originally from India, Sneha started her journey in Singapore as a student of 'National University of Singapore' and is currently working as an IT professional.

She is a Bharatanatyam dancer and is working towards promoting 'spiritual wisdom' through her dance, dance dramas and writings.

Apart from this, she is a volunteer at the 'Art of Living', the 'Project Bhakti' initiative by Hindu Endowment board, and Aidha (an NGO empowering women)."

will know that Arjuna was in a state of sheer confusion as to his duty. He spoke about his confusion to Krishna, a dear friend who patiently let Arjuna speak initially giving him the space to be. Arjuna reached a point where he realized that his rantings would reach him nowhere and thereby surrendered to Krishna. Krishna uplifted Arjuna through the Gita and granted Arjuna the access to inner wisdom. From this we also learn that only when we surrender and when we are ready to receive, will knowledge come to us. Most of us today are clouded by our own opinions, thoughts, ideas and preconceived notions about ourselves and about others. Now you might ask what exactly do you mean by surrender? According to me, surrender is the act of stepping down from the fact that we are not the doers and allowing a higher power to take over. This is what happened to Arjuna when he surrendered to Krishna. While there are many shlokas in the Gita, I would like to throw your attention to a shloka that has had a deep impact in my life.

uddhared atmanatmanam,
natmanam avasadayet
atmaiva hy atmano bandhur
atmaiva ripuratmanah

“Let a man lift himself by his own SELF alone and let him not lower himself for this self alone is the friend of oneself and this Self is the enemy of oneself.” This is the direct meaning of this shloka. Krishna mentioned that the responsibility of using the mind to uplift ourselves lies in our hands alone. Even though Krishna was a dear friend to Arjuna, Krishna could not do this job for Arjuna. He was granted the necessary knowledge to uplift himself by Krishna. Arjuna had to do this himself even though he had his dear friend guiding him. We are all in the Arjuna state of mind and the responsibility of uplifting ourselves lies in us alone.

There are a lot of external factors that are attractive to the senses. Many a times we may find ourselves in those situations where we lower ourselves by falling prey to these attractions. And what do we do if we find

ourselves in these situations? How do we uplift ourselves?

The above point gained more clarity when I had a chance to listen to the commentary of Ashtavakra Gita few years later. In the Ashtavakra Gita, Janaka is seen to unfold and blossom with every word from the mouth of Ashtavakra. We have heard from many to control our senses. However, the question is can we really control our emotions or reactions that arise through our daily interaction with the external world? Aren't we causing more trouble to ourselves by resisting them and wasting our time trying to control them? Ashtavakra, here, beautifully explains instead of resisting, just be a witness to the emotions. Simply watch them as one would watch clouds in the sky. Our emotions, thoughts that create a mental racket are all temporary, they simply rise and fall. Instead of allowing these to control us, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could watch all of these rising in us just like one would watch a movie? Initially we may find it difficult, but slowly if we start observing all the thoughts that arise in our mind, rather than being a slave to our own mind, we can become a master of the emotions and thereafter, become free. And wouldn't it be wonderful to experience a state where one is above all thoughts, emotions and all the mental garbage? Once in a while they may come and go but nothing affects us. Ah! What a wonderful state to be in!

Oh something's opening within!

One may go on reading the scriptures mechanically and talk about it but unless and until you experience it for yourself, it will only be another piece of information. The words from both the Bhagavad Gita and the Ashtavakra Gita have been a means for me to the unexplored and has opened new horizons in me. A simple exercise that I keep doing when I am stuck is asking myself one question “What is happening within me right now and am I being identified with it?” In this way your attention is directed towards what is in the NOW. Writing down all that goes on around

you and within you, is a great way to stay in the present as well and opens different dimensions in you. There are so many options to become more aware and stay in the present. You need to figure out what works the best for you.

The other day I received a notification from the minimovie maker application in my phone mentioning that they had done a video for me based on the pictures that I had taken for that particular day. I was reminded of how the mind is nothing but a minimovie maker application that gives a snapshot of all the events of the past. Instead of observing them, what we do is get stuck to the application and create all sorts of mental trauma for ourselves. Would we want to waste our time acting upon those thoughts or would we prefer to simply sit back and observe? Knowing that these thoughts rise

and fall and without being caught in it, wouldn't it be wonderful if we can simply sit back and watch this movie called 'Life'?

Here is a poem that sprang up from one of my scribblings!

"Amidst the mad race"

A grand show in a stage called life
Burdened is he, who picks up a strife
Amidst the mad race, with no time to
contemplate
Fortunate is the one, who can meditate!!

A show meant to purely witness,
And uplift oneself to absolute stillness!
Amidst the mad race, trying to find a place,
Fortunate is the one, with access to the inner
space!!



Your own self is your ultimate teacher (sadguru). The outer teacher (guru) is merely a milestone. It is only your inner teacher that will walk with you to the goal, for it is the goal.

Yoga is the work of the inner self (vyakta) on the outer self (vyakti). All that the outer does is merely in response to the inner. It [the outer self] has some control over the body and can improve its posture and breathing. Over the mind's thoughts and feelings it has little mastery, for it is itself the mind. It is the inner that can control the outer. The outer will be wise to obey. The inner is the source of inspiration, the outer is moved by memory. The source is untraceable, while all memory begins somewhere. Thus the outer is always determined, while the inner cannot be held in words. The mistake of students consists in their imagining the inner to be something to get hold of, and forgetting that all perceivables are transient and therefore unreal. Only that which makes perception possible, call it Life or Brahman, or what you like, is real.

The self by its nature knows itself only. For lack of experience whatever it perceives it takes to be itself. Battered, it learns to look out (viveka) and to live alone (vairagya). When right behaviour (uparati) becomes normal, a powerful inner urge (mukmukshutva) makes it seek its source. The candle of the body is lighted and all becomes clear and bright.

