

Discover the wisdom of this powerful ancient Indian classic

The Bhagavad Gita

a series of three meetings on its 18 Chapters



The Second Meeting on Devotion, Chapters 7-12

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United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queen's Gardens, London, W2 3AH

Review of First Meeting

H. P. Blavatsky says that the Bhagavad Gita (literally, “The Lord’s Song”) “contains a dialogue wherein Krishna – the “Charioteer” – and Arjuna, his *Chela*, have a discussion upon the highest spiritual philosophy. The work is pre-eminently occult or esoteric,” (*The Theosophical Glossary*” p. 56) and that “the Gita is a record of the ancient teachings during the Mystery of Initiation.”

The scripture can be understood on many levels and Theosophy says that all true esoteric texts and myths have *seven keys* to their complete understanding. William Q. Judge – the closest co-worker of HPB, whose rendition/translation of the Gita is the basis of these meetings – explains, “the poem can be read in many different ways, each depending on the view-point taken, *e.g.*, whether it is considered in its application to the individual, or to cosmogenesis, or to the evolution of the Astral world, or the Hierarchies in Nature, or to the mortal nature, and so on.” (*Gita*, p. xvi-xvii) We have not been given all the “keys” but we are provided with that which is of the most direct and practical help and benefit to us in our present condition and mode of life and that is that Krishna represents and speaks as our Higher Self, whilst Arjuna is the individual human soul, who must turn towards and seek refuge in that Self. The battlefield on which the dialogue is set is the battlefield of life and refers to the war within, which each of us must at some time face.

Theosophy differs from most traditional approaches to the Gita, due to it maintaining emphatically that “When Krishna uses the personal pronoun throughout the Gita [i.e. whenever he says “I” or “Me” etc.], he is not referring to his own personality, but to the Self of All.” (*Notes on the Bhagavad Gita*” p. 157) This is important for us to keep in mind throughout this second meeting’s study of the Bhakti-Devotion section of the text.

In the first meeting we saw the structure of the 18 Chapters and provided a survey of the main themes in the Gita divided into three divisions of man’s natural progress:

	I (Ch. 1-6)	II (Ch. 7-12)	III (Ch. 13-18)
Stage	Aspirant	Devotee	Adept
Condition	Ignorance	Learning	Mastery
Quality	Harmony	Sacrifice	Compassion
Arena of Life	Action	Devotion	Knowledge

The whole system aims at union with the Divine by renunciation of personal interest in the fruits of our actions; it is a “Yoga of Synthesis” or “Integral Yoga” since it combines and blends Action, Devotion, and Knowledge (Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga).

The first meeting focused primarily on Karma Yoga, the main theme of the first six chapters. Now we will explore Bhakti Yoga, the principal theme of the next six chapters.

Chapters 7 to 12 “Devotion” Bhakti Yoga

The Soul of man is Manas, the “Thinker,” the Reincarnating Ego. When incarnated, it becomes conjoined with Kama, the principle of desire and passion; the unselfish becomes conjoined with the (usually) selfish. But as “the Eternal Pilgrim” we can identify with our Infinite Self – which in one sense is Absolute *Space* – and then resolve all these things intelligently.

Devotion to others – self-sacrifice – is the “Path” of the Chela/Disciple, the real devotee. This can also be seen as an aspect of what “The Voice of the Silence” calls “*The Hall of (probationary) Learning*,” in which devotion to the interests of others is essential.

