

# THE UPASANA GITA

*(Fifteen verses from the Bhagavad Gita for meditation  
—With Text, Transliteration, Word for Word  
Meaning, Translation and Commentary)*

BY

D. S. SARMA, M.A.,  
Principal, Vivekananda College.

**THIRD EDITION**

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TO  
OUR BELOVED LORD  
TO WHOM WE RENDER  
WHAT IS HIS OWN.

## PREFACE

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The selection of the Gītā verses in the following pages was first made by the author for his own personal use. The verses were then taught to the members of his family and formed part of the family worship. They were later printed with English translation and commentary for the benefit of the inmates of Śrī Chenna Malleswarar and Śrī Chenna Keśava Perumāḷ Devasthānaṁ Hostel. They are now reprinted for the benefit of the students of Vivekananda College. Nothing will give the author greater happiness than to know that others also find them useful in their daily devotions. In this edition the Commentary has been separated from the verses and printed together at the end.

D. S. S.



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## INTRODUCTION

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### I

Every earnest reader of the Bhagavad Gītā has his own favourite verses on which he loves to contemplate. He has his own collection of important verses, and so no collection made by others will ever satisfy him. However, the following eighteen verses are suggested to beginners for their daily meditation. They form a sort of miniature Gītā and may be said to contain the essence of its teaching. The principles on which the selection is made are explained in the Commentary that follows the verses.

The student who uses these selected verses for meditation is advised to look upon himself as Arjuna, who puts a question at the beginning and makes a promise at the end. And he should look upon the Bhagavān who answers the question as Išvara himself. In short, the dialogue is to be understood as one between man and God. In fifteen verses the Bhagavān reveals the most profound secrets of spiritual life. Therefore all those who accept these verses for purposes of upāsana should get them by heart and dwell on the meaning of each word, till their minds become steeped in the spirit that lies behind. And, with the clue given by these verses, they should go through the whole Gītā. Then they will understand why the Bhagavad Gītā is considered one of the greatest scriptures of the world.

### II

For the benefit of those who do not know the Devanāgarī characters, transliteration of the Sanskrit

verses in Roman script is given in the following pages along with their English translation. According to the scheme of transliteration adopted here the Sanskrit alphabet would be represented thus:—

अ=*a*; आ=*ā*; इ=*i*; ई=*ī*; उ=*u*; ऊ=*ū*; ऋ=*r*;

ॠ=*r̄*; ऌ=*l*; ए=*e*; ऐ=*ai*; ओ=*o*; औ=*au*;

अं=*am*; अः=*ah*.

क=*ka*; ख=*kha*; ग=*ga*; घ=*gha*; ङ=*ṅa*;

च=*ca*; छ=*cha*; ज=*ja*; झ=*jha*; ञ=*ña*;

ट=*ṭa*; ठ=*ṭha*; ड=*ḍa*; ढ=*ḍha*; ण=*ṇa*;

त=*ta*; थ=*tha*; द=*da*; ध=*dha*; न=*na*;

प=*pa*; फ=*pha*; ब=*ba*; भ=*bha*; म=*ma*;

य=*ya*; र=*ra*; ल=*la*; व=*va*; श=*śa*;

ष=*ṣa*; स=*sa*; ह=*ha*; क्ष=*kṣa*; ज्ञ=*jña*;

*N.B.* It should be observed that the vowels *e* and *o* are pronounced long in Sanskrit. Therefore no diacritical marks are used to denote their quantity.

The points to be noted in this scheme of transliteration are:—

- (1) All vowels with a dash above should be pronounced long.
- (2) *e* and *o* should always be pronounced long almost like the vowel sounds in *made* and *mode* respectively.
- (3) *m* denotes *anusvāra*, and *h* *visarga*.
- (4) *kh*, *gh*, etc. denote the aspirated varieties of *k*, *g*, etc.