You can observe the observation, but not the observer. You know you are the ultimate observer by direct insight, not by a logical process based on observation. You are what you are, but you know what you are not. The self is known as being, the not-self is known as transient. But in reality all is in the mind. The observed, observation and observer are mental constructs. The self alone is.

-- Nisargadatta Maharaj

Anand Chandrasekar



Srimad Bhagavad Geeta Mahatmyam The Greatness of Chapter 11 The Ghost In The Rest-House

**C A S Menon (original in Malayalam)
N Vasudevan (translation to English)**

There lived a brahmin, Sanandan, in the town of Meghamkara situated on the banks of river Praneeta. He used to recite the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad Geeta everyday and reflect on its teachings. Thus he became a Brahma-Jnani (knower of Brahman) and a fearless person. Once he set on a pilgrimage to river Godavari to have a holy dip in it.

These stories are taken from a souvenir book published by the Chinmaya Mission many years ago. These stories are from the book Sreemad Bhagavad Geeta Mahatmyam which was originally written in Malayalam by CAS Menon. The author has based his book on Padma Puranam, which narrates, for each of the 18 chapters of the Geeta, a story to illustrate the redemption attained by a Jeeva by chanting and contemplating on the contents of that chapter. This book was translated into English by N Vasudevan.

Article submitted by Shri Anand Chandrasekar. Anand Chandrasekar is a devotee of the Lord who enjoys chanting and spreading the message of the Gita.

During his journey, he joined company with a group of other travellers and reached a place called Vivaha-Mandapa-Puri. Usually, during his journey, he used to get invited by people for food and shelter. That night no one invited him. He wandered from house to house in the village along with his co-travellers in search of shelter, but all in vain. At last he met the village headman and placed his request before him.

“In this place, no one would invite a stranger to his house for food and shelter. But...” said the village headman, “the king has built a spacious rest house in the outskirts of the village for the convenience of travellers. Go straight this way, and you will reach the rest house.”

Sanandan was happy. He and his friends walked along the path shown by the headman and reached the rest-house. They spent the night there. The arduous journey had made them weary and they slept well that night.

Next morning Sanandan woke up to find himself lying on the courtyard of the rest house. All his friends, it seemed, had deserted him and gone away. He found none of his friends anywhere around him.

Sanandan got up hurriedly and started searching for his friends. He came upon the village headman and told him:

"I don't find my friends anywhere. Perhaps they must have left earlier. Let me try to catch up with them."

The village headman fell at his feet and said: "Revered Sir, it seems you are a great yogi, having great powers of mantra. You do have the powers to increase your longevity".

Sanandan could not understand what the headman said, and replied: "Please let me go". He moved ahead.

"Oh, please don't, please don't go", pleaded the headman. "You must stay with me as my honoured guest for some time. I shall make all arrangements for your comfortable stay."

When the headman compelled him so earnestly, Sanandan yielded to his request.

The headman took best care of his guest. One morning, the headman fell at the feet of Sanandan weeping bitterly.

"What happened?" asked Sanandan. "Get up, and tell me."

The headman cried loudly. "Last night the devil ate my son. Who is there now for me?"

"Devil? Which devil? Where is it?" asked Sanandan

"Revered sir! There is a monstrous devil in this area who eats up human beings. When his atrocious actions became intolerable, we sought the help of a sorcerer and through him reached an agreement with the devil. The agreement was that he should not eat anyone from the village, but only those who take shelter for the night in the rest house outside the village, and that the village headman would direct the travellers passing through the village to the rest house. He agreed to the condition. Accordingly, all the were instructed to deny shelter and food for strangers in their own homes but instead to direct them all to the rest house."

The headman paused for a while, and continued:

"Revered sir! You also spent a night in the rest house. Your friends were all eaten up by the devil. Only you had escaped his clutches. Your magical powers are indeed wondrous, please be kind enough to save my son!"

"How can I do that?" asked Sanandan indifferently.

"You can do it. Last night, a young man came to this village. He was a friend of my son. I did not know it, and so I directed him to the rest house. When my son came back home at night, he realised the mistake committed by me and immediately he rushed to the rest house to bring back his friend. But alas! He was eaten up by the devil along with his friend."

"My dear friend!" said Sanandan. "As you sow, so you reap I You made a number of innocent people food for the devil. And now he made your son his food!"

"Revered sir!", the headman continued. "When I approached the devil with my unbearable grief and asked him if there was any remedy for my grief, he said thus. Please be kind enough to listen to what he told me."

Sanandan nodded his approval. The headman started telling the story:

"The devil told me: 'Yes, there is a remedy for your grief. If a brahmin who regularly chants the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad Geeta wants to help you, you can get back your dead son, and I too will get released from this state of existence of mine.'

'Is the Geeta so glorious a book?' I asked the devil.

'Yes', he said, 'and the eleventh chapter of the Geeta is specially so.'

"After a pause, the devil continued. 'Once upon a time, a vulture while flying over a lake, happened to drop a piece of bone from its beak into the water below. A wise man who saw the incident, at once remarked that the lake had turned into a sacred one, and he immediately made arrangements to perform rites for his ancestors on the banks of the lake by using its water. People who saw the man doing the rites,

laughed at his apparent foolishness of treating the lake as a sacred one, and asked him what made him think so. He said in an unruffled voice: 'This stretch of water has been sanctified. I shall tell you how. A Brahmin called Vittavaan (rich man; in this context a man rich in his spiritual wealth) was killed by a group of robbers. Vittavaan used to chant the eleventh chapter of the Geeta three times a day—in the early dawn, at noon and at dusk. It was a piece of his bone that the vulture had dropped here in this water. That is why this lake has now become a sacred Teertha'.

