

Discover the wisdom of this powerful ancient Indian classic

The Bhagavad Gita

a series of three meetings on its 18 Chapters



The First Section on Right Action, Chapters 1-6

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Introduction

Some key statements are made by Krishna to Arjuna that help us when considering the main themes in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

Krishna, like all Avatars and Bodhisattvas, was a divinely incarnated mortal, which HPB calls “trees of salvation grown out from the one seed of Avatarism.” His teachings to Arjuna were reported by Vyasa, the general name and title of Author-Sage. They hold a very special place, being deemed to reverberate through the whole of this dark period among the cosmic cycles. (*The Secret Doctrine*, 1:662-5, 2:68-70)

Krishna is famous for these spiritual instructions and his death on 18th February 3102 BCE started, for India and the West, the current cycle of the Kali-Yuga, the Black Age.

The Bhagavad Gita is part of the *Maha-Bharata*—an account of the early struggles of the Royal house of the Kurus—who set themselves in conflict with their cousins the Pandavas, of which Arjuna was a prince. It is set on the battlefield named Kuru-Kshetra. It is a conflict *in each person’s mind* between the Universal Laws of LIFE and Love (Karma-Alaya) and our ‘isolated’ brain-mind, a selfish reflection which we call our personality. Virtue (lawfulness) fights with vice (disregard of law), thus our Mind decides its course of action.

This is the perennial psychology of the ancient Wisdom; do ask if you don’t understand it.

Krishna, as the highest Spiritual Teacher, Atma or the SELF, answers questions posed by Arjuna, (the ‘free’ Mind-man). Krishna was named “Narayana,” the Holy Spirit moving on the waters of Infinite Space, as a Sage embodying Universal Laws and virtues... or the Higher Self of all. He gives theoretical *and* practical advice (both) based on the single concept that the Spiritual Being is the only *permanence* and *Reality*, whether in the Cosmos, in Man, or the Monad in the “atom.”

It is universal, deathless, and the root of manifestation. This primordial plastic substance is therefore present everywhere, and the source of every independent being, in all atoms, all humanities, all Galaxies. Scientifically it is life-energy.

The “embodied self” or Arjuna-mind (us, we are all “Arjunas”) must first desire to know the One Self, Krishna, this Universal Spirit (the Atma within the *form*). Only self-control of the desire nature, Kama, and therefore self-purification (living a good life) will lead to and activate its share of the universal wisdom-Buddhi.

But Krishna’s theoretical and practical teachings are voluntary and not enforced; he recognizes and respects the right of individual choice of every free-willed being. This is true ethics and compassion, the mark of divine wisdom and love, which we in our modern society should truly value and cherish, lest we lose what is worthwhile and humanising.

At the end of the “Song” he says to Arjuna: “***There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master—Ishwara***—who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. ***Take sanctuary with him alone... with all thy soul***; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place. ***Thus have I made known unto thee this knowledge which is more secret than secrecy itself; ponder it fully in thy mind; act as seemeth best unto thee.***” (*Gita*, Ch. 18 v. 61, 62 & 63)

These important statements are repeated and emphasized many times in this “Song of Life.”

The Structure of the Gita

A survey of the main themes in the *Gita* show it developing in three divisions, as we do.

Here, each division is comprised of Six Chapters which correspond to three universal natures interblended in every Man-Mind (from *The Secret Doctrine* 1:181). These are:

	I (1-6)	II (7-12)	III (13-18)	
Stage	Aspirant	Devotee	Adept	} <i>three natural stages that all of humanity pass through</i>
Condition	Ignorance	Learning	Mastery	
Quality	Harmony	Sacrifice	Compassion	
Arena of life	Action	Devotion	Knowledge	

The whole system aims at union with the Divine by the renunciation of interest in the fruits of personal action, it is a “Yoga of Synthesis” and “Integral Yoga” since it combines and blends Action, Devotion & Knowledge (Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga). This is the key the *Gita* uses, of oft repeated sequences of hands-heart-head.

