

An In - Depth Exploration of the Eighteen Chapters of the Bhagavad Gītā

Dr. Nurul Islam

Former Research Scholar, Department of Sanskrit, Assam University, (A Central University), 788011

Email: [nislambabu7\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:nislambabu7[at]gmail.com)

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Abstract: *It is, in fact, the pinnacle of Indian spiritualism. The Bhagavad Gītā, written thousands of years ago, has been analyzed and practiced differently by different scholar. The Bhagavad Gītā is one of the holy books of Hinduism. It was written about five thousand years ago, 18 chapters (section 25 to 42) in the Bhishma Parva from the epic of Mahābhārata. That's mean Bhagwat Gītā is a part of Mahābhārata, the great historical epic composed by Maharṣi Kriṣṇa Dvaipayana and also called Vedavyāsa. The main subject matter of 'Bhagavad Gītā' is self-knowledge or spiritual wisdom. The most popular holy Gītā has three main things: knowledge, action, and love. The Gītā has eighteen chapters and 700 Ślokas. In this paper, the researcher wants to discuss about a brief introduction to the eighteen chapters of holy Gītā*

Keywords: Gītā, Arjuna, Kriṣṇa, Mahābhārata, Kurukṣetra, Śloka, God

1. Introduction

During the battle of Kurukṣetra, when Arjun came to the battlefield in the chariot of Kriṣṇa, he saw his grandfather Vishma, education guru Drunabrothers Duryodhan and other relatives, loved ones and many more. Then Arjun collapsed completely. Because they are all their own opponents in the war so he was not willing to fight and got involved in that chariot. It was at that moment Sri Kriṣṇa's advice to the true kṣatriya religion was known as Srimad Bhagavad Gītā. This Srimad Bhagavad Gītā is briefly called Gītā. It is also called the Upaniṣads. There is a wonderful combination of these three - knowledge, action and devotion. The immortality of the soul, the work of selflessness, and the surrender of God to the fullest - these are the words of the Gītā. The teachings of the Gītā were not just for Arjuna but it was for the whole world, if a person adopts the teachings given in the Gītā in his life, he can never be defeated by anyone. In the Gītā Mahatya, the Upaniṣads have been called the cow and the Gītā its milk. This means that the Gītā accepts the spirituality of the Upaniṣads in the best way. The Gītā means that the Upaniṣads or the Mokṣa Śāstras, as described by Bhagavan. Śrī Kriṣṇa is called Śrīman Śrī word means glory, Kriṣṇa is glorious. Again he is God, mentioned in the verse.

ऐश्वर्यस्यसमग्रस्यवीर्यस्ययशसःश्रियः।

ज्ञानवैराग्ययोश्चैवषण्णांभगइतीरणा॥(बिष्णु पुराण6/74)

Which means total opulence, complete religion, complete fame, complete Śrī and all knowledge, disinterest in which exists; He was called God.

If anyone is able to understand the summary of the Bhagavad Gītā accurately, then he can experience the ultimate truth and be free from the confusion of raga (bondage) and the miseries of the world. Arjuna too got freedom from worldly sufferings while fighting the war of Mahābhārata. This was possible only due to the Divya Chakṣu (दिव्यचक्षु) given by Lord Śrī Kriṣṇa and due to this Divya Chakṣu, Arjuna was able to fight

the war without attaining any karma and attained salvation in the same life. The holy Gītā is the everlasting dictum of psychicknowledge from ancient India. The word Gītā means song and the word. The BhagavadGītā is called the Song of God. Let us briefly know the message hidden is hidden in the eighteen chapters of Gītā one by one.

