



# Bhagavad Gita

# Chapter 1: Sorrow of Arjuna

- Arjuna, after glancing at his enemies, asks Krishna to drive the chariot to the middle of the battlefield.
- Filled with compassion, he questions Krishna the need for the war and the consequences that would arise from the war.
- Arjuna prefers to let his enemies kill him voluntarily.
- Unwilling to fight, Arjuna throws his Gandiva.

*Summary: Arjuna scans the battlefield of Kurukshetra, looks at his dear ones whom he has to fight and filled with compassion, throws away his Gandiva*

# Chapter 2: Yoga of Knowledge

- Krishna explains to Arjuna the concept of changeless soul (Atman) in a changing body, how death is certain for the born and rebirth is certain for the dead.
- He also explains the duty of a warrior : To fight or to become a sinner.
- Krishna introduces the concept of Karma Yoga: Karma refers to action while Yoga refers to Union with God (Brahman).
- According to Karma Yoga one should perform selfless action and view success and failure the same way. A person who follows the above principles is in union with god.
- To a question from Arjuna on how to identify a “Illumined soul”, Krishna says ‘ a person who controls his senses, sense objects, ego and desires is an illumined soul’.

*Summary: Krishna convinces Arjuna to fight the war explaining the concepts of Atman, Brahman and Karma Yoga*

# Chapter 3: Karma Yoga

- Arjuna questions Krishna as to why he should fight rather than follow the path to Brahman.
- Krishna classifies people into two types:
  - Ones who achieve Brahman through Knowledge
  - Ones who achieve Brahman through Self-less Action
- For people with Self-less Action:
  - Activity with self control is better than inertia
  - If the assigned action is not performed, their life becomes meaningless
  - Understanding that they are not the “doer”, brings detachment from senses, sense objects and fruit of their actions
- Krishna explains that it is better to perform one’s duties, however imperfectly, than to assume the duties of another person however successfully.
- He also explains that rage and lust cause a man to do evil against his own will and this can be overcome by controlling the senses, thereby realizing the Atman.

*Summary: Krishna asks Arjuna to dedicate all actions to “HIM” and fight*

# Chapter 4: Renunciation through Knowledge

- Krishna explains the “Knowledge” through which one can renounce sense and sense objects
- He also explains that one who sees the “inaction” in action and “action” that is in inaction is a wise man
- By “inaction” and “action”, Krishna refers to “Brahman” as the doer of everything!
- There are two ways to practice detachment:
  - Renunciation through Senses
  - Renunciation through Sense objects
- Krishna says a person who understands the above knowledge and masters the senses, will find Brahman and get enlightened
- Krishna asks Arjuna to clear out his delusions (Maya)

*Summary: Krishna imparts the knowledge through which one can renounce the worldly desires*

# Chapter 5: Yoga of Renunciation

- Arjuna questions Krishna to explain which is better – Renunciation through action or Yoga of action
- Krishna replies saying that ‘Renunciation through action’ can only be performed by following the ‘Yoga of action’
- Action rightly performed and action rightly renounced brings freedom than mere shunning of actions. Performing the actions with the understanding that one is not the doer is the ‘Yoga of action’
- One who performs ‘Yoga of action’ attains Brahman and sees everything equal
- Such a yogi, reaches the state of ‘Nirvana’ and attains freedom from Karma

*Summary: Krishna explains how to renounce action to attain freedom from karma*

# Chapter 6: Yoga of Meditation

- Krishna tells Arjuna that a person who follows Karma Yoga is considered a 'Yogi' and a person who merely refrains from action is not a yogi. He also says a man can uncover his Atman through will power.
- Krishna puts forth the guidelines for a yogi to do meditation that would lead to the divine state of Nirvana.
- Krishna tells that a person who takes others happiness and sorrow as his own is considered to be the highest of yogis
- To Arjuna's question on how one can meditate unwaveringly for longer time, Krishna responds by saying that the mind can be brought under control by constant practice and being dispassionate.
- Arjuna then questions Krishna as to what would happen to a man who has faith but does not struggle hard enough to reach Brahman? Krishna explains that even if a man falls away from the practice of yoga, he is not lost and he will be provided several opportunities to attain the highest goal of finding abode in Brahman