“... it is convenient to arrange the discourses in three broad groups. Taking the first as an introductory discourse, you find that Lord Shri Krishna refers in the next five chapters, to the several schools of philosophy, that flourished at the time, namely; the Sankhya, Karma, Gnana, Sanyasa, and Abhyasa, each describing the path towards salvation.

“The great Lord then examines the merits and defects of each school, and points out that there are, in nature, two important entities or factors which the several schools have lost sight of, and without the help of which the paths recommended by those philosophers will not be of much avail.

“He then expounds his own doctrine or theory with regard to the goal of human life, and from this standpoint supplies the key, as it were, with which the different viewpoints could be reconciled so as to evolve them in a harmonious whole in proper setting. This doctrine is enunciated in the next group of six chapters beginning with the seventh discourse.”

The Doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita by Bhavani Shankar, 47

But now we are at the start, the stage of aspiring towards knowledge and mastery, we are in the condition of comparative self-ignorance, although we are trying to practice the quality of harmony in the arena of our life, which is predominantly, one of action.

What is given in the seventh and later discourses is for those passed onto the **second condition of learning** – learning humility, learning to look inside oneself, learning how to sacrifice correctly what’s unimportant in the name of progress and wisdom-compassion.

That stage we shall cover in the next meeting, but after learning the **first lessons of right action** in Chapters 1-6, which lead to the necessary realisations and desire for study further.

Chapters 1 to 6 “Right Action” Karma Yoga

W. Q. Judge gives a theosophical key for reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* as an epic of aspiring humanity, whose “battlefield is the body acquired by Karma and Tanha, thirst for life... the speaker and his party representing the lower self” and the Pandus *our higher nature*. (*Gita*, Ch 1, p 2)

There is also this cosmic key, “the speaker, the plains and generals, together with their weapons, are *beings, forces, planes, and planets in the universe*.” (ibid) Applied to ourselves, the poem is of the greatest value, as an inevitable battle between our higher and lower natures. Krishna, our Higher Self, encourages and instructs us, the ‘Arjunas,’ in philosophy and ethics so we can tame and overcome our bad (Kuru) nature, so fitting ourselves to fulfill our natural progression from animal-man to human.

In Chapters 1-6 we are tilling the “field of living action,” life in the body with its skandhas as our Karma, ie that which we have yet to learn. Our life’s duties or path (Dharma) are our natural obligations that will re-harmonise our real, inner self with the One Self.

This ideal to be reached is “United Action–Harmony–Brotherhood”: a Oneness with the All.

Thus the work of the "aspirant" when plunged in the "The Hall of Ignorance" is duty or "Right Action." The same worldview and occult guide is also in the Buddhist *Voice of the Silence*, p. 6.

So the *Gita*’s readers start with the Yoga of Action or Karma Yoga in order that they gradually transfer their high consciousness to the waking-active state, *bringing a sense of the divinity of life*.

Chapter 1 is the field of struggle and a description of the nature of the contending forces. If our "past" haunts us it is due to the personality’s ignorance and fear. It is that karma which we created in the past and may be unwilling or unprepared to now face; it is named Vishada, Arjuna’s Despondency.

Chapter 2 gives arguments for righteousness as a practical ideal. If the spirit is immortal, one application is to recognise that reincarnation brings us back to make good our past faults.

Chapter 3 is about right livelihood, knowledge that harmonises us with the Divine. This Knowledge-Wisdom is to be acquired as it will solve the riddle of life (the Sphinx’s riddle).

Chapter 4 One Universal Spirit enfolds all beings. *Realising this is discrimination*, it leads to acting rightly. Wisdom, like fire, purifies our understanding, motive and choices.

Chapter 5 Dispassion leads to skill in performing all acts, due to the nature of a controlled mind. Freeing ‘Mind’ from too personal desires is the basis of all Unselfishness.

Chapter 6 Duty and discrimination between good and selfish (evil) acts. Self-discipline in ‘thought’ first is the daily practice, since sacrifice *by the Spirit - for goodness* - is a universal law. Good thoughts create good actions and these six chapters teach the essentials of right and skillful action, or true Yoga.