"People accepted the statement of the wise man." 'From that day, that lake became a sacred one.'

'I too will get liberated likewise through the glory of the eleventh chapter of the Geeta'.

The devil continued: "O village headman! There is a brahmin now in this village, who is competent to deliver your son and myself from our present state of existence. It so happened that I swallowed him up in the rest house, but because of his being a BrahmaJnani, my throat was burnt by his spiritual strength and I spat him out. If this great person pours a pot of water over my head after duly sanctifying it by touching it and chanting the eleventh chapter of the Geeta seven times, your son will come out alive and I too will be released from the state of devilhood."

"Revered sir", the headman addressed Sanandan, "kindly pour a pot of water sanctified by your chanting and liberate the devil as well as my son!"

Sanandan was in no great hurry to do the job. He was rather more intrigued by the story of the devil, and asked:

"What sin did he commit on account of which he became a devil and started eating the people who took shelter in the rest house?"

The headman said: "I shall tell you that also".

"In this village there was a brahmin who had taken to farming. One day while he was keeping guard over his fields, a huge vulture happened to pounce upon an unwary traveller. An ascetic saw this rushed to the rescue of the

traveller but before he could reach the spot the vulture had flown up with the traveller clutched its powerful claws. It was then that the brahmin keeping guard the fields could see the traveller up in the sky, held by the claws monstrous vulture.

'The ascetic, who saw the brahmin farmer, turned red with anger and cursed him: 'You stood there enjoying the plight of person who had fallen in danger. May you therefore become a Rakshasa (devil)'.

"The brahmin pleaded his innocence and said that he did not, notice the incident as he was completely absorbed in his work."

"He who is not prepared to help those in mortal danger and rendered helpless, will fall into hell, even though he might have earned a lot of merits. Though you did not notice the vicious vulture attacking the traveller, you will have to suffer the curse, as the incident took place within your fields over which you were keeping guard. People cannot be so insensitive to the things happening within their own immediate surroundings."

'Oh please!' implored the brahmin, 'don't keep me existing helplessly in the form of a devil. Please be kind enough to also indicate a way out from this cursed existence'.

'Alright,' said the ascetic. 'if a person, who chants the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Geeta regularly, happens to pour water, sanctified by his chanting of the eleventh chapter several times over, on your head, you will get liberated from your state of devilhood.'

So saying, the ascetic walked away. "It was that brahmin who had turned into this devil. He can be rescued from his state of existence only by your good self. And through his liberation my son will also be saved".

The village head man concluded his narration and stood silently.

Sanandan's heart melted at the plight of the headman and the devil. He went to the place where the devil was residing. The headman and a crowd of villagers followed him. Sanandan sat down near the devil on a special seat and meditated on the Cosmic Form of the Lord, the subject of the Geeta. He then took a

pot of water in his hands and started chanting the eleventh chapter of Geeta. Gradually, his face started glowing with the splendour and Brahma Tejas. People watched him with amazement and reverence. When he finished chanting the eleventh chapter several times, he got up and poured the water slowly over the head of the devil.

Wonder of wonders! Transformation! The body of the devil slowly started transforming into a divine form! Released from the curse, the body of the devil transformed into that of an attendant of Lord Vishnu, with four hands holding lotus, mace, conch and the divine wheel, clad in yellow silks and adorning a multi-coloured flower garland. And by his side there appeared a large number of similar forms, all with four hands holding the lotus, mace, conch and wheel, with flower garlands and clad in yellow silks. They were the various people whom the devil had swallowed up in the rest house.

“Our prostrations to you, who have delivered me and these persons from our miserable existence and elevated us to the world of Lord Vishnu”, said the erstwhile devil and prostrated to Sanandan along with others.

“Where is my son? Where is he?”, asked the headman anxiously.

“O headman! Look! There is your son, holding the lotus flower and smiling at you!” said the erstwhile devil.

“O my child! Come let us go home” said the headman.

“Me, your son? And you say our home?” the son burst out in laughter. He said: “I was your father twice, in two of my earlier births. This time I became your son. And, in this manner, I had innumerable births and innumerable houses. To

which of these shall I come? And who indeed is my father?” The son again burst into laughter.

The strange laughter echoed in the heart of the headman.

“O my son! Are you abandoning me and going away?” asked grief-stricken father.

“O village headman!” said the son sympathetically. “Please behave wisely. No one belongs to anyone. All persons, all these you see around, all belong to the Lord only. I have been liberated and am going to the world of Lord Vishnu, Cut asunder bondages of family, wealth, house and relatives and come to the Lord’s world. Learn from this revered brahmin, Sanandan, at least the eleventh chapter of the Geeta. Give up all attachments to wealth and worldly pleasure! Elevate yourself with the help of the satsang you have just got, the association with Sanandan. Break the ties of samsaar and rise to the world of the Lord. Come! Come!”

So saying, all the transformed people rose into the sky and disappeared from the human vision.

Sanandari was pleasantly surprised at the strange happenings. He taught the village headman the eleventh chapter of the Geeta, and encouraged him with his companionship for a few months. In due course, both of them attained the world of Lord Vishnu.

Such is the glory of the eleventh chapter of the Geeta.

Thus I have narrated the glory of the eleventh chapter of the, Geeta. Even the act of listening to this story carefully will liberate one from great sins.