*Summary: Krishna puts forth the guidelines of meditation for a yogi*

# Chapter 7: Knowledge and Experience

- Krishna asks Arjuna to practice yoga and promises to give the knowledge and direct spiritual experience through which God can be seen in total reality
- Krishna talks about his 8-fold prakriti – Earth, Water, Fire, Ether, Air, Mind, Intellect, Ego and explains that he is beyond all those eight elements
- Krishna says everything in this universe is contained in Him, but He's not in them
- Krishna then classifies his worshippers into four types – world weary, seeker of knowledge, seeker of happiness and men of spiritual discrimination and considers the last type of worshippers to be the highest.
- People with wordly desires worship deities and performs rituals. As long as one has unwavering faith in that diety, they will get what they pray for, Krishna being the indirect giver.

*Summary: Krishna tells Arjuna that He would provide the spiritual experience to know Him and asks Arjuna to have full faith in Him*

# Chapter 8: Way To Eternal Brahman

- Arjuna requests Krishna to provide more information on Brahman, Atman, the creative energy of Brahman and how God is revealed at the hour of death
- Krishna defines Brahman as the highest consciousness and when present in a body is called the Atman. The creative energy of Brahman is the life force (prana) behind all existence
- For a person who thinks about God all along his life through meditation, God will reveal himself at the hour of death. During the time of death, a man should control his senses completely, fix the prana between the eyebrows and meditate upon God uttering the sacred syllable “OM”. Such a man will reach God.
- Krishna also explains the two paths after death. Devayana is the ‘path of no return’ are for those who are liberated from rebirth. Pitriyana is the ‘path of fathers’ who reach the lunar light and will follow the rebirth cycle subject to laws of time
- A yogi, who constantly thinks of God is considered the highest when compared to the one who merely follows the path described in the sculptures

*Summary: Krishna explains how to reach Brahman at the hour of death*

# Chapter 9: Yoga of Mysticism

- Krishna provides Arjuna with the highest knowledge of God. Those with faith in this knowledge will find abode in God and stop the cycle of rebirth
- All creatures exist within Krishna but he does not physically exist in all creatures
- Creatures bound by Maya are helpless and they fail to see the actual Master – God himself
- Krishna is the Veda, the fire, the offering to the fire, the OM, sustainer of the universe and is omnipresent
- According to Krishna, anything offered with true devotion and love to God, any actions and gifts given to others will be considered offerings to God
- Although a man may commit many sins in his life time, if he has complete faith in God, he is forgiven and considered holy

*Summary: Krishna imparts the highest knowledge – Expel Maya and surrender to God with love and devotion.*

# Chapter 10: Divine Glory

- Knowing Krishna is the God of the Gods, Arjuna wishes to see the full extent of his glory
- Krishna says he is the seed of all animate and inanimate things in the world and there is no limits to his manifestations
- Krishna says he is the Atman, mind, consciousness, shiva, vishnu, the sacred syllable OM, Ayiravada, kamadhenu, uchchaishrava, ananta, sun, moon, indra, varuna, mariachi, krishna, arjuna, vyasa, the ganges, the beginning, the middle and the end in creation
- After showing his several manifestations, krishna asks arjuna to stay focussed and understand that “HE” alone exists

*Summary: Krishna describes his various manifestations*

# Chapter 11: The Vision of God in His Universal Form

- Arjuna requests Krishna to show his divine form (the changeless Atman)
- Krishna gives Arjuna divine sight to see his universal form - His transcendent form, speaking from innumerable mouths, seeing with myriad eyes, adorned with countless divine ornaments, wearing celestial garlands, full of revelations, boundless and appeared as thousand suns rose together in the sky.
- Awe-struck by Krishna's Universal Form, Arjuna seeks forgiveness for considering the Lord as a fellow mortal and pleads the Lord to return to his human form
- Krishna returns to his present human form and asks Arjuna to fight the war

*Summary: Krishna reveals his Universal Form per Arjuna's request*

# Chapter 12: Yoga of Devotion

- Arjuna asks Krishna to explain which kind of devotee has a greater understanding of yoga – one with steadfast love or the unmanifest?
- Krishna says that a devotee with steadfast love and complete faith in God has great understanding of yoga. The unmanifest will also attain God but it will be a harder task
- Devotees with steadfast love are completely absorbed in God while devotees worshipping the unmanifest will reach God by repeated concentration, controlling lust and renouncing the fruits of all action
- Krishna also says no matter what path the devotee chooses, he has to be
  - Be friendly and compassionate to all
  - accept pleasure and pain with equanimity
  - be forgiving, ever contented, have unshakeable resolve and control over his speech