- (5) *c* has approximately\* the familiar sound of *ch* in *chin*.
- |      |           |   |   |   |   |                              |
|------|-----------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| (6)  | <i>t̥</i> | . | . | . | . | <i>t</i> in <i>ten</i> .     |
| (7)  | <i>ḍ</i>  | . | . | . | . | <i>d</i> in <i>den</i> .     |
| (8)  | <i>t̥</i> | . | . | . | . | <i>th</i> in <i>thin</i> .   |
| (9)  | <i>ḍ</i>  | . | . | . | . | <i>th</i> in <i>then</i> .   |
| (10) | <i>ṇ</i>  | . | . | . | . | <i>ng</i> in <i>sing</i> .   |
| (11) | <i>ṇ̄</i> | . | . | . | . | <i>n</i> in <i>singe</i> .   |
| (12) | <i>ṛ</i>  | . | . | . | . | <i>ri</i> in <i>Rishi</i> .  |
| (13) | <i>ś</i>  | . | . | . | . | <i>s</i> in <i>Samkara</i> . |
| (14) | <i>ṣ</i>  | . | . | . | . | <i>sh</i> in <i>ship</i> .   |
- (15) *ṇ* has the sound of *n* in Sanskrit *maṇi* (=gem).

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\* The values indicated are not strictly accurate. For instance, the initial sounds in English *thin* and *then* are dental spirants, whereas Sanskrit *t̥* and *ḍ* are dental stops.



## PRELIMINARY PRAYER

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य

त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।

न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो

लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥

*pitāsi lokasya carā-carasya  
tvamasya pūjyaśca gurur-garīyān;  
na tvaṭ-samo'styabhyadhikah kuto'nyo  
loka-traye'pyapratimaprabhāva.*

*pitāsi* - father thou art; *lokasya* - of the world; *cara acarasya* - of all that move and all that stand; *tvam* - thou (art); *asya* - its; *pūjyah* - the object of worship; *ca* - and; *garīyān* - greatest; *guruh* - teacher; *na-asti* there is none; *tvat samah* - equal to thee; *kutah* - how then (could there be)? *anyah* - another; *loka - traye-api* - even in the three worlds; *adhikah* - greater (than thee); *apratima-prabhāva* - O thou of incomparable power.

Thou art the father of the world—of all that move and all that stand. Thou art the object of its worship and its greatest Teacher. There is none equal to Thee. How then could there be in the three worlds any one greater than Thee, O Thou of incomparable Power?

XI. 43

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायम्

प्रसादये त्वामहमीशर्माज्यम् ।

पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः

प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥

*tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṁ  
prasādaye tvām aham īśam iḍyaṁ;  
piteva putrasya sakheva sakhyuḥ  
priyaḥ priyāyārhasi deva soḍhum.*

*tasmāt* - therefore; *praṇamya* - having bowed; *praṇidhāya* *kāyaṁ* - having prostrated myself (lit. body); *tvām* - to thee; *iḍyaṁ īśam* - adorable Lord; *aham* - I; *prasādaye* - seek thy grace; *soḍhum arhasi* - bear with (me); *deva* - O Lord; *pitā iva* - as a father; *putrasya* with a son; *sakhā iva* - as a friend; *sakhyuḥ* - with a friend; *priyaḥ* - as a lover; *priyāyāḥ* - with his beloved.

Therefore I bow down and prostrate myself before Thee, O adorable Lord, and seek Thy grace. Bear with me as a father with a son, as a friend with a friend and as a lover with his beloved. XI. 44

असतो मा सद्गमय ।

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ॥

*asato mā sadgamaya;  
tamaso mā jyotirgamaya;  
mṛtyormā amṛtaṁ gamaya.*

*gamaya* - lead; *mā* - me; *asataḥ* - from the unreal; *sat* - to the real; *gamaya* - lead; *mā* - me; *tamasah* - from darkness; *jyotiḥ* - to light; *gamaya* - lead; *mā* - me; *mṛtyoḥ* - from death; *amṛtaṁ* - to immortality.

Lead me from the unreal to the Real;  
Lead me from darkness to Light;  
Lead me from death to Immortality.

ओं शान्तिः, शान्तिः, शान्तिः ॥

*Om śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ.*

In the name of Eternal may there be peace, peace,  
peace everywhere.