From Chapter 7 onwards we find the most sublime teachings. They contain an introduction to, and an exposition of, metaphysics, which lead to occult knowledge, culminating in the practice of devotion to the Unmanifested, the essence of which is actually innate in every being, humanity included, as our Higher Self, the Krishna within. (“*The Secret Doctrine*” 1:86 & 1:169)

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Chapter VII Devotion by means of Spiritual Discernment

Krishna ended Chapter VI by saying “of all devotees he is considered by me as the most devoted who, with heart fixed on me, full of faith, worships me.” Then, at the start of Chapter VII, he reminds Arjuna that when such a rare person fixes their mind in meditation on the Supreme Spirit, believing firmly in It, and continuing steadfastly in practice, they will learn all that can be known:

"Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am. Earth, water, fire, air, and akasa, Manas, Buddhi, and Ahankara is the eight-fold division of my nature. It is inferior; know that my superior nature is different and is the Knower; by it the universe is sustained . . . I am the cause, I am the production and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is none superior to me . . . and all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string . . . in all creatures I am the life, and the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the spirit . . . in all creatures I am desire regulated by moral fitness." (*Gita*, pp. 53-4)

Krishna stands for the spiritual essence seated in the heart of all things. He causes the qualities of sattva, rajas, and tamas to arise in Nature, but he is not bound by them. He declares that He is the "Eternal Seed," and he is the "Wisdom of the Wise." All Nature, and every creature, is produced by His divine illusive power acting through the qualities. Only those who approach Him directly, know Him, and will be able to surmount illusion.

Those who remain unwise, wicked, and deluded will never attain to Him. These, the deluded, have many desires, worship other gods and powers, and follow rituals devised by them to achieve their lesser goals. However, Krishna states that the "power to achieve" springs from spirit, but if it is directed to temporary, short-sighted goals, it can sustain them only temporarily. (*Gita*, pp. 54-5)

Four classes of men who work righteousness worship Krishna or, we could say, seek after spiritual truth and reality: "The afflicted, searchers for truth, those who desire possessions, and the wise." The best are those who possess spiritual knowledge obtained by exclusive devotion to Him. They permit the Higher Self to act. They are rare, consistently follow the path of peace, and are devoted to the Supreme. These, after many births, discover His ubiquitous nature and see Him residing in their own hearts, "superior to all things, and exempt from decay." (*Gita*, pp. 55-6)

"At the time of rebirth, all creatures fall into the delusion of the opposites which springs from liking and disliking." It is they who created their present condition through their choices made in past lives. But those men of righteous lives whose sins have ceased, being free from this delusion of the 'pairs of opposites,' firmly settled in faith, worship me. They who depend on me, and labor for deliverance from birth and death know Brahma, the whole Adhyatma, and all Karma. Those who rest in me, knowing me to be the Adhibhuta, the Adhidaivata, and the Adhiyajna, know me also at the time of death." (*Gita*, pp. 56-7)

Chapter VIII Devotion to the Omnipresent Spirit named as OM

Arjuna asks Krishna to further explain the terms and names that he just used. How can these ultimates be in a human body? How do those who meditate fixedly on them, when they die, learn their meaning? (*Gita*, p. 58)

Krishna states that Brahman, the Supreme, is the ABSOLUTE, the exhaustless, indescribable source and substratum of all. Adhyatma is the name for Krishna "manifesting as the Individual Self." Adhibhuta "is the Supreme Spirit dwelling in all elemental nature through the mysterious power of nature's illusion." Adhidaivata is "the Purusha, the Spiritual Person," and Adhiyajna "is myself in this body." (*Gita*, pp. 58-9) The terms, especially the first, third, and fourth, could thus be seen as virtually synonymous. Adi-Atma is literally the First or Supreme Self, Adi-Bhuta literally the First or Supreme Element (see "*Theosophical Glossary*" p. 6), Adi-Daivata is literally the First or Supreme Deity, and Adi-Yajna the First or Supreme Sacrifice.