First chapter, entitled is “The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna”(46 verses):

Various scholars titled first chapter as *Arjuna vishada yoga*. In this chapter Arjuna said to Lord Kriṣṇa in the battle ground that I can see only inauspicious signs, I do not see any welfare in killing the kinsmen in war. I neither want victory, nor state and happiness, what benefit do I get from such a state, happiness or even this life. With whom we have the desire to enjoy the pleasures of the state, etc., when he is the one who stands in this war land after renouncing all the comforts of his life. I do not want to kill them all, even if they all kill me, but how can I will be happy by killing my own family. In this way, Arjuna, being content with mourning, abandoned the bow in the battlefield and sat on the chariot, forgetting his duty. Then Lord Kriṣṇa, told Arjuna about his duty and deeds. Lord ŚrīKriṣṇa introduced Arjuna to the truth of life. Kriṣṇa understood Arjuna's position, Arjun's body was fine but his morale was broken even before the war started. His body cannot stand without the mind. Therefore, Lord Kriṣṇa, while performing the duty of a Guru, saved Arjuna's mind by reasoning, intelligence, knowledge, discussion of karma, nature of the world, the state of life in it and the vision of that supremely supreme authority Brahma. Summary of the first chapter ends here.

Second Chapter is that ‘Sāṅkhyayoga’ the yoga of knowledge (72 verses):

The second chapter begins the philosophical discussions and teachings found in *Gītā*. In this chapter, Lord Kriṣṇa told that to live and die, to be born and to grow, to have subjects come and go. Feelings of happiness and sorrow, they are always in the world. The cycle of time brings and takes all these conditions. There is no more grief after knowing the

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nature of life. Kama, anger, fear, raga, malice, worsen the mind's mood and senses are not subdued. Indriyajaya is the greatest sprit/confidence. Even if someone leaves the subject from outside, the insides mind does not agree. When the taste of subjects goes through the mind, then the mind becomes cheerful, calm and happy. Rivers meet in the sea, but it does not give up its dignity. When living in such a world, accepting its practices, many thoughts keep entering the mind. But those who do not lose their dignity only get peace. It is called Brahmi Situation in the Gītā in the definition of ancient spirituality. Mahatma Gandhi memorized by heart last nineteen Ślokas of this chapter and considered them as the companions during the non violent movement against the British rule.¹

Third chapter is Karmayoga, or the yoga of action (43 verses):

In this chapter, Lord Kṛiṣṇa told that a person cannot give up karma, it means in this inhabited world; everyone has to engage in some kind of work. Kṛiṣṇa gave his illustration and said that I am the form of Narayana, there is no work left for me. Even then I do deeds without sleep and others follow my path. The difference is that those who are foolish do the work by indulging but the knowledgeable do the deeds their intellect. Here in the Gītā, there is well-familiar word sagacity or intelligence, it is means not appropriate to uproot the people of ordinary understanding who are engaged in karma, because they cannot become knowledgeable and if their karma is missed, then they will wander from both the worlds. Nature compels a person to do karma. A person who wants to leave karma from outside, but the mind remains immersed in it. This chapter states that actions can bond the people of this world and even free them it. Without devotion working for the purpose to satisfy God, man can be relieved from the law of karmic response to his actions and is able to attain enlightenment and spirituality. According to Flood & Martin, chapter three and onwards develops "a theological response to Arjuna's dilemma".²

Forth Chapter is the Yoga of knowledge as well as the disciplines of action and knowledge (42 verses):

Kṛiṣṇa discloses that he educated this Yoga to the Vedic sages. Arjuna objects how you could deed like this whilst sages lived before you. Kṛiṣṇa mentioned that everybody is in the course of rejuvenation, whilst to Arjuna could not remind his earlier births. When dharma detorates and the men forgot the objective of his life, he goes back restore the dharma, said Kṛiṣṇa. When one will go back he contemplates about inner consciousness. The last Ślokas of this chapter goes back the argument of aimless action and the necessity to decide the correct action, caring out it as one's duty while disavowing the results and rewards. According to Kṛiṣṇa, the exterior action which inner disavowing is the furtive to the life of privilege. Action educates while altruistic response spirituality, self-

consciousness. In this chapter Kṛiṣṇa disclose the divine nature to Arjuna.³ Sri Kṛiṣṇa explains the long history of the Gītā, the purpose and significance of its landing in the world of every age, and explains the need for gaining intimacy with the self-knowledge of Guru.