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# THE UPĀSANA GĪTĀ

अर्जुन उवाच—

1. कथं विद्यामहं योगिन् त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।  
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन् मया ॥

*Arjuna uvāca:—*

*katham vidyāmahaṁ yogin  
tvāṁ sadā paricintayan;  
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu  
cintyo'si bhagavan mayā.*

*katham* - how; *aham* - I; *vidyām* - may know; *tvām* - Thee; *yogin* - O Yogin; *sadā* - constantly; *paricintayan* - meditating; *ca* and; *keṣu keṣu* - in what various (lit. in what and what); *bhāveṣu* aspects; *bhagavan* - O Lord; *cintyo'si* - art Thou to be contemplated; *mayā* - by me.

Arjuna said:—

How may I know Thee, O Yogin, by constant meditation? In what various aspects, O Lord, art Thou to be contemplated by me?

X. 17.

2. विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।  
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥

*vistareṇ'ātmano yogam  
vibhūtim ca janārdana;*

*bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir-hi  
śṛṇvato nāsti me'mṛtam.*

*kathaya* - speak; *bhūyaḥ* - again; *vistareṇa* - in full; *janārdana* - O Janārdana; *ātmanah yogam* - of Thy power; *ca* - and; *vibhūtiṃ* - grandeur; *hi* - for; *me* - to me; *śṛṇvataḥ* - who am listening to; *amṛtam* (thy) life-giving (speech); *tṛptiḥ* - satiation; *nāsti* - there is none.

Speak again to me in full, O Janārdana, of Thy power and of Thy grandeur; for I am never satiated with listening to Thy life-giving words. X. 18.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

3. ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहं अमृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।  
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥

*Śrī-Bhagavān-uvāca* :—

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham  
amṛtasy'avyayasya ca;  
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya  
sukhasy'aikāntikasya ca.*

*aham* - I (am); *hi* - indeed; *pratiṣṭhā* - the abode; *brahmaṇah* - of the Absolute; *amṛtasya* - the immortal; *ca* - and; *avyayasya* - the immutable; *ca* - and; *śāśvatasya dharmasya* - of the eternal Law; *ca* - and; *ekāntikasya sukhasya* - of perfect bliss.

The Blessed Lord said :—

I am indeed the abode of the Absolute, the Immortal and the Immutable, of Eternal Law and of perfect Bliss.



## 4. सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो

मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो

वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥

*sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtirjñānamapohanam ca;  
vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyo  
vedāntakṛd-vedavidēva cāham.*

*ca* - and; *aham* - I; *sanniviṣṭaḥ* - am seated; *hṛdi* - in the heart; *sarvasya* - of all; *mattaḥ* - from me; *smṛtiḥ* - memory; *jñānam* - knowledge; *ca* - and; *apohanam* - (their) loss; *aham eva* - I am indeed; *vedyaḥ* - He who is to be known; *sarvaiḥ vedaiḥ* - by all the Vedas; *aham eva* - I (am) indeed; *vedāntakṛt* - He who made the Vedānta; *ca* - and; *vedavit* - He who knows the Vedas.

And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory and knowledge and their loss as well. I am indeed He who is to be known by all the Vedas. I am He who made the Vedānta and I am He who knows the Vedas. XV. 15

## 5. ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

*ye yathā mām prapadyante  
tām-stathaiṇa bhajāmyaham;  
mama vartmā'nuvartante  
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ.*

*yathā* - howsoever; *ye* - whosoever; *prapadyante* - approach; *mām* - me; *tathā eva* - even so; *aham* - I; *bhajāmi* - accept; *tān* - them; *sarvaśaḥ* - on all sides; *manuṣyāḥ* - men; *anuvartante* - follow; *mama vartma* - my path; *pārtha* - O Pārtha.

Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I accept them; for, on all sides, whatever path they may choose is Mine, O Pārtha. IV. 11

6. मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi*

*saṁnyasyā'dhyātma-cetasā;*

*nirāśīr-nirmamo bhūtvā*

*yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ.*

*saṁnyasya*-having surrendered; *sarvāṇi*-all; *karmāṇi* - works; *mayi* - to me; *yudhyasva* - fight; *adyātma-cetasā* - with thy mind in unison with the Spirit; *bhūtvā* - having become; *nirāśīr* - free from desire; *nirmamah* - free from self; *vigata-jvaraḥ* - with passion spent.