*Summary: Krishna explains the faithful practices of devotion, that would lead to immortality*

# Chapter 13: Field and its Knower

- Arjuna wants to understand Prakriti and Brahman, the field and its knower, the knowledge and things needed to be known during one's earthly existence
- Krishna explains to Arjuna that the body is the field and one who observes the field is its Knower or Atman. Discrimination between the field and its knower is the highest knowledge
- Krishna defines Prakriti as the invisible cosmos and the field as the sum of Intellect, Ego, mind, consciousness, five elements and five sense objects. Freeing from self, serving the teacher and striving unceasingly to know the Atman are among the key ideas in the roots of true wisdom. To achieve immortality, one has to understand Brahman. Brahman is beginning less, transcendent and eternal.
- Prakriti, the beginning less, is where the evolution of the body, senses and gunas come from. The individual self or the Atman (part of the supreme Brahman) experiences the pain and pleasure through the gunas. One who is able to differentiate between the Prakriti and the Atman is never reborn.

*Summary: Krishna differentiates Prakriti and Atman, the highest knowledge*

# Chapter 13: Field and its Knower (Ctd.)



- This Atman can be realized in many ways.
  - Through contemplation and meditation
  - Following the yoga of right action
  - Worshipping God as their teachers have taught them

*Summary: Krishna differentiates Prakriti and Atman, the highest knowledge*

# Chapter 14: The Three Gunas

- Gunas come from Prakriti (nature) in three forms – Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas
- Krishna teaches Arjuna the importance of these gunas, which binds the soul to the body
- Sattwa, the highest of the gunas, helps to seek happiness and knowledge. Sattwa is tranquility, pureness and calmness.
- Rajas, the passionate of the gunas, makes one restless, thirsty for pleasure and greed
- Tamas, the lowest of the gunas, brings ignorance, stupidity, laziness and inertia
- People who die in Rajasic and Tamasic states will be reborn in the midst of people with similar characteristics while abiding in sattwa leads to higher realms.
- A man can cultivate any one of the gunas by his actions, thoughts and ways of living.
- Ideally, one has to transcend the gunas and reach Brahman, which is above and beyond all gunas.

*Summary: Krishna explains the characteristics of the three gunas – Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas*

# Chapter 15: Devotion to Supreme Spirit

- Aswattha, an inverted fig tree, has its base roots in heaven, branches towards the earth and its leaves representing the songs of the vedas
- The tree's upward and downward branches are governed by the gunas, its buds represent the senses and downward reaching roots reflects a man's actions
- Krishna emphasizes to sharpen the axe of non-attachment and cut through the firmly rooted Aswattha tree, thereby stopping the rebirth cycle
- Krishna also talks about mortal and immortal beings – worldly creatures are mortals and Gods (devas, higher realms) are immortal
- Pervading these beings are Krishna, the supreme Atman, and one who realizes this sacred truth becomes truly wise and fulfils the purpose of his life.

*Summary: Krishna reveals the sacred truth – the realization of Supreme Atman*

# Chapter 16: Divine & Demonic Tendencies

- There are two tendencies in a man – the divine and the demonic
- A man with divine tendencies is tranquil minded, forgiving and enduring, charitable and always in the path to union with Brahman
- Men with demonic tendencies are conceited, foolishly proud, intoxicated by wealth and do not follow sacred rituals, is full of lust and consciousness of power. Such men who deny the presence of Krishna in themselves or others will be subjected to endless rebirths filled with delusion and degradation
- Demonic tendencies lead to greater bondage and men who have these tendencies never reach the supreme being. On the other hand men with divine tendencies attain liberation
- Krishna asks Arjuna to abstain from the three doors of hell – lust, rage and greed. Avoiding these would lead men to salvation

*Summary: Krishna describes the divine and demonic nature of man and shows the path to salvation.*