Meditation is to be a constant thing regardless of what we may be doing outwardly. "At all times meditate only on me and fight. Thy mind and Buddhi [in the *Gita*, "Buddhi" is used in its exoteric sense of the discriminative/discerning intellect] being placed on me alone, thou shalt without doubt come to me." If the "power of meditation" is also "concentrated at the hour of death" the devotee "attains to that Supreme Divine Spirit." (*Gita*, p. 59)

There is a "path" called "indestructible," which describes the consistent spiritual meditation carried forward from life to life by some devotees. It is chosen by those who, free from earthly attachment, aim to be Brahmacharyas (ascetics devoted to studying the Universe and doing good to all creatures). Krishna describes this special practice as: Closing the "the doors of the senses," imprisoning the mind in the heart, and focusing the vital powers in the head. When this is maintained at the time of death, along with repetition of the word "OM," the devotee "goeth to the supreme goal." Great-souled ones (or Mahatmas) who have attained supreme perfection are no longer bound by the troubles of rebirth and change.

When a great cosmic cycle comes to a close, everything merges "into the unmanifested" and then, on the opening of a new period of activity it all "emanates spontaneously" back into manifestation and objective existence. There is, however that which is never dissolved but which is indivisible, indestructible, unmanifested, and exhaustless, "it is called the Supreme Goal." Krishna says that "it is my supreme abode." Notice he does not say "The Supreme is me" but rather "The Supreme is my *abode*; the Supreme is *where I abide*," a point he will repeat in Chapter XV. The Supreme cannot be something manifested or individual, least of all a "supreme personality" as is believed by some.

Chapter IX Devotion by means of the Kingly Knowledge and the Kingly Mystery

This Chapter marks the closing of the first half of the Bhagavad-Gita, and serves as a summation of that already said. Krishna is seen to make a change in addressing Arjuna. He calls him "thee who findeth no fault." Earlier, Arjuna had been contentious and impatient with Krishna's explanations. Arjuna has progressed. (*Gita*, p. 64)

Krishna imparts some of the Raja-Vidya or Royal/Kingly Knowledge: "All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. Nor are all things in me; behold this my divine mystery: myself causing things to exist and supporting them all but dwelling not in them. Understand that all things are in me even as the mighty air which passes everywhere is in space . . . at the end of a kalpa . . . I cause them to evolve again. Taking control of my own nature I emanate again and again this whole assemblage of beings, without their will, by the power of the material essence. These acts do not bind me . . . because I am as one who sitteth indifferent, uninterested in those works. By reason of my supervision nature produceth the animate and inanimate universe; it is through this cause . . . that the universe revolveth." (*Gita*, pp. 64-5)

Those who are deluded are unacquainted with this true state of the Universe. Deluded, they are of vain hopes, confused in action, reason, and knowledge and thus, they incline to evil and deceitful principles. The wise, knowing Krishna to be the Spirit of the Universe, and the indivisible, imperishable principle of all things, recognise Him as the highest in all manifestation. Krishna offers more examples of excellence, saying:

"I am the Holy One . . . the goal, the Comforter, the Lord, the Witness, the resting-place, the asylum and the Friend; I am the origin and the dissolution, the receptacle, the storehouse, and the eternal seed . . ." (*Gita*, p. 66) ". . . for those who, thinking of me as identical with all, constantly worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness." (*Gita*, p. 67)

Those who enter the temporary "Heaven" state after death enjoy it "for a period in proportion to their merits, [then] sink back into this mortal world where they are born again as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted." (*Gita*, p. 67) The Theosophical teaching about that after-death condition of Devachan is the same but explained in much greater detail. (see "*The Key to Theosophy*" p. 145 and the compilation "When We Die," available for free at the Lodge and online at <https://www.theosophy-ult.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/when-we-die-theosophy.pdf>)

Krishna then adds: "Those who devote themselves to the gods, go to the gods; the worshippers of the pitris go to the pitris; those who worship the evil spirits go to them, and my worshippers come to me. . . . Whatever thou doest, O son of Kuntî, whatever thou eatest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me. Thus thou shalt be delivered from the good and evil experiences which are the bonds of action [Karma]; and thy heart being joined to renunciation and to the practice of action, thou shalt come to me." (*Gita*, pp. 67-8)

Again: "I am the same to all creatures; I know not hatred nor favor; but those who serve me with love dwell in me and I in them. . . . he who worships me never perisheth. . . . Having obtained this finite, joyless world, worship me. Serve me, fix thy heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me." (*Gita*, pp. 68-9)

Chapter X Devotion by means of the Universal Divine Perfections

Krishna, continuing the teaching of Chapter 9, gives Arjuna a survey of the vibhutis, or examples of the divine perfections in manifestation. They represent examples of His excellence present to the world.