Surrender all thy works to Me and fight, with thy mind in unison with the Spirit and free from every desire and trace of self, and all thy passion spent. III. 30

7. यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

*yatkaroṣi yadaśnāsi*

*yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat;*

*yattapasyasi kaunteya*

*tat-kuruṣva madarpaṇam.*

*yat* - whatsoever; *karoṣi* - thou doest; *yat* - whatsoever; *śnāsi* - thou eatest; *yat* - whatsoever; *juhoṣi* - thou offerest; *yat* - whatsoever; *dadāsi* - thou givest away; *yat* - whatsoever; *tapasyasi* - thou dost practise of austerities; *kuruṣva* - do; *tat* - that; *kaunteya* - O son of Kunti; *madarpaṇam* - as an offering unto me.

Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest away and whatsoever of austerities thou dost practise—do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering unto Me. IX. 27

8. शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥

*śubhā'śubha-phalairēvaṁ  
mokṣyase karma-bandhanaiḥ;  
saṁnyāsa-yoga-yuktā'tmā  
vimukto māmupaiṣyasi.*

*evam* - thus; *mokṣyase* - thou shalt be free; *karma-bandhanaiḥ* from the bonds of works; *śubha-aśubha - phalaiḥ* - which bear good or evil fruits; *saṁnyāsa-yoga - yukta-ātmā* - with thy mind firmly set on the way of renunciation; *vimuktaḥ* - having become free; *upaiṣyasi* - thou shalt come; *mām* - to me.

Thus shalt thou be free from the bonds of works which bear good or evil fruits. With thy mind firmly set on the way of renunciation, thou shalt become free and come to Me. IX. 28

9. अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

*ananyāścintayanto mām  
ye janāḥ paryupāsate;  
teṣāṁ nityā'bhiyuktānām  
yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmyaham.*

*ye janāḥ* - those men; *paryupāsate* - who worship; *mām* - me; *ananyāś-cintayantaḥ* - and meditate on me and no other; *nitya-abhiyuktānām* - who are ever devoted (to me); *teṣāṁ yoga-kṣemaṁ* - their welfare; *aham* - I; *vahāmi* - bear. (it rests on me)

Those who meditate on Me and worship Me and no other, and who are ever devoted to Me—their welfare rests on me. IX. 22.

10. मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवासिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥

*mayyeva mana ādhatsva*

*mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya;*

*nivasiṣyasi mayyeva*

*ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ.*

*mana ādhatsva* - fix (thy) mind; *mayi eva* - on me alone; *buddhiṁ niveśaya* - let thy thoughts rest; *mayi - in me*; *mayi eva* - in me alone; *nivasiṣyasi* - thou wilt live; *ata ūrdhvaṁ* - hereafter; *na saṁśayaḥ* - there is no doubt (of this).

Fix thy mind on Me alone, let thy thoughts rest in Me. And in Me alone wilt thou live hereafter. Of this there is no doubt. XII. 8

11. यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

*yo mām paśyati sarvatra*

*sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati ;*

*tasyā'haṁ na praṇaśyāmi*

*sa ca me na praṇaśyati.*

*yaḥ* - he who; *paśyati* - sees; *mām* - me; *sarvatra* - everywhere; *ca* - and; *paśyati* - sees; *sarvaṁ* - everything; *mayi* - in me; *aham* - I; *na prapaśyāmi* - am never lost; *tasya* - to him; *ca* - and; *saḥ* - he; *na prapaśyati* is never lost; *me* - to me.

He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me—I am never lost to him and he is never lost to Me.

VI. 30

12. सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

*sarva-bhūta-sthitam yo mām*

*bhajat-yekatvam-āsthitah;*

*sarvathā vartamāno'pi*

*sa yogī mayi vartate.*

*sa yogī* - the yogin; *yaḥ* - who; *āsthitah* - having attained; *ekatvam* - oneness; *bhajati* - worships; *mām* - me; *sarva-bhūta-sthitam* - abiding in all beings; *vartate* - (he) lives; *mayi* - in me; *sarvathā api* - howsoever; *vartamānah* - he lives.

The Yogin who, having attained to oneness, worships Me abiding in all beings—he lives in Me, howsoever he leads his life.