Gita Jayanti 2016-17

List of Competitions Prize Winners

Chanting / Oratorical & Essay Competitions

Gita Chanting Cat 1

First	Koruprolu Deekshitha BPMC Kindergarten
Second	Anirudh Balaji PCF Sparkle Tots
Third	Lakshmi N. Iyer St. Hilda's Kindergarten
Consolation	Maadesh Krishnaprakash Little Learners
Consolation	Nagiah Saravanan Ananya PCF Sparkle Tots

Gita Chanting Cat2

First	Rashmika Anand Yew Tee Primary School
Second	Janhavi Balaji Global Indian International School
Third	Janvi Hariram Sarada Kindergarten
Consolation	Ananya Parthasarathy CHIJKatong Primary School
Consolation	Darshan Deepak Kumar Global Indian International School

Gita Chanting Cat 3

First	Sharanya Mangalpadi Yio Chu Kang Primary School
Second	Advaith.K.Atreyia NPS International School
Third	Shravan Hariram Cedar Primary School
Consolation	Sarayu Pradeep Compassvale Primary School
Consolation	Vedant Ganesh Dulwich College Singapore

Gita Chanting Cat 4

First	Amogh.K.Atreyia NPS International
Second	Prerana Aditi Cheekoty NPS International School
Third	Aparajit Iyer NPS International School
Consolation	Dhwani Deepak Kumar Global Indian International School
Consolation	Srinidhi Balaji Global Indian International School

Gita Chanting Cat 5

First	Sandhya Ramachandran Global Indian International School
Second	Rachana Murali Narayanan ACS Independent

Gita Chanting Cat 6

First	Ajay Mohan
Second	Abitha Venkataraman
Third	Bhargavi. S
Third	Dr. Varsha Santhosh
Special	Andrew Ong

Oratorical Competition Cat 3

First	Advaith.K.Atreyia NPS International School
Second	Avyuktha Subramanian Compassvale Primary School
Third	Sharanya Mangalpadi Yio Chu Kang Primary School

Oratorical Competition Cat 4

First	Amogh.K.Atreyia NPS International School
Second	Aparajit Iyer NPS International School
Third	Jaidev Balaji Global Indian International School

Essay Writing Competition Cat 6

First	Sowmya Sathish
Second	Mahendra Kasula

- Category 1 Age 4-5 years
 Category 2 Age 6-7 years
 Category 3 Age 8-10 years
 Category 4 Age 11-14 years
 Category 5 Age 15-22 years
 Category 6 Age 23 years and above

Time

Sowmya Sathish

Dictionaries define time as an indefinite continuous progress of existence that happens in irreversible succession from past through present through future. Scientifically, time is often referred to as another measurable dimension, along with the three spatial dimensions, the X, Y and Z axis. A few other dictionaries and writings identify time as a linear continuum of instants.

In short time is,

- a **linear continuum** of events; which is
- an **irreversible**; and
- **indefinite**

Our encounter with time in today's fast-paced life is limited to the clock, time management, and punctuality. Given this state of affairs, this opportunity to explore the Bhagavad Gita impelled to look for analogous paradigms of this indefinite resource from a philosophical perspective. Though the physical landscape has transformed through the years, the concepts of 'space' and 'time' has always and will remain the same. The essay intends to analyze and stimulate a deeper thinking on this endless phenomenon for self-realization. The article discusses personal interpretations based on simple translations from the given text - SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA from a common man's perspective of 'time'.

TIME IS A LINEAR CONTINUUM OF INSTANTS

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

*karmanyevadhikaraste ma phalesu kadacana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango 'stv
akarmani*

Context

After Arjuna expresses his dejection of losing friends and relatives in the course of the war and

the accumulation of 'sins', he seeks solace as a disciple of Krishna to instruct him on means to dispel his grief. Lord Krishna begins his discourse by letting Arjuna visualize the immortal nature of soul within all living entities, thus training towards a long-term notion of time. In this context, Arjuna was advised by the Lord to fight as his duty not being entitled to the fruits of his action, as he is not the cause of the results. At the same time, he mentions that not performing the duty does not become a solution.

Interpretations

Krishna lets Arjuna know that he only has control over his 'present instance of time' (actions) and not the future (fruits of action). In due course, the future becomes the 'present'. At that instance in time, thinking about the 'past' to take credit or lament for the current moment (cause of the result), and would rather be effective to act based on the 'present' as time waits for none.

Time is a continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future (Oxford dictionary). One can neither experience a yesterday or tomorrow. This continuous progress limits one's experience of 'yesterday' to memories and 'tomorrow' to a fantasy or a prediction. We cannot change the past as the progress is linear. We aspire for a bright future and hence work in present towards it.

'Future' is hence made to be the motivation for our present experience.

The verse grounds us to reality by hitting us hard that future (fruits of action) is not under your control, but dwells in dreams. It implies that our actions in '**present**' should be influenced by the '**positive experience**' (dharma) at any instance of time and not by one's dream of future.

Most of the career and education choices today are sadly inspired by a hope for a 'bright' future which may never be experienced. Parenting styles have evolved such that children are brought up with the notion of 'doing' actions for a benefit. The 'if you..' sentence has been used innumerable in most families. "If you study hard, you will get good marks and lead the life you want". Choices are made based on benefits rather than experience.

While 'hope' is definitely a positive motivation, what would happen on the contrary if one picks up a choice to be an artist than a software consultant because he likes to paint? Following the heart for a fulfilled experience of the 'present' is far from reach in today's world of thinking. 'What are we rushing for?' and 'will we get what we want?' remain unanswered questions.

While emphasizing the importance of 'present' tense in time, the verse makes us take a step back to envision the linear constancy of 'time' from a different perspective. While it is vital 'not to cry over irrevocable spilt milk', it is also important not to perform actions chasing future. A fulfilled happy life can only be experienced by working 'rightfully' without expectations of a certain experience in future. But then arises the question, 'What is rightful?', a potential topic for the next essay competition!