Since He is "the origin of all the Gods and of the Adepts" none of those can trace his origin. But those who know, perceive "the mighty Ruler of the universe . . . without birth or beginning, he among men, undeluded, shall be liberated from all his sins." (*Gita*, p. 70)

"Subtle perception, spiritual knowledge, right judgment, patience, truth, self-mastery; pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity; birth and death, danger and security, fear and equanimity, satisfaction, restraint of body and mind, alms-giving, inoffensiveness, zeal and glory and ignominy, all these the various dispositions of creatures come from me. . . . I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me; . . . the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me; their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another and constantly

speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction. To them . . . I give that mental devotion by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment." (*Gita*, pp. 70-1)

Arjuna recognises in this Personage who is his friend, a universal potential, and declares some understanding; yet, since he has not developed the needed universality to "see" Krishna everywhere, he asks Krishna to choose a "form" under which he might be meditated on. Arjuna the devotee says that by using such a focus he would be better able to visualise and worship him. (*Gita*, p. 72)

Krishna, seeing that Arjuna was still burdened by the illusion of forms, and a mind perception limited to his daily condition, lists further examples of his manifestation as those perfections in Nature, already known to Arjuna.

He begins with the statement: "I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and the end . . . I am endless time itself, and the Preserver whose face is turned on all sides." (*Gita*, pp. 73-5) In Theosophy, "Ego" is not a negative word; it literally means "I" and in Theosophical terminology has a specific meaning, whether spelt with or without a capital "E": it is the Higher Manas principle, the reincarnating soul, our Permanent Individuality. But in the original Sanskrit, Krishna uses the term "*Self*"; "I am the Self which is seated in the hearts of all beings," and that is the word "Atman" which is above and beyond the Ego for It is the *One* Spirit, the Higher Self of all. Possibly Mr. Judge's intent was to show that Krishna can represent all of the Principles of our Higher Triad, Atma-Buddhi-Manas.

Krishna concludes the list, saying: "I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate." (*Gita*, p. 76) This wording might at first glance suggest a fundamental separateness between the Divine and the Universe but it is not so; other translations render it: "Having pervaded this entire universe with but a fragment of Myself, *I* remain." The message is that the Divine is not 100% intermixed with, and thus lost within, Its manifestation; It is immanent and yet transcendent. Being the INFINITE, how could it be otherwise?

The first verse of the Purusha-Suktam of the Rig Veda says, "The Universal Spirit pervades the whole Universe yet still extends ten "inches" beyond." The "Om Purnam" invocation that often precedes the Isha Upanishad declares, "All this [i.e. the manifested Universe with all its planes] is full, all THAT [i.e. Brahman/Parabrahm, the Absolute] is full. From fullness, fullness comes. Take fullness from fullness, and fullness still remains."

Chapter XI Vision of the Divine Form as including All Forms

Arjuna declares himself satisfied with Krishna's explanation concerning spiritual excellence to be existing in the heart of every creature in the Universe. He then prays that Krishna will reveal his divine form to him.

Krishna finding it appropriate to do this, says: "Here in my body now behold . . . the whole universe animate and inanimate gathered here in one . . . But as with thy natural eyes thou art not able to see me, I will give thee the divine eye." (*Gita*, p. 79) Sanjaya (the narrator) describes to Dhritarashtra the mysterious universal power of Hari, another name for Krishna. (*Gita*, pp. 79-80)

Arjuna, frightened by such a vision, observes: "I behold, O God of gods, within thy frame all beings and things of every kind . . . Thou art the supreme inexhaustible Being, the end of effort, changeless, the Supreme Spirit of this universe, the never-failing guardian of eternal law," and he concludes with the words: "I seek to know thee, the Primeval One, for I know not thy work." (*Gita*, pp. 80-83)