VI. 31

13. आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

*ātmaupamyena sarvatra*

*samam paśyati yo'rjuna;*

*sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham*

*sa yogī paramo matah.*

*yaḥ* - he who; *paśyati* - looks upon; *sarvatra* - all; *samam* - equally; *ātmaupamyena* - as himself; *sukham vā* either in pleasure *yadi vā duḥkham* - or in pain; *saḥ* - he; *mataḥ* - is considered; *arjunā* - O Arjuna; *paramaḥ yogī* - a perfect Yogin.

He who looks upon all as himself, in pleasure or in pain—he is considered, O Arjuna, a perfect yogin.

VI. 32

14. मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥

*mat-karma-kṛn-mat-paramo*  
*mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ;*  
*nirvairāḥ sarva-bhūteṣu*  
*yaḥ sa mām-eti pāṇḍava.*

*yaḥ mat-karma kṛt* - he who does my work; *mat-paramaḥ* - who looks upon me as the Supreme; *mad-bhaktaḥ* - he who worships me; *saṅgavarjitaḥ* - without attachments; *nirvairāḥ* - he who is without hatred; *sarva - bhūteṣu* - towards all creatures; *saḥ* - he; *eti* - comes; *mām* - to me; *pāṇḍava* - O Pāṇḍava.

He who does My work, and looks upon Me as the Supreme, he who worships Me without attachments and who is without hatred towards any creature—he comes to Me, O Pāṇḍava.

XI. 55

15. मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto*  
*mad-yājī mām namaskuru;*  
*mām-evaiṣyasi satyaṁ te*  
*pratijāne priyo'si me.*

*man-manā bhava* - fix thy mind on me; *mad-bhaktāḥ (bhava)* - be devoted to me; *mad-yājī (bhava)* worship me; *namaskuru* - prostrate thyself; *mām* - before me; *eṣyasi* - so shalt thou come; *mām eva* - to me alone; *pratijāne* - I promise; *te* - to thee; *satyaṁ* - truly; *asi* - thou art; *priyaḥ* - dear; *me* - to me.

Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, prostrate thyself before Me, so shalt thou come to Me. I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to Me.

XVIII. 65

16. सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

*sarva-dharmān parityajya*

*mām-ekam śaraṇam vraja;*

*aham tvā sarva-pāpebhyo*

*mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.*

*parityajya* - surrendering; *sarva-dharmān* - all duties; *vraja* - come; *mām ekam* - to me alone; *śaraṇam* - for shelter; *mā śucaḥ* - do not grieve; *aham* - I; *mokṣayiṣyāmi* - will release; *tvā* - thee; *sarva-pāpebhyah* - from all sins.

Surrendering all duties come to Me alone for shelter. Do not grieve, for I will release thee from all sins.

XVIII. 66

17. इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥

*iti te jñānam-ākhyātaṁ*

*guhyād-guhya-taraṁ mayā;*

*vimṛśyaitad-aśeṣeṇa*

*yatheccchasi tathā kuru.*

*iti* - thus ; *jñānam* - wisdom ; *guhyād-guhyataram* - more secret than all secrets ; *ākhyātam* - has been declared ; *te* - to thee ; *mayā* - by me ; *vimrśya* - having considered ; *etat* - this ; *aśeṣena* - fully ; *tathā kuru* - so act ; *yathā icchasi* - as thou wilt.

Thus has wisdom, more secret than all secrets, been declared to thee by Me. Consider it fully and act as thou wilt. XVIII. 63

अर्जुन उवाच—

18. नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥

*Arjuna uvāca* :—

*naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir-labdhā*

*tvat-prasādān-mayā'cyuta* ;

*sthito'smi gata-sandehaḥ*

*kariṣye vacanam tava.*

*mohaḥ*-(my) delusion ; *naṣṭaḥ* - is gone ; *tvat-prasādāt* - by thy grace ; *acyuta* - O Acyuta ; *smṛtiḥ labdhā* - I have come to myself ; *sthito'smi* - I stand ; *gata-sandehaḥ* - free from doubt ; *kariṣye* - I will act ; *tava vacanam* - according to thy word.