TIME IS AN IRREVERSIBLE CHANGE

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥

*prahlādaśh chāsmi daiṭyānām
kālah kalayatām aham
mṛigāṇām cha mṛigendro 'ham
vainateyaśh cha pakṣhiṇām*

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥
*kalo 'smi loka-ksaya-kṛt pravṛddho
lokan samahartum iha pravṛttah
rte 'pi tvam na bhaviṣyanti sarve
ye 'vaśthitah pratyanikesu yodhah*

Context

Along the motivational discourse Lord Krishna reveals his exalted position, manifestations and opulences. Arjuna devotes himself to the heavenly being and requests Lord Krishna to describe more about of His magnificence and the Lord describes the supreme powers of nature (his characteristics), through a series of similes in chapter 10. In the first verse, he describes his splendor by stating that he is the devoted Prahlada amongst the demons, he is 'time' amongst subduing principles, a lion amongst the beasts and Garuda (eagle) amongst birds (verse 10.30)

Hearing the magnificence of Lord Krishna, Arjuna becomes curious to see the ultimate manifestation of Lord Krishna and requests to reveal His true form. Chapter 11, describes Arjuna's experience with the universal form. He is taken back with fear and questions Lord Krishna on his 'real' purpose of this birth as Krishna, for which he answers, 'I am time the destroyer of the worlds' (verse 11.32).

Interpretations

One of the key characteristics of 'time' is its **nature to wear down ALL things in the universe**. Every living creature on this planet is terrified of deterioration, ultimately death. In common, the first thought on the cause of destruction is linked to 'pancha-bhooth' or the five great elements - fire, earth, water, wind and ether. The elements have different characteristics and account for different faculties of human experience. Destructive experiences with the nature such as tsunami, earthquakes, changes through earth's climatic phenomenon's such as ice-age are limited to the physical experiences with the five elements. The verse, however reminds us that everything in this universe is under the influence of 'time' and cannot escape its subduing impact.

Conquering this subjugating nature of time has always been an aspiration for many. From Ravana, to Surapadman, to even the devas, across to the titans in Greece chasing immortality has been the ultimate goal but in vain. Once the this limitation of 'time' is realized, the focus moves onto overpowering the other three dimensions of space, including

the underlying reason behind the war of kurukshetra. Today, in a world of advanced medical sciences freezing the aging process yet remains a challenge. Medications have delayed death and not deterioration. Nature finds its own means through the evolution through new diseases.

***While time wears down the physical world,
does time heal (subdue) emotions too?***

All of us have gone through some extremely painful events in our lives. But we do not seem to grieve over it the same way we used to. Was it the magic of time? The agonizing experience is only limited to the present. The continuous linear nature of time along with its subduing quality, transforms the present into past, a memory. Time takes 'control' of these memories in the human brain too and wears away the intensity of emotions as the ultimate subduer. We weep for days & nights but every day the duration of 'crying session' keep on reducing. Though time makes people uncomfortable with grief accepting the continuous linear nature of time makes the pain fades away, just like the material universe.

The conscious acceptance of the facets of time is thus crucial for physical and emotional empowerment.

TIME IS INDEFINITE

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः ॥

*aksaranam a-karo 'smi dvandvah samasikasya ca
aham evaksayah kalo dhataham visvato-mukhah*

Context

As Lord Krishna describes his greatness on the request of Arjuna, he describes his magnificence by personifying that he is the beginning 'A' amongst all letter sounds, dual word amongst grammatical compounds, as eternal as 'time' and brahma amongst creators.

Interpretation

The verse mentions that that, 'time' is the greatest unending phenomena. The interpretation discusses this eternal quality of time from two perspectives – physical and experiential.

Physical inexhaustibility

Scientists have various theories behind the creation and destruction of the universe. There has been not 'one' such theory that has been accepted unanimously on the 'time' of creation and the possible 'time' of destruction. The exact conception of creation is never known and so will the end. Arjuna gets to experience this physical perception of the unlimited past and the unending future, the inexhaustibility of this past present and future all at once, the ultimate form of time, 'Kala' (Lord Krishna) and notwithstanding this power questions Krishna on his mission.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥
*tvam aksaram paramam veditavyam tvam asya
visvasya param nidhanam
tvam avyayah sasvata-dharma-goptasanatanas
tvam puruso mato me*

Though indefinite in nature time reveals itself as 'moments' or 'instances' to be experience in progression and not 'all at once'. A huge tree comes from a tiny seed but we may not be able to see the changes that happen every day due to the limitations of our experience with time. Arjuna experiences time (Kala) beyond these limitations and sees all forms of the tree all at once!

***Why at do we feel time flies on merrier days
and time lags in grief?***

Every second is the same. Lord Krishna describes himself as, '*amongst measures I am time*'. Time is one unit that is precise amongst forms of measurement. Measurements of length, weight and similarly other units have taken diverse forms - imperial, metric roman etc. - but the measure and of time across clocks have remained constant.

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥

*prahlādaśh chāsmi daityānām
kālaḥ kalayatām aham
mṛigāṇām cha mṛigendro 'ham
vainateyaśh cha pakṣhiṇām*

If the absolute happening of time is precise, the variation of experience with instances of

time is related to its perception. Time dilation explained by the 'Theory of relativity' states that the experience of time is relative rather than absolute. Consider the time perception from animal's perspective. A dog with a life-span of 12 years and a bee living for 1-3 months definitely experience 'time' differently. The process of aging, another 'attribute' of time, serves as evidence.

Experiential eternity

As much as time dilation is a 'physical' experience, it may also be experienced on a mental plane. When we dream, we feel that time has been long enough for a number of events to take place, but in reality the time of sleep would have been short. The same 'instance' in time is perceived differently in different dimensions of mental consciousness. Vedas mention four dimensions to consciousness: waking (jagrata), dreaming (swapna), dreamless deep sleep (susupti), and transcendence (turiya). Each stage successively reveals more profound experience of the nature of being, the experience with time, just as in the movie Inception.