Chapter I The Despondency of Arjuna

The dialog opens with a question from King Dhritarashtra (the 'blind' usurper ruler, the physical body) to Sanjaya ("the Victorious One"), an aspect of his consciousness able to access the plane where Krishna the Higher Self resides. (*Gita*, p. 1 and see p. 96)

Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya, his Counselor, of the disposition of the forces on the war-field of Kurukshetra,¹ symbolising the personality in which karma acts and the skandhas (life-atoms) exist (*Gita*, p. 1). The "war" is the struggle between man's desires and his half-asleep Buddhi-Wisdom.

The two 'opposing' armies consist of the qualities, powers and forces which make up each person's psychological nature, high and low. Broadly divided these are the Righteous and Virtuous which confront the Selfish and the Vicious. These qualities and emotions are found in all of us, and are called, usually, our "good," and "bad" inclinations, character and motives. (*Gita*, p. 2)

The son of Dhritarashtra, Duryodhana, to whom the governing of the Kuru kingdom was entrusted, is heard describing the disposition of the armies to Drona, his instructor in arms. All the names of Kings, heroes, their standards, conch-horns and arms symbolize and indicate psychological forces resident in the passionate (rajasic) nature of every man and woman. (*Gita*, pp. 2-4 & see fns this p 11)

Arjuna asks Krishna: "I pray thee, Krishna, cause my chariot to be placed between the two armies, that I may behold who are the men that stand ready, anxious to commence the battle; with whom it is I am to fight in this ready field; and who they are that are here assembled to support the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra in the battle." (*Gita*, p. 4)

Arjuna represents the devoted man, the aspiring mind in all of us, who desires to learn and do that which is right. Krishna, *is also in us*, as the Wise Spirit—the Higher Self and discriminating Mind, 'he' is one with the *Universal Mind*². We, as the embodied-mind, hold a discussion, however brief, every time we make a choice.

Arriving at this survey position, Arjuna is suddenly overwhelmed by seeing the many friends, relatives, and allied kings that stand ready to fight. Although they are all related, they oppose each other. Arjuna, who knows them all intimately (seeing that they are part of his own lower nature) is troubled with indecision; and, fearing to make an evil choice, he tells Krishna, using many arguments derived from Scripture and conventional philosophy, that he is unable to decide, and being fearful of doing wrong, he will do nothing. He says that he will not even commence his part of the fight, because he fears he will be breaking religious, and customary familial laws by harming or killing these close relatives of his. He says he is prepared to offer himself as a sacrifice to them. (*Gita*, pp. 4-6)

Sitting down in the chariot, Arjuna sets his bow aside. Thus the *Gita* starts with Arjuna's dejection-dilemma.

¹ This "Field of the Kurus" is located historically about 55 miles North of modern "New Delhi." At the time of the Pandavas and Kurus it was named Hastinapura, its ruins can still be seen.

² Upon this principle the whole of the philosophy hinges! It teaches we are in reality not a simple body and personality. Like the Egyptians and Zoroastrians, *the soul is winged*, even while it is engaged in life on the physical plane. It has an appropriate body that is a fit vehicle to work here, but it forever transcends it, since Mind is a *spiritual origin* not a physical one. The *Gita* was given to explain mind-consciousness – "the hard question" to humanity in the time of Dark Age physicality, to take our understanding beyond the material plane.

Chapter II Devotion through Application of the Speculative Doctrine

Krishna plays on the pride of Arjuna, pointing out to him that his indecision will dishearten the army and if this becomes known he would be viewed as dishonorable by all Kshatriyas. (*Gita*, p. 9)

Krishna then speaks of the immortality of the Ego in every man's heart. That cannot be destroyed at death but exists eternally. “Those who are wise in spiritual things grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be.” (*Gita*, pp. 11-12)

The One Spirit, being everywhere, is the essence of all beings, being without death it can sustain all. It is the Inner Ruler of the body. “...it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal.” The universal law requires continuity and progress; these are our responsibilities and choices we accepted, an ancient pledge we already made at birth. (*Gita*, p. 12)