Krishna reminds Arjuna that his present duty lies in being a leader in the Kurukshetra war, and says:

"I am Time matured, come hither for the destruction of these creatures: except thyself, not one of all these warriors here drawn up in serried ranks shall live. Wherefore, arise! seize fame! Defeat the foe and enjoy the full-grown kingdom! They have been already slain by me; be thou only the immediate agent, O thou

both-armed one. Be not disturbed. Slay Drôna, Bhîshma, Jayadratha, Karma, and all the other heroes of the war who are really slain by me. Fight, thou wilt conquer all thine enemies." (*Gita*, pp. 83-4)

Sanjaya observes that the trembling Arjuna then addressed Krishna: "The Universe, O Hrishekesha, is justly delighted with thy glory and is filled with zeal for thy service . . . O mighty Being, thou who art greater than Brahmâ, who art the first Maker . . . first of Gods, the most ancient Spirit; thou art the final supreme receptacle of this universe; thou are the Knower and that which is to be known, and the supreme mansion . . . thou art all things!" (*Gita*, pp. 84-5)

Krishna, smiling tenderly, resumed his usual appearance and assuaged Arjuna's fears. In conclusion he tells him, as the Supreme Spirit: "I am to be approached and seen and known in truth by means of that devotion which has me alone as the object. He whose actions are for me alone, who esteemeth me the supreme goal, who is my servant only, without attachment to the results of action and free from enmity towards any creature, cometh to me, O son of Pandu." (*Gita*, p. 88)

Chapter XII Devotion by means of Faith

Arjuna asks Krishna which is the better approach to Bhakti, whether to worship Krishna as "the indivisible and unmanifested" (i.e. as the impersonal Divine Principle) or as the personal and anthropomorphic Krishna with visible form.

Krishna replies that "those who, with minds equal toward everything, with senses and organs restrained, and rejoicing in the good of all creatures, meditate on the inexhaustible, immovable, highest, incorruptible, difficult to contemplate, invisible, omnipresent, unthinkable, the witness, undemonstrable," will reach the goal but adds that "For those whose hearts are fixed on the unmanifested the labor is greater, because the path which is not manifest is with difficulty attained by corporeal beings." He does not discredit this approach, nor try to dissuade Arjuna from taking it, but says it is difficult. Mr. Judge in a footnote says, "The difficulty here stated is that caused by the personality, which causes us to see the Supreme as different and separate from ourselves." But ideally that personality weakness is not to be pandered to but to be overcome. (*Gita*, p. 90)

Yet the more personal approach is not dismissed by Krishna, for he goes on to say, "But if thou shouldst be unable at once steadfastly to fix thy heart and mind on me, strive then . . . to find me by constant practice in devotion. If after constant practice, thou art still unable, follow me by actions performed for me; . . . But if thou art unequal even to this, then, being self-restrained, place all thy works, failures and successes alike, on me, abandoning in me the fruit of every action. For knowledge is better than constant practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation; final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation." (*Gita*, pp. 90-91)

Krishna continues to describe some of the qualities his devotee should develop: "My devotee who is free from enmity, well-disposed towards all creatures, merciful, wholly exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, constantly devout, self-governed, firm in resolves, and whose mind and heart are fixed on me alone, is dear unto me. . . . He also is worthy of my love who neither rejoiceth nor findeth fault, who neither lamenteth nor coveteth, and being my servant hath forsaken interest in both good and evil results. He also is my beloved servant who is equal-minded to friend or foe, the same in honor and dishonor, in cold and heat, in pain and pleasure, and is unsolicitous about the event of things; to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little speech, content with whatever cometh to pass, . . . But those who seek this sacred ambrosia – the religion of immortality – even as I have explained it, full of faith, intent on me above all others, and united to devotion, are my most beloved." (*Gita*, pp. 91-2)

Special Hints to Occultists in the Bhagavad Gita

In Chapter XI, after Krishna revealed to him for the first time the full majesty, glory, and excellence, of his “divine form,” Arjuna spoke with sorrow, “Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee ‘O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend,’ and blinded by my affection and presumption, I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this I beseech thee, O inconceivable Being, to forgive.”