On a physical plane, time moves swiftly. On a mental plane it is slower depending on the dimension of consciousness.

On this note, I tend to agree with the idea (one of the interpretations on the happening of bhagavad gita) that the entire discourse might have taken place on a different dimension of consciousness. Time did not 'stop', as it is a linear continuum of events. Time did not become slow as it is the most precise 'measure'; the duration of an 'instance' is constant. Time is the ultimate subduer. Time (Lord Krishna as Kala) subdued Arjuna's state of consciousness to experience a slow time dilation. Just as the dialogue took place on the battle field, it is possible that the war happened simultaneously. The perception of 'time' by the

duo (transcendent state) was different from that of the warriors (waking state).

Hence, the experience of time depends on our perception; it may be instantaneous or indefinite.

THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

*sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah*

Translation

As a concluding note, Lord Krishna mentions that it is possible to achieve the ultimate goal of liberation from ones sins by simply surrendering to Him abandoning forms of rightful actions.

Interpretation

Leaving behind all the physical and sensory boundaries (dharma/actions), and surrendering consciously to 'time' (Lord Krishna - 'Aham eva kalo'), seeks relief from all limitations (papa/sins), and every 'instance' of time expands to eternity achieving the ultimate experience (moksha/liberation).

All of us yearn for a longer life. Even after 100 years of a life time it is highly possible to lack fulfillment.

What if we tune ourselves to experience the present instance to the maximum extent?

Thus, expanding consciousness such that our sensory perceptions are union with the entire universe would culminate in an experience where very instance of time is indefinite. No wonder why sages practiced yoga and meditation, the only path to 'bliss'.



INTERNATIONAL GITA FORUM 2016

G Srinivasan

Chairperson, IGF Sub-Committee

IGF was held on Sunday 16th October 2016 at PGP Hall.

The Forum featured two distinguished speakers of different background but well versed in Bhagavad Gita. One was a noted neurosurgeon in Bengaluru, Dr Thimappa Hegde and the other was an academician in IIT Mumbai, Prof K Ramasubramanian.

The Forum was inaugurated by Sri R Jayachandran Chairman, Gita Jayanti Advisory Committee and Hindu Endowments Board. After the welcome speech by Sri G Srinivasan, Chairman, International Gita Forum Sub Committee, the Forum began with the tradition of lighting the lamp.

In the morning session Dr Thimappa Hegde, who spoke under the title “**Bhakti Yoga from a Professional’s perspective**”, commenced his lecture by invoking the blessings of his various Gurus that was a testimony to his serious study of their teachings. Through slides, he showed a few complicated medical cases that he had come across and how the teachings had helped him to maintain his composure and take due actions in saving those lives.

Dr Hegde first explored Bhakti Yoga as given in Chapter 12 of Bhagavad Gita. He stated that Bhakti means Devotion which was love directed towards a higher principle, which is considered reverential or sacred like parents, Guru, Nation or God. Dr Hegde elaborated the methods of cultivating *Bhakti* where ultimately God love will become equal to Self love. And since self love is the most intense love, that form of love is called *Uttama Bhakti*.

He said that Bhakti is also a course of discipline to achieve the spiritual goal, the ultimate goal of liberation. First stage of Bhakti Yoga is Karma Yoga. The second stage is *Upāsana Yoga* the last stage of is *Jnāna Yoga*. Bhakti Yoga is the common name for all the three because, *Bhakti* is the common atmosphere in which all these three Yogas are practiced. It is not that *Bhakti* is separately practiced in a separate time but Karma Yoga, *Upāsana Yoga* and *Jnāna Yoga* have to be imbued in *Bhakti*. He explained that how God is worshipped – from a single Form (*Eka Rupa*) to several Forms (*Aneka Rupa*) and ultimately to No Form (*Nirupa*). The devotee will then realise God is formless yet present every where in the Universe that has been created by God.

It was followed by short Q&A session

The next session was Open Forum that was moderated by Sri R Jayachandran. Questions ranging from Bhagavad Gita to the pursuit of Spiritual path to the prevailing worldly situations were asked and both the speakers complemented the answers for almost all the questions with conviction and clarity.

In the final session Prof K Ramasubramanian listed that factors that shackle the humans in forcing them to perform unacceptable acts deviating them from the righteous path. He quoted extensively from Gita and Valmiki Ramayana illustrating similar situations and the behavior of the persons involved in such scenarios to enforce the right choice one should make. Only by doing so, the bondage that cloud the human thinking could be removed making him move forward and be at absolute peace in any situation.

Emcee Smt. Roshni Mahesh guided the proceedings smoothly.

The Forum ended in the evening with a vote of thanks by Sri G Srinivasan.

PS: IGF 2016 photographs are given on page 97

GITA JAYANTI ART COMPETITIONS 2016-17

Sandhya Ramaprasad
Chairperson, Art Competitions Sub-Committee

It gives me great pleasure to present this year's Art Competition report. The competition was held during the IGFS event on 16th Oct 2016.

The main purpose of the various Gita Jayanti events is to educate the common man and generate interest in the GITA. The Art competition is an effort in this direction bringing the message to our young children.

In this year's event, 45 children participated in 3 age groups. The theme for the competition was "Avatars of Vishnu." It was really amazing to see how the children responded with their artistic impression of the avatars. Enthusiasm and liveliness was clearly visible both in the children and the parents.

The 3 distinguished judges namely Mrs Anu Chandran, Mr Suhas Sudhakaran and Mrs Lakshmy Iyer had a challenging time picking the best entries. They personally felt the standard of art and the visualization by the children was improving year after year. The winning entries are featured in this addition of Gita vani.

In appreciation of their efforts, all participants were presented with participation gifts. The prize winners were awarded mementos and certificates.