Each being has its own duties. These are not matters of pain or pleasure but of responsibility. “Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee”: they are unimportant while duty, correctly performed, is. (*Gita*, pp. 13-14)

“In this path there is only one single object, and this of a steady, constant nature; but widely-branched is the faith and infinite are the objects of those who follow not this system.” Such a one has to free himself from worldly attachments that are pleasant or unpleasant. (*Gita*, pp. 15-16)

The motive for any action determines its worth... but to perceive this well one has to become detached from passion and anxiety. Action is always necessary. Right action has to be known, and then chosen. Yoga, or union with the Spirit, enables a man to act skillfully because he applies wisdom. (*Gita*, p. 17)

Ignorance and delusion have to be understood, so that wisdom can assist. Meditation, and contemplation on the excellent and the divine, achieves this. This is the key of devotion to the spirit while living in a body. (*Gita*, p. 17)

Arjuna asks how a wise man living in the world may practice spiritual knowledge; Krishna surveys the higher qualities of Nature and Man: fearlessness, dispassion, contentment, devotion:

"A man is said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and content in the Self through the Self. His mind is undisturbed in adversity; he is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger." (*Gita*, pp. 18-19, 103)

Krishna shows how the passionate lower self ensnares the mind and clouds its perception of truth:

"He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger is produced delusion, from delusion, a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all! But he who, free from attachment or repulsion for objects, experienceth them through the senses and organs, with his heart obedient to his will, attains to tranquility of thought." (*Gita*, p. 19)

“The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark (boat) upon the raging ocean. Therefore, O great armed one, he is possessed of spiritual knowledge whose senses are withheld from objects of sense.

“What is night to those who are unenlightened is as day to his gaze; what seems as day is known to him as night, the night of ignorance. Such is the self-governed Sage!”

Through this exercise, tranquility in contemplation is obtained. This eliminates anxiety. Universal wisdom is available to the calm man. Reflection is then possible. Objects of sense are to be given an appropriate importance. Desire, greed, selfishness and pride are to be shunned. This is true dependence on the Supreme Spirit. (*Gita*, pp. 19-20)

Chapter III Devotion through the Right Performance of Action

Arjuna accuses Krishna of confusing him, since he recommends the act of fighting over the superior duty of contemplation, leading to the attainment of true knowledge. He asks him to choose the best method for him. (*Gita*, p. 22)

Krishna, desiring that Arjuna do the choosing, offers alternatives: one is logical reasoning; second, meditation on universal facts and principles. The second he declares is devotion by the right performance of actions based on wisdom. (*Gita*, pp. 22-23)

"He who remains inert, restraining the senses and organs, yet pondering with his heart upon objects of sense, is a... bewildered soul. But he who having subdued all his passions performeth with his active faculties all the duties of life, unconcerned as to their result, is to be esteemed." (*Gita*, p. 23)

Right action, Krishna states, "comes from the Supreme Spirit who is one, wherefore the all-pervading Spirit is at all times present in the sacrifice." The key to right action is detachment and disinterest in results. (*Gita*, pp. 24-25)

The karma of Nature, of the Cosmos, and of the world we live in, is shown through the "qualities," which are inherent in all forms. The Self is distinct from them. Krishna then states: "Throwing every deed on me, and with thy meditation fixed upon the Higher Self, resolve to fight, without expectation, and free from anguish." (*Gita*, p. 26; for the qualities/Gunas see pp. 100-103 and 115)

Affection and dislike are two sentiments that influence discrimination. They create passions; the wise man does not let them affect him. Krishna then states: "It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. It is better to perish in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." (*Gita*, pp. 27-28)

Arjuna asks why men offend, as if by a secret force. (*Gita*, p. 27) Krishna explains that lust-greed-desire creates attachments and insatiable desires; this constant enemy rages like a fire:

"It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of rajas; insatiable and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on earth. As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, and as the womb envelopes the foetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion. By this—the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased—is discriminative knowledge surrounded.... Therefore at the very outset restraining thy senses, thou shouldst conquer this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment." (*Gita*, pp. 27-8)

Chapter IV Devotion through Spiritual Knowledge

Krishna explains that wisdom is eternal. It was first taught by him to Sages since the beginning of evolution. Confused, Arjuna asks how it was possible for him to be as old as the Primeval Teacher.