Commenting on this in Chapter XI of “*Notes on the Gita*,” Robert Crosbie, who founded the United Lodge of Theosophists, remarks: “Here in this ancient scripture is pictured the fatal error made again and again by mankind in the failure to recognize a divine teacher when he appears among them in human guise. Buddha, Jesus, and many others before and after them, were treated by their contemporaries as ordinary human beings actuated by similar motives as the rest of mankind. . . . These conditions prevented the true relation between teacher and disciple which is so necessary to the latter if he would benefit fully from that relation. . . . Even Arjuna, loyal and devoted disciple as he was, had failed to perceive the wondrous nature of his teacher. . . . It is natural to suppose that Arjuna had by his unshaken confidence and constant devotion arrived at a stage of development where such help was merited. It might be well for students of Theosophy to consider whether they may not have made a similar mistake in regard to Those who brought the message of Theosophy to the Western world, and so kept closed the only door through which direct help could come.”

Intelligent, sincere, heartfelt devotion towards the real *inner* being of Masters and Their Messengers – only *after* much study, research, and consideration, of their lives, work, and writings – can open doors which directly aid Theosophists in their journey from **aspiration**, through **devotion**, to eventual **Adeptship**. This is one aspect of Theosophical Bhakti: an unforced, naturally arising, devotion to the Teachers, springing from a realisation of what They really are.



An Overview and Implication of what Krishna teaches in 10 points

1. The Gita affirms we are immortals in our essence.
2. Nature as a whole is ruled by immutable law. It is made up of immortal beings. At this time, some have less experience than we do, i.e. the elementals and the Monads of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, and some have more, such as the Adepts, Mahatmas, Dhyan Chohans (celestial beings who have passed through the human stage of evolution) and beings such as Krishna, Buddha, the “Great Sacrifice” mentioned in “The Secret Doctrine,” and so forth.
3. The key to progress is first to discharge our Karmic debts. Do no further harm by way of selfishness. Become wise by study, reflection, and disinterested effort: right livelihood. Develop friendliness to all. All may not be friendly to *you* but that does not excuse you from radiating love and compassion. Understand our responsibility to all others as co-immortal sisters and brothers.
4. All beings form a collaborative whole. Since they are eternal, they are never destroyed. Harmony, patience, and calmness are keys to self-purification.
5. The Universe is a School. Our World is our classroom. We are riveted to it because of ancient bonds of attraction. All beings around us are our eternal co-pupils.
6. The Lodge of Adepts has always existed in the world. We conceal it from ourselves by selfishness and by carelessness. It stores and safeguards WISDOM.
7. Krishna, the Higher Self, is within our spiritual heart. He – or, rather, IT – is in the heart of all others. Brotherhood is an indestructible fact of Nature.
8. Even the rare occurrence of “annihilation” is not ultimate. Nor is there a final or *literally* everlasting rest in a Universe of infinite extent and perpetual motion. Wisdom widens our circle of usefulness and deepens our responsibility to all the rest of the evolving mass of beings.
9. Law is impersonal, universal, and immutable. "As you sow, so shall you also reap," is the rule of total fairness.
10. The wise sacrifice their attainment to help all others.