Arjuna said :—

My delusion is gone. By Thy grace, O Acyuta, I have come to myself. I stand free from doubt. I will act according to Thy word. XVIII. 73

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासु उपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायाम् योगशास्त्रे

श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे उपासनगीता नाम

अष्टादश महागीताः ॥



*iti śrīmad-bhagavad-gītāsu upaniṣatsu  
brahma-vidyāyām yoga-śāstre śrī-kṛṣṇa-  
'rjuna-saṁvāde upāsana-gītā nāma  
aṣṭādaśa mahā-gītāḥ.*

*iti* - thus; *upaniṣatsu* - in the Upaniṣads; *bhagavad - gītāsu* - of the Bhagavad Gītā; *brahma-vidyāyām* - in the science of the Absolute; *yoga-śāstre* - in the scripture of yoga; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-arjuna-saṁvāde* - in the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna; *aṣṭādaśa mahāgītāḥ* - the eighteen great verses; *upāsana-gītā-nāma* - entitled the Upāsana Gītā.

Thus in the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad Gītā, the science of the Absolute, the scripture of Yoga and the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna these are the eighteen great verses entitled:

*The Upāsana Gītā*

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## COMMENTARY.

1-2. The first two verses are the words of Arjuna. They contain a question which expresses the soul's hunger for knowledge of God. The very fact that the soul asks the question—'How may I know Thee, O Lord?'—shows that it is already awakened and that it sets divine knowledge higher than anything else in life. It is willing to listen to the Lord and is never satiated with listening. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you", said Jesus Christ. This is a fact, and it is within the experience of all earnest seekers after God. You have only to ask, and ask earnestly, and He will send you His answer. You will be surprised to see in how many different ways the message comes. It may come through a book which you chance to read or through a lecture which you chance to hear or even through a casual word which you may overhear, or, again, through a spontaneous thought arising in your own mind.

3-4. In verses 3 and 4 the Teacher first describes who Īśvara is. Īśvara is a personal God through whom alone the impersonal Brahman or the Absolute is realised by us. He is the concrete symbol of the infinite consciousness, which is characterised as Sat-cit-ānanda. He is the source of all dharma. And in Him only can we find real and lasting happiness. But where can we find Him? He is to be found in the hearts of all creatures. It is, in fact, by Him that they live and move, and know and remember. Therefore all of us—plants and birds, animals and men—are brothers and sisters.

Divided in various ways as we are, we form one family—the family of God.

The next question is, how can we realise His presence in the hearts of His creatures? The answer is, it is with the aid of scriptures that we can do this and not with our own unaided reason. The aim of all Vedas and Vedāntas—of all the scriptures of the world, in fact—is only to point out the way and help us to realise God.

5. Verse 5 sets forth the grand charter of liberty which Hinduism gives to all men. As all scripture are helps to realise God, every man is at liberty to choose whatever scripture is most congenial to him. Hinduism never commits the error of saying that its own method of approach to God is the correct one and that all other methods are wrong. All religions, all sādhanas, are pathways to God. And whatever be the path we may choose, whether it is karma, bhakti, dhyāna, jñāna or prapatti, He meets us half-way on that path.

While giving us this grand charter of liberty, the Gītā gives us also the following warning—

“Better one’s own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another which is perfect. Better death in following one’s own Dharma, the Dharma of another is fraught with fear.”

III. 35

Thus all religions may be good and true; but our own religion is the best *for us*.

6-16. Verses 6-16 describe the various paths, or rather the various stages of the one path that leads to God. The whole path is called Yoga, and its successive stages or ascents are called Karma-yoga (6-8), Bhakti-yoga (9-10), Jñāna-yoga (11-14) and Prapatti-yoga (15-16).

Verses 6-8 set forth Karma-yoga or the path of works. If we discharge our duties in a spirit of sacrifice, that is, if we regard them only as opportunities of service to God and not as means of self-aggrandizement, we become free from the consequences of our actions and begin to taste the happiness of fellowship with God. Thus Karma-yoga sets us free from the bonds of the Law of Karma. In other words, by devotion to God and service to Him in society we can overcome the world and enter the Kingdom of Spirit. Thus Karma-yoga naturally leads to Bhakti-yoga.