Krishna speaks then of the reincarnation of the eternal Spirit in each man. It uses many bodies. Memory of the details of past lives are accessible only to a Sage.

"I am born but through my own maya—illusion, the mystic power of self-ideation, the eternal thought in the eternal mind. I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness." (*Gita*, p. 31)

Krishna, the Universal Spirit shows himself only to pure men. It is not birth but character and quality that divide humanity into four castes.³ The Wise, perceiving Immutability, see the necessity for their continued duties in whatever location or condition. (*Gita*, p. 32)

Wisdom is discrimination between the necessary and unnecessary. Nature is to be studied, known, regulated, and subdued. From this practice is derived contentment with one's circumstances. Every act ought to be considered sacred and dedicated to the Supreme Spirit, the Unitary factor in Nature. (*Gita*, pp. 32-4) "One must learn well what action is to be performed." (33)

"He who abandoneth the desire to see a reward for his actions, is free, contented... all actions of such a man who is free from self-interest, who is devoted, with heart set upon spiritual knowledge... are dissolved." (34)

Sacrifice is making all actions sacred, giving up self-interest. Many forms and methods of sacrifice are expressed in rituals, but the highest is obtaining spiritual wisdom through study and its application in daily life. Sacrificial spiritual action purifies a man's karma and attunes him to the One Spirit.

"Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bharata. *By this knowledge thou shalt see all things and creatures whatsoever in thyself and then in me.*" This is the mystic doctrine of saints and sages. (*Gita*, p. 35)

"The wise who see the truth will communicate it into thee... thou shall never again fall into error." (36)

"There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge": Wisdom comes as one progresses. The one-pointed resolve to know and to act as the Supreme purifies all who adopt this discipline. Those who doubt, who are skeptical, who will not enquire into the Spirit, or study, can have no steadiness, certainty or happiness.

"No (karmic) actions bind that man who through spiritual discrimination hath renounced action and cut asunder all doubt by knowledge, O despiser of wealth. Wherefore, O son of Bharata, having cut asunder with the sword of spiritual knowledge this doubt which existeth in thy heart, engage in the performance of action. Arise!" (*Gita*, pp. 36-37)

Chapter V Devotion by means of Renunciation of Action

Arjuna about the paradox of both methods of progress, of action (the Yoga School), or abstaining from action (the Sankhya speculative School).

Krishna says these two methods form a pair and cannot be detached from each other. Although both lead to liberation from material existence "devotion through action is better than renunciation."

Detachment, freedom from opposites, make Ascetics free of karmic action: perfect action and perfect abstinence from action produce the same ultimate end; they are equal minded and respected by all.

³ "This refers to the four great castes of India; the Brahmin, the soldier, the merchant, and the servant. Such division is plainly evident in every country, even when not named as such." (*Gita* p 32)

"Renunciation of action and devotion through action are both means of final emancipation, but of these two devotion through action is better than renunciation. He is considered to be an ascetic (one who has really renounced) who seeks nothing and nothing rejects, being free from the influence of the 'pairs of opposites,' O thou of mighty arms; without trouble he is released from the bonds forged by action. Children only and not the wise speak of renunciation of action (Sankhya school) and of right performance of action (Yoga school) as being different. He who perfectly practices the one receives the fruits of both, and the place which is gained by the renouncer of action (Nirvana-emancipation) is also attained by him whom is devoted in action." (*Gita*, pp. 38-39)

No self-interest in action gives freedom from obscuring desires, it shows us that One Spirit-Soul (World Soul) is resident in every creature, yet separate. If this Unitary truth is not grasped, its consequences lead us astray. We come from the One Source while occupying many bodies.

This knowledge of the Self within disperses all mists of confusion. Regardless of external appearance, the illuminated Sage is able to perceive the One Self present in every form.