We would like to thank the judges, parents and kids for making this program a grand success. Our special thanks to the Gita Jayanti Committee for providing us an opportunity to organize this event.

Art Competition Prize Winners

Cat-A (4 to 6 years)

1 st prize	Shabdha Sriram, Changi Bethany school house
2 nd prize	Vanshika Gajjala, DPS International School
3 rd prize	Arunagiri Gowshik, Kidz Campus
Consolation	Roshan, PAP Sparkle Tots
Consolation	Srivikash s/o Rameshkumar, MOE Kindergarten @ Dazhong Primary School

Cat-B (7 to 10 years)

1 st prize	B. Poojasree, St. Margarets Primary School
2 nd prize	Siriparapu Harshith, GISS Baleshtier
3 rd prize	Vasundhara Soundaryarajan, Yuvabharathi International School
Consolation	Ananya Kottapuram Manoj, GISS – Baleshtier
Consolation	Aashritha, Admiralty Primary School

Cat-C (11 to 14 years)

1 st prize	B Deebika, Cedar Girls Secondary School
2 nd prize	T A Arvind Ganesh, DPS International School
3 rd prize	Samiksha Manoharan, Commonwealth secondary school

PS: Art competition related photographs are given on page 107, 108, and 109

GITA JAYANTI COMPETITIONS 2016 - 17

Ajay Kumar Nair, Anand Chandrasekar, Manesh M
Competitions Sub-committee

The annual feature of Gita Chanting, Essay and Oratorical competitions held by Gita Jayanti continued this year too. Held over two weekends in February and March 2017, the competitions saw a participation of about 80 children and adults.

Participants of the chanting competition recited verses from Chapter 11 – Vishvaroopā Darshana Yoga; oratorical competition participants spoke on the topics “Seeing oneness in diversity” (8-10 year olds) and “Let us be instruments” (11-14 year olds); essay writing participants submitted essays on “Time”

Three highlights of this years’ competition were

1. Swami Chidananda Puri graced the event on 4 March with his divine presence and distributed prizes to the winners of the Gita Jayanti competitions. Swamiji heads ‘Advaita ashramam’ in India and was in Singapore to deliver a talk for Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam.
2. For the first time since the start of the competitions, the essay writing competition was done on a virtual basis with participants submitting their entries via email.
3. Mr Andrew Ong, a Singaporean Chinese, participated in the Gita Chanting competitions and recited 35 verses by heart.

With the grace of Lord Krishna shining upon us, the dedicated service of judges, volunteers and the generosity of the prize and venue sponsors, the competitions took place in an atmosphere of devotion and touched many hearts.

One of the participants has this to say over email, “This is the first time that we are participating in this event and our experience was very nice. Overall, both the preliminary round and the finals were conducted very efficiently. Though the experience looked very smooth to us on the exterior I am sure a lot of effort and planning would have gone behind the scenes. Everyone involved was very polite and welcoming and made sure the kids did not feel nervous at all. Please convey our thanks, appreciation and best wishes to all the people involved.”

The Gita Jayanti Competitions Committee is working on a five-year plan to encourage many more to learn to recite the entire Gita by 2021 when we celebrate the 25th year since the start of Gita Jayanti celebrations in Singapore. We look forward to greater participation in the coming years.

PS: Chanting and oratorical competitions photographs are given on page 104, 105, and 108.

Krishna Manjari 2016

Dr Chitra Krishnakumar, Co-Chairperson, KM2016 Sub-committee

Krishna Manjari 2016, the cultural programme held on 10 Sep 2016 at the Singapore Polytechnic Auditorium, saw the participation of large segment of the Indian diaspora taking part in various performances. The performances, dance and music were based on the Theme: **Gita & the Paths to the Supreme**. Every item was preceded by the chanting of a relevant shloka from Gita pertaining to the performance.

Classical dances, semi classical dances, skits, songs formed the repertoire for the evening. The evening also had a melodious Bhajan session of Shri Ajay Kapil and wife Lakshmy Kapil, popular Bhajan singers from India (Delhi).

Various Organisations such as Chinmaya Seva Centre, Sri Aurobindo Society, Amriteswari Society, Singapore Sindhi Association, Pure Hearts Recreation Centre, Temple of Fine Arts, Hindu Centre, Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam, Kannada Sangha etc participated with dances, music and skits.

The images used as background projections for the programme were original paintings by local artists. The event was coordinated by Singapore Sindhi Association and Soorya (Singapore).

PS: Krishna Manjari 2016 photographs are given on page 110 & 111.

Gita Jayanti Celebrations 2016-17

Chockalingam S, Gita Jayanti Organizing Committee Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Queenstown)

It has been the privilege of Sri Muneeswaran Temple (Queenstown) to lead the celebrations in 2016-17.

With the Lord's grace, the success in the planning, preparations and hosting of the various GJ events was possible through the strong support and dedicated commitment of the various Hindu and Indian community organisations, Hindu Endowments Board (HEB) and a core team of hardworking volunteers.

The year started with Gita Parayan, a series of monthly sessions where participants took part in the chapter readings of the Bhagvad Gita. Each gathering was hosted by a member organisation. In total, 8 parayan sessions were held. The grand finale of the parayan was the full chanting of the Gita on the Mokshada Ekadashi - the actual Gita Jayanti day - on the 10 Dec 2016 at the Sree Lakshminarayan Temple.