Verses 9-10 describe Bhakti-yoga, the next stage in spiritual ascent. There are three points to be noticed here. The first is the emphasis on concentration. You are quite at liberty to choose any form of the Divine as your object of love and worship. In reality, God is formless. But, as our finite minds cannot seize the Formless, we invest the Formless with a form for purposes of worship. But having once chosen our form—be it that of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Śiva or Śakti—we should make that our Iṣṭa Devatā, the supreme Ruler of our spiritual life, and think of no other. We should concentrate all the love that our hearts are capable of on the deity of our choice. The second point is that all those who worship God thus with a single-minded devotion are assured even of their worldly welfare. Worldly welfare is not a thing to be despised. As long as we live in the world, we are bound to pray for material things—such as food and shelter and the safety of our dear ones—as well as for spiritual things. Our hearts cannot but long for the good things of life. And nothing but harm will result to us by our trying to suppress our legitimate desires. The best way of overcoming the tyranny of our desires is to make them depend for their fruition upon the will of God. We should lay them at His feet along with ourselves

and calmly abide by His decision. The third point is that, on a higher plane of Bhakti, we get beyond all notions of worldly welfare and have an assurance of life in God. To live in God—that is the real reward of exclusive devotion, of *ananya-bhakti*, and not simply worldly or other-worldly welfare.

In verses 11-13 we have a description of *Jñāna-yoga*. *Jñāna* does not mean mere intellectual knowledge. It means spiritual vision. It consists in seeing the unity of all things in God. The separateness of all things that we see in everyday life is only a partial truth. To get at the whole truth we should perceive their unity as well as separateness. When we look at a page printed in a language which we do not know, we see only isolated letters, because we do not comprehend their unity in meaning. But when we look at a page in a language known to us, we scarcely see the isolated letters, for our attention is wholly occupied with the meaning. The difference between *ajñāna* and *jñāna* is just like this. A *jñānī* is one who looks at the unity of all persons and things in the world and ignores their separateness, whereas an *ajñānī* is one who looks at only their separateness and has no notion of their underlying unity. We are all like small islands in an ocean—separate above, but united below, at the bottom of the sea. In fact, without this basis we cannot stand. When once we experience this unity, we can never lose sight of it, for it is the most wonderful experience a man can have. It means we have gone up to a higher plane of consciousness. It is like our going up to the top of a light-house and seeing the whole city in one view below. Also, we may say that the experience of *Jñāna* on the part of a man is similar, on a higher plane, to the experience of, say, a cat or a dog which has attained for a moment, by some magic, to human consciousness and become aware of tints and

melodies, hopes and loves, regrets and longings and a thousand other new values of life, of which the sub-human creature had no idea before.

The result of such a spiritual vision for man is two-fold. Firstly, the man who has acquired it ever abides in God internally, whatever may be his external mode of life. Do we not often come across men in humble stations of life—clerks in city offices and peasants in villages—who have acquired an abiding faith in God, who make no difference between man and man and who lead their apparently monotonous lives in perfect peace and contentment? Such people may be said to have had a glimpse of the ever-abiding Reality behind the fleeting shows of life. Secondly, the man who has acquired it feels the pleasures and pains of others as his own and is ever ready to serve his brethren and alleviate their sufferings. Indeed, a man's spiritual worth should always be measured by the readiness of his sympathy for the sufferings of others.

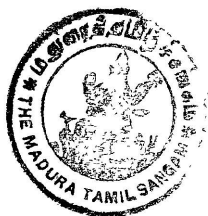
Verse 14 is a sort of summary of Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna Yogas described so far. According to Śaṅkara, it gives the essence of the Gītā-śāstra.

Verses 15-16 give us the final message of the Gītā, *viz.*, that absolute surrender to God is the easiest way by which we can escape the sin and the sorrow of this world. They also give us the promise of the Lord that He is ever ready to come to the rescue of those who seek refuge in Him. Hence these oft-quoted verses are looked upon as the grandest utterances in the Gītā. No further comment on them is necessary.

17. This verse points out that man has absolute freedom to choose his own destiny. The profoundest secret by which he can order his life and direct it to a divine

end has been revealed to him; and he is free either to accept it or to reject it and take the consequences.

18. The last verse is the response of Arjuna to the whole teaching. Arjuna stands for all of us. He is the representative of humanity in the Bhagavad Gītā. He is the Jivātman, as the Bhagavān is the Paramātman. Therefore those who repeat this verse at the end should think that it is the promise which they themselves are giving to God—the promise that they will act according to the teaching given in the foregoing verses.





## Other Books by the Author

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