Fifth Chapter is the Yoga of action and knowledge (29 verses):

In fifth chapter, Arjuna asks Kṛiṣṇa which path is better; Lord Kṛiṣṇa said that special attention has been paid to the rites or purification of the mind which is related to karma. If you walk properly on any one path, then you get the same result. By surrendering all the actions of life, a person reaches the pole point of absolute peace like a lotus blooming in water.

Sixth Chapter is the Yoga of self-control (47 verses):

Lord ŚrīKṛiṣṇa said in the sixth chapter that the restraint of the most senses is the squeeze of karma and knowledge. Yoga is when the state of mind in happiness and sadness remains in the same. When a person does any work with renouncing all worldly desires and desire for fruit, then that man is in situation of yoga. The person who subdues the mind, his mind becomes his best friend, but for the man who is not able to subdue the mind, that mind becomes his greatest enemy. The one who has subdued his mind gets the divine and for the person who attains enlightenment, happiness, sorrow, cold, heat and humiliation all become equal. Such a person is always content with subjugating the fixed mind and senses and attaining the divine by knowledge.

Seventh chapter is the Yoga of jñāna (knowledge of nirguṇa brahma) and vijñāna (knowledge of manifest divinity) 30 verses:

In the seventh chapter, ŚrīKṛiṣṇa discusses *jñāna* (knowledge) and *vijnana* (realization, understanding) using the Prakṛiti-Purusha (matter-soul) framework of the Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy, and the Maya-Brahman framework of its Vedanta school. ŚrīKṛiṣṇa said that knowledge of the infinitude of the universe is science and progress from monotony to unity is knowledge. Both these views are suitable for humans. In seventh chapter, there are so many forms of God are alluded, whose also aggrandizement comes in the tenth chapter named Vibhutiog. There is also a mention of the special Bhagwati vision, which has the same deity in the Sutra-Vasudeva: Sarvamiti, all Vasu or bodies, the noun is Vishnu. But according to His own interest/feeling in the world, the same deity is worshiped in many names and forms, they are all fine. But it is good that a learned person recognizes the world which is the highest summit of spiritual science.

Eighth chapter is the yoga of the Indestructible Brahma (28 verses):

In the eighth chapter, ŚrīKṛiṣṇa said that spirituality is the name of the combined composition of life and body. The body the creation and the sprit, these three powers works together in the body are called Adhigyas. In the Upanishads,

¹Sargeant, Winthrop (2009), Christopher Key Chapple (ed.), The Bhagavad Gītā: Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition, Albany: State University of New York Press. ISBN 978-1-4384-2841-3

²Galvin Flood, Charles Martin (2013) The Bhagavad Gītā: A new translation. W.W.Norton and Company.p.xix. ISBN 978-0-39334513-1

³Galvin Flood, Charles Martin (2013) The Bhagavad Gītā : A new translation. W.W.Norton and Company.p.xix. ISBN 978-0-39334513-1

the syllable was expanded and in the Gītā, the essence of that syllogism has been said - the syllable is the noun syllable of Brahma Paramana, i.e Parabrahma. Spiritedness is the name of the mingling structure of man, that is, organism soul and body.

Ninth chapter is the yoga of sovereign science and the sovereign secret (34 verses):

In the ninth chapter, Lord ŚrīKṛiṣṇa said that all the ritualistic rituals of the Vedas are Yajña, Amrit, death, saint-dissent (यज्ञ, अमृत, मृत्यु, संत-असंत) and all the gods and goddesses are there in Brahma (all of them are in the Brahma). In this area, the representation of Brahmanism is predominant, from which the creation of the expressed world is repeated. Many types of Devpuja are popular in the world, it is also right in its place, this vision of coordination was valid for the Bhagwat Acharyas, and in fact it was their great power.