The secret bliss of true understanding prevents the "heart" from becoming attached to "objects of sense." Contact with "objects of sense" only gives fleeting pleasure, which ending... produce pain and suffering and wrong impulses from desire or anger. (*Gita*, pp. 40-1) Krishna observes:

"The man who is happy within himself, who is illuminated within, is a devotee, and partaking of the nature of the Supreme Spirit, he is merged in it. Such illuminated Sages...devoted to the good of all creatures, obtain assimilation with the Supreme Spirit...on both sides of death..." (*Gita*, p. 42)

The true devotee slowly frees himself of desire and anger, is restrained and has secure knowledge of *the true Self*. His mind and heart under his control, he determines to attain liberation from the world of attachments. By adopting this attitude, he becomes free in his present life and shares, *consciously*, in the wider life of the Supreme Spirit. Such is the path of the mystic.

"Knowing that I, the great Lord of all worlds, am the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances and the friend of all creatures, he shall obtain me and be blessed." (*Gita*, p. 43)

Chapter VI Devotion by means of Self-Restraint

"He who, unattached to the fruit of his actions, performeth such actions as should be done is both a renouncer of action and a devotee of right action... Action is said to be the means by which the wise man who is desirous of mounting to meditation may reach thereto; so cessation from action is said to be the means for him who hath reached to meditation." (*Gita*, p. 44)

Thus true meditation is obtained *through action* but with renunciation of all interests in the result.

Although the "lower self" is resident in the body it has its natural duty to represent the "Higher Self." It errs when it forgets this agency. The "Higher Self" is always the friend of the "lower Self," which being involved in illusion caused by the "pairs of opposites," *becomes an enemy to its own self*. Every man, as "lower mind," has to recognize this, and choose to make a change.

The "lower Self" has to choose to free itself, this "self-conquest" if successful, allows us to cope with self-directed desire: we may feel it but we remain unmoved. This position, when adopted and maintained, gives the "lower Self" spiritual knowledge and discernment. This is also called "equal-mindedness," or true meditation and is to be practiced in daily life. (*Gita*, p. 44)

For the practice of concentrated meditation, Krishna recommends seclusion, ease of posture for the body, control of the emotions and the mind, and restraining the senses. With the mind under

control, peaceful and free from fear, the devotee's thoughts should be directed to the Spirit. Krishna calls this true yoga, or "divine discipline." (*Gita*, pp. 46-7)

Moderation in living: in our food, habits and company are keys to success in the process of self-purification. By centering our "heart" on the True Self, a man progresses towards the final Goal while continuing the duties of daily life, which are now done with intelligence and love. "As a lamp sheltered from the wind flickereth not" he focuses on the reality behind sense objects and daily affairs, cultivating contentment. Detachment from pain and pleasure is called yoga, "spiritual union or devotion, which is to be striven after by a man with faith and steadfastly." (*Gita*, p. 48)

Krishna states that in the process of meditation, when every desire that arises in the imagination has been abandoned, and the lower mind, held steady, subdues the impulses that arise from the senses and organs, he then finds rest.

Krishna states: "Supreme bliss surely cometh to the sage whose mind is thus at peace... The man who is endued with this devotion and who seeth the unity of all things perceiveth the Supreme Soul in all things and all things in the Supreme Soul." (*Gita*, p. 48)

But Arjuna notes his mind is restless, agitated, strong and obstinate like the wind. How can steadiness be maintained in meditation, and exercise of the yoga of equal mindedness be advocated?

Krishna repeats that while it is difficult to do this, yet, "it may be acquired through proper means and by one who is assiduous and controlleth his heart." (*Gita*, p. 50)

Arjuna observes that while he has faith and devotion, his untrained mind falls away from steadfastness and divine discipline. In such a case, do his delusions destroy him? (*Gita*, p. 50)

Krishna assures Arjuna if he practices this "...never to an evil place goeth one who doeth good."

He states that rebirth in a "pure and fortunate family; or even in a family of those who are spiritually illuminated" is for those whose devotion has been interrupted by death.