The midterm highlight of the GJ Year was the Gita Forum, held on 16 October 2015. The Forum featured two distinguished speakers of different background but well versed in Bhagavad Gita. One was a noted neurosurgeon from Bengaluru (India), Dr Thimappa Hegde and the other was an academician from IIT Mumbai (India), Prof K Ramasubramanian. The Forum was inaugurated by Sri R Jayachandran, Chairman, Hindu Endowments Board. After the welcome speech by Sri G Srinivasan, Chairman, International Gita Forum Sub Committee, the Forum began with the tradition of lighting the lamp. While Dr Thimmappa peppered his talk with his expertise in neural brain surgery and how Gita helps make him a better doctor. He also elaborated on various aspects of devotion. From a modern working professional's point of view, this was a very opportune talk. Prof Ramasubramanian's talk was on "Can we avoid the portals that shackle us?" He went into the depths of interpretation of the Gita by Sri Sankaracharya on the various characteristics of devotion and behaviour and also on other scriptures like Valmiki Ramayana. After their talks, there was a very active Q&A session where audience asked very penetrating questions which were answered with authority and eloquence by the distinguished speakers. On the whole, it was an event of mental illumination and authority due to the depth of knowledge of the distinguished speakers.

Another of the highlights this year, was the Krishna Manjari, a cultural show held on 10 Sep 2016 at the Singapore Polytechnic auditorium. It featured outstanding bhajan singing by invited artists from India - Shri Ajay Kapil and Smt Lakshmi Kapil. The event also featured top talents from the local art scene of Singapore with exceptional performances in Carnatic music, Odissi, Bharata Natyam, Mohiniyattam and Kathak. Various community organizations too presented impressive performances like dances, skit etc.

Children and family are also an important part of the Gita Jayanti. Art competition was held in conjunction with the GJ forum. There were more than 100 participants in various age categories. The Gita Chanting, Oratorical and Essay Writing competitions were held in early 2017. With the strong support of parents, gurus and well-wishers, we could see the commitment and dedication of the children in giving their best at these events. We had over 100 registrations for chanting. One of the key highlights of Gita Jayanti has been the integrating influence it has – in multiple ways. It is also important to note that this year we have had a local Singaporean Chinese, Mr Ong Wah Koon Andrew, who participated in the chanting competitions and chanted the entire set of verses (35 shlokas from Chapter 11) from memory, without any mistakes - a remarkable feat indeed. There was also an entry by a Muslim child from GISS for the chanting competition.

The finale of the GJ festivities is the Havan, to be held on 12 March 2017. We are grateful to H E Jawed Ashraf, the High Commissioner of India to Singapore for gracing the event as the Guest of Honour. This is another of the integration aspects of the GJ celebrations for 2017. We are ever thankful to the various organisations that support the event in diverse ways and the strong representation of all sections of the Hindu community and Indian diaspora at the various Gita Jayanti events.

Acknowledgements

Gita Jayanti management is immensely grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their significant contributions to the Gita Jayanti celebrations for the year.

Gita Havan

- His Excellency Mr Jawed Ashraf, High Commissioner of India to Singapore, for kindly gracing the occasion as the Guest of Honour.
- Mamta Shahani and HP Dayani for donation towards Havan Prasad.
- Dr Shanmuganathan of Asia Tunneling Corpn for providing carpets.
- Dr Varsha Santhosh for being the MC for the stage function.

International Gita Forum 2016

- Guest of Honour, Sri R Jayachandran, Chairman, Gita Jayanti Advisory Committee and Hindu Endowments Board who also chaired the final Open Forum session.
- Distinguished invited speakers: Dr Thimappa Hegde and Prof K Ramasubraman (both from India).

Chanting, Essay, Oratorical Competitions

- Amriteswari Society for hosting the preliminary rounds of the Gita Chanting competition, and the oratorical competition.
- Hindi Society (Mahatma Gandhi Hall) for hosting the finals of the Gita Chanting competition.
- Swami Chidananda Puri for his divine presence at the finals of the Gita Chanting competition and for giving away the prizes to the winners.
- A donor who sponsored the cash prizes for the competition winners and wishes to remain anonymous.
- Judges for the Gita Chanting and Oratorical competitions: Sri. Ajay Mohan, Sri. Anand Chandrasekar, Sri. C Krishnamurthy, Sri. Krishna Kumar, Smt. Padmini Chandrashekar, Sri. R Chakravarthy, Sri. R S Ravi, Smt. Radhika Nair, Sri. Rajesh Anand, Smt. Sangeetha Jumbunathan, and Sri. Sunilkumar.
- Judges for the Gita Oratorical competition: Sri. Krishnaraj Rao, Sri. Rajesh Anand and Sri. Krishna Kumar.
- Judges for the Gita Essay competition: Sri. R S Ravi and Sri. Krishna Kumar.
- Sri K Ramaprasad for the photography.
- Smt Roshni Mahesh for being the MC for the competition finals.
- Volunteers who helped in the smooth conduct of the competitions.

Krishna Manjari 2016

- Talented singers from India, Mr Ajay Kapil, Mrs Lakshmi Kapil for excellent and soulful bhajans.
- Rhythms Aesthetic Society (Singapore) for their very talented Tabla and Keyboard artistes as well as rehearsal support.

- Outstanding local artistes who showcased their talents in Carnatic music, Odissi, Bharata Natyam, Kathak and Mohiniyattam.
- Abhilash CS, Manesh M, Jayachandran M, Ramaprasad, Sandhya Ramaprasad and Dwarakanath for excellent technical and stage support.
- Abhilash CS and Soorya (Singapore) for online payment system for ticketing.
- All the various organizations whose artistes performed at the event as well supported in various ways.
- Rajeev Varrier and Vinayan for photography.
- All volunteers who helped make the event smooth and glitch free.

Art Competition

- Judges: Mrs Anu Chandran, Mr Suhas Sudhakaran and Mrs Lakshmy Iyer

Gita Vani - Annual Publication

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Others

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- All associations and temple who have supported the Gita Jayanti Celebrations
- All volunteers for their selfless support, dedication and love for Gita.
- All devotees of the Lord and His Divine message, Srimad Bhagavad Gita.