H. P. Blavatsky once wrote in an article, on one of the rare occasions when she actually used the word “God” for the Absolute: “If there is a still greater absurdity than to speak of a cruel God: it is to admit that God, the *Great, Absolute Whole*, could ever interfere in terrestrial or human affairs. The infinite cannot associate with the finite; the unconditioned ignores the conditioned and the limited. The absolute “Intelligence-Wisdom” cannot act in the restricted space of a small globe. It is omnipresent and latent in the Kosmos, infinite as itself. We find its only truly active manifestation in *humanity as a whole*, composed as it is of stray sparks, finite in their objective duration, eternal in their essence, issuing from that Hearth without beginning or end. Therefore, the only God whom we should serve is Humanity, and our only cult should be the love of our fellow man. Doing evil towards him, we wound God and make him suffer. When we deny our brotherly duties and refuse to consider a pagan as well as a European as our brother, we deny God. This is our religion and our dogmas.” (“*Theosophy: Some Rare Perspectives*” p. 21)

Our Bhakti and Devotion involves seeing and honouring the inner Divinity and Godhood of every being, as also within our own being.

The Dhyana Sloka

The Dhyana Sloka is an introductory poem, invocation and meditation of nine verses “which is usually sung before the beginning of *Bhagavad Gita* reading.” It will be played at the start of the meeting.

1. Bhagavad Gita taught to Arjuna, by Lord Narayana himself, written in the middle of the Mahabharata by the Old Sage Vyasa.¹
O Divine mother, she who showers Elixir of Advaita on us, O mother of 18 chapters, I meditate on thee, O Bhagavad Gita, the destroyer of illusion of manifestation (Samsara).
2. Salutations O Vyasa, one with the great intellect, with eyes like the fully blossomed lotus. Through whom, the lamp of light is filled with oil of knowledge.
3. Salutations to Krishna, the bestower of all desires of the desirers. The holder of Jnana-Mudra,² the milker of the Elixir of Bhagavad Gita.
4. All the Upanishads are cows; the Milker is Krishna, the cowherd boy; Arjuna is the calf; Wise and pure men drink the milk, the supreme, immortal nectar of the Gita.
5. O son of Vasudeva, O Lord who destroyed Kamsa³ and Chanuura. O Joy of mother Devaki, Salutations O Krishna, the teacher of the world.
6. Bheeshma, Drona were the two banks,⁴ Jayadrada was the water, Shakuni (king of Gandhara) was the blue lotus, Shalya was the crocodile, Kripa was the tide, Karna was the mighty wave.⁵ Aswathama and Vikarna⁶ were the dangerous alligators, Duryodhana⁷ was the whirlpool, Pandavas crossed this river of war with Krishna as their helmsman.
7. May this lotus of the Mahabharata, born in the lake of the words of Vyasa (Son of Parashara), with intense sweet fragrance of the essence of Gita, with many stories as its stamens, fully opened by the discourses on Hari, the destroyer of the effects of Kaliyuga, and drunk joyously by the bees of good men in the world, day by day become the bestower of good to us.
8. I bow down to Sri Krishna, the source of all joy, whose compassion brings speech from the lips of the dumb and carries the lame over mountains.
9. Salutation to him who is worshipped with divine chants by Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra, Maruta, who is pleased by singers of Sama Veda by singing Vedas and Upanishads following the word sequence, who is seen by yogis who are absorbed in him, with their mind merging in him, and whose end is not known even by the hoards of devas and Asuras.

A sung version of this meditation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37UqD5woZdc>

¹ The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are the two Sanskrit epics of ancient India, Vyasa the legendary Indian author.

² Jnana Mudra, a special meditation mudra. In Sanskrit ‘Jnana’ = Wisdom, ‘mudra’ = sign/gesture.

³ Kansa, the tyrant ruler of the Vrishni kingdom at Mathura, was the uncle of Krishna and his devoted enemy.

⁴ Symbolising respectively “the necessary rules and regulations” and “military skills,” they supported both sides.

⁵ Karna, a “flawed good man” of exceptional abilities, who illustrates the dilemmas of right duty, ethics, morals.

⁶ Vikarna acknowledged his brothers’ injustices against the Pandus, but ultimately supported the established order.

⁷ Duryodhana, eldest of Kauravas, the hundred sons of blind king Dhritarashtra, symbolises passion without humility.