Incarnating again, Krishna says he will come into "contact with the knowledge which belonged to him in his former body, and from that time he struggles more diligently towards perfection... for even unwittingly by reason of that past practice, he is led and works on." (*Gita*, p. 51)

15 Principal Ideas of the Gita

1. The Universal Supreme Spirit, indefinable, changeless and undying pervades All.
2. Manifestation periodically brings every being to rest at the end of objective Manvantaras. They re-awake at the same stage and with its own continued identity when it restarts. Nothing is annihilated, destroyed or forgotten.
3. Spirit and Matter are both eternal. (see *Notes on the Bhagavad Gita*, p. 132-3). Mind-consciousness is the interaction between Spirit and Matter, in many degrees. It has free choice but based on earlier decisions is indissolubly bound by them (this is Karma).
4. Consciousness relates to Spirit. Krishna is the Universal SPIRIT cosmically; in man he/it is ATMA the HIGHER SELF. This *One Consciousness* pierces up and down the seven planes of being and upholds the memory of every being. (*Gita Notes*, p. 98-100)
5. All beings are immortal in Spirit-consciousness. The Universe evolves for Monads to develop a knowledge of the Law “in every creature.” Therefore “brotherhood” is a fact.
6. Ignorance is the inability to sense the One Spirit. The Monadic Essence is a “ray” of the One Spirit, surrounding everything, nothing outside of IT, the “God” of religions.
7. Man is free and independent and learns by choosing. His responsibility is to the Self who instructs him in the Law of Karma-Atma by *Buddhi, which is one with all else*.
8. In mankind every “act” produces reactions (Karma) as the motive is disharmonious or universal (selfish or unselfish). This causes reincarnation through the School of Life.
9. Living in harmony not disharmony with the Law is the task of humanity to learn. The Universal Spirit, our Self, advises us that breaking of the Law of brotherhood is wrong.
10. Three qualities (“Gunas”) pervade all of Nature: Wisdom, Action, and Indifference. The pairs of opposites (Wisdom and Indifference) confront our freedoms, and define them.
11. Emancipation, liberation, bliss, Nirvana, indicate freedom from the sorrow and pain from past ignorance. Freedom-consciousness is detached from personal results.
12. Actions are to be performed with fore-thought (responsibility) *and in the interest of all*. Wisdom is the perception of necessary duties. *It is being a true “brother and sister.”*
13. Evolution is for us to embody the Wisdom latent in us. Therefore purification of motive results in the subduing of desire and replacing passion and emotion with Wisdom.
14. The Wise have the duty of assisting all other “creatures” to attain their state. They make themselves, through choice, the agents in the World of what is good and truthful.
15. Free choice is a spiritual attribute, helping men realize their duties “that *which is due* to humanity.” It activates our search and demands we “know ourselves” through self-study.



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.⁴
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 (Samsaara).
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,⁵ 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 Kamsa⁶ and Chanuura. O Joy of mother Devaki, Salutations O Krishna, the teacher of the world.
6. Bheeshma, Drona were the two banks,⁷ 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.⁸ Aswathama and Vikarna⁹ were the dangerous alligators, Duryodhana¹⁰ 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>

⁴ The Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are the two Sanskrit epics of ancient India, Vyasa the legendary Indian author.

⁵ Jnana Mudra, a special meditation mudra. In Sanskrit ‘Jnana’ = Wisdom, ‘mudra’ = sign/gesture.

⁶ Kansa, the tyrant ruler of the Vrishni kingdom at Mathura, was the uncle of Krishna and his devoted enemy.

⁷ Symbolising respectively “the necessary rules and regulations” and “military skills,” they supported both sides.

⁸ Karna, a “flawed good man” of exceptional abilities, who illustrates the dilemmas of right duty, ethics, morals.

⁹ Vikarna acknowledged his brothers’ injustices against the Pandus, but ultimately supported the established order.

¹⁰ Duryodhana, eldest of Kauravas, the hundred sons of blind king Dhritarashtra, symbolises passion w/out humility.