# Chapter 17: Three Kinds of Faith (1)

- Arjuna questions Krishna on what kind of faith a man has if he does not follow scriptures.
- Krishna says a man's temperament is his faith. Men who are of sattwic nature worship God in all forms. Men who are of Rajasic nature worship power and wealth while men with tamasic temperament worship the spirits of the dead
- Similarly, Krishna also classifies food into three types – Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic. Sattwic foods are juicy, soothing, fresh and agreeable, Rajasic foods are bitter, sour and acidic while Tamasic foods are stale, tasteless and rotten
- Men with Sattwic nature, perform sacrifice following scriptures, while men of Rajasic nature offer sacrifice for pride and men with Tamasic nature perform sacrifice without faith
- Men who follow three fold austerities of body (physical cleanliness and sexual purity), speech (truthful and beneficial), mind (serenity, sympathy and meditation) devotedly, with enlightened faith and no desire for reward, are of Sattwic nature. Austerity practiced with selfish pride or to gain honor is said to have Rajasic nature. Meanwhile, austerity practiced for harmful or foolish purposes, is Tamasic.

*Summary: Krishna explains the Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic nature of man*

# Chapter 17: Three Kinds of Faith (2)

- Gifts given to deserving persons, at the right time and place, without expecting any rewards are Sattwic. Gifts given for selfish motives, expecting a return are Rajasic while those given to unworthy persons, at the wrong time and place is Tamasic.
- Krishna then bestows Arjuna, the sacred words of “OM TAT SAT” and explains its meaning.

OM – always uttered by the devotees of Brahman, before any sacrifice, alms giving or austerity.

TAT – the absolute, is uttered by seekers of liberation, during any sacrifice, almsgiving or austerity.

SAT – the auspicious act, is all the actions dedicated to Brahman, persevered in any sacrifice, almsgiving or austerity.

*Summary: Krishna explains the Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic nature of man*

# Chapter 18: Yoga of Renunciation

- Krishna explains renunciation as complete giving up of actions motivated by desire, while non-attachment means performing actions without expecting any returns. Performing good actions such as alms giving, sacrifice and austerity purify those who rightly understand and perform them, without expecting any rewards.
- Krishna classifies renunciation into three types – Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic renunciations. In Sattwic renunciation, a man performs actions as per the scriptures, without any attachment. In Rajasic renunciation, a man abstains from any action because it is disagreeable to him or fear of bodily pains. If a man, in his ignorance, renounces those actions that scriptures recommend to perform, then his renunciation is Tamasic. If a man is egoistic and full of desire, he reaps the fruits of pleasant, unpleasant and a mixture of both. But if he renounces ego and desire, will reap no fruits at all.
- Krishna says that action is motivated by knowledge, the knower and that which is known. Knowledge is then classified into three types according to the gunas. Sattwic knowledge says that only Brahman exists in different forms in all creatures. While Rajasic knowledge considers each creature as separate from one another and Tamasic knowledge does not understand nature.

*Summary: Krishna teaches the art of being in union with God through renunciation and non-attachment*

# Chapter 18: Yoga of Renunciation (2)

- Conscience is classified into Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic. Sattwic conscience is the ability to distinguish between right and wrong actions. Rajasic conscience cannot clearly distinguish between right and wrong actions while tamasic misunderstands right for wrong actions.
- Determination is inspired by Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwic determination is unwavering and derives strength from the practice of yoga. Rajasic determination is motivated by personal desires, while Tamasic determination is to remain stubborn with wrong beliefs.
- Krishna classifies Happiness also into three types. Sattwic happiness is being one with the Atman. Rajasic happiness is derived from the pleasure of senses, while Tamasic happiness is being in delusion and unreal. Krishna reiterates that nobody can escape the three gunas and one has to continue his actions, no matter how imperfect the actions may be.

*Summary: Krishna teaches the art of being in union with God through renunciation and non-attachment*

# Chapter 18: Yoga of Renunciation (3)

- To be one with Brahman, one has to practice the art of non-attachment, renunciation of desires and self control of mind and body. A man who understands this and is one with God always, has gained the highest wisdom. misunderstands right for wrong actions.
- Krishna also says that, one should never tell this holy truth to anyone who lacks self-control, devotion, despises his teacher and mocks God. But one, who loves God and spreads this knowledge of Gita, will reach Brahman.
- Even if a man simply listens to the words of the Gita with faith and doesn't doubt them, he will be liberated from his sins. Spreading this knowledge is considered the highest service to God.

After hearing this discourse from Krishna, Arjuna's doubts are dispelled and he thanks Krishna for this profound knowledge.

OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI !

*Summary: Krishna teaches the art of being in union with God through renunciation and non-attachment*