Tenth chapter is the yoga of divine glories (42 verses):

The essence of the tenth chapter is that as many gods are there in the world, they are all the realities of the same God, all the qualities and demerits of a human being are forms of the power of God. Kṛiṣṇa says he is the *atman* in all beings, Arjuna's innermost Self, also compassionate Vishnu, the Surya (sun god), Indra, Shiva-Rudra, Ananta, Yama, as well as the Om, Vedic sages, time, Gayatri mantra, and the science of Self-knowledge. Arjuna accepts Kṛiṣṇa as the *purushottama* (Supreme Being). Though these gods cannot be interpreted with wisdom, they are there in the world. Someone is worshiping Peepal. Some mountain, river or sea, fish, turtles. Abundance of deities is found everywhere in the history of the world. Accepting his power, the Bhagavats gave everyone a form of Vishnu and gave them a new vision of coordination. Its name is Vibhutiog. The equities which is fortifies or miraculous are the form of God.

Eleventh chapter is the yoga of the vision of the universal form (55 verses):

In the 11th chapter, Arjuna saw the Vishwaroopa of God. Virāt Roop means the visible eyesight of the everlasting world above the human plane and ambit. The quadrilateral form of Vishnu is benign on the human plane. When Arjuna saw the great form of God, his forehead exploded. 'दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म' these nervous sentences came out of his mouth and he prayed that the natural condition God has placed for man is sufficient.

Twelve chapters is the yoga of devotion (20 verses):

In the twelfth chapter, Kṛiṣṇa glorifies the path of love and devotion to God. Bhagwan Kṛiṣṇanarrates the process of devotional yoga (Bhakti yoga). ŚrīKṛiṣṇa told that those who are engaged in the meditation of God are Bhagavanīṣṭha (भगवन्निष्ठ), that is, devotion arises from devotion. There are nine types of Sadhana Bhakti and Premalakshana (प्रेमलक्षणा) Bhakti, which are practiced by everyone. Lord Kṛiṣṇa said that a man who keeps his mind fixed and continues to worship my virtuous form, he is considered by me to be a more perfect siddha yogi among yogis. At the same time, a person who worships the omnipresent, unimaginable, formless, imperishable, immovable nature of God and

subdivides all his senses and remains in the interest of all beings, living in the same manner under all circumstances. Lord Kṛiṣṇa said to Arjuna that you keep your mind fixed in me and put your intellect in me, thus you will definitely stay in me forever. If you cannot do this, then generate the desire to get me through the practice of Bhakti-yoga. If you cannot do this also, then try to do deeds only for me, thus by doing deeds for me you will achieve the ultimate accomplishment of my attainment.

Thirteenth chapter is the Yoga of discrimination between the field and the knower of the field (35 verses):

In the thirteenth chapter he describes the difference between transient perishable physical body (*kṣetra*) and the immutable eternal soul (*kṣetrajna*). The presentation explains the difference between *ahaṁkāra* (ego) and *atman* (soul) and individual cognition and universal cognition. The knowledge of one's true self is linked to the realization of the soul. A pathless creation is born from the contrast of qualities. The solitary entity remains calm and serene, like a pure light, and the lonely soul is still idle. But Rajaguna, who is in the middle of the two, drags them to the ground of gesticulations. The name of the motion element is Rajas. Lord Kṛiṣṇa said that the feeling of not receiving anything other than me, the feeling of being stable in my devotion without being distracted, the feeling of being in a pure solitary place, the feeling of being constantly in self-form and the divine nature. All this has been said by me to be a sense of being interviewed, and whatever else is there is ignorance.

Fourteenth chapter is the Yoga of division of three guṇas (27 verses):

In the fourteenth chapter there is a summary of all the Vedic, philosophical and mythological metaphysics — there are many interpretations of the three guṇas — सत्व, रज, तम. Bhagwan Kṛiṣṇa opens again this chapter continuing his discourse from the previous chapter. Kṛiṣṇaclarifies the distinction between *purusha* and *prakriti*, by mapping human experiences to three guṇas these are listed as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. All phenomena and individual personalities are a combination of all three *guṇas* in varying and ever-changing proportions. The *guṇas* influence the ego, but not the soul, according to the text. This chapter also relies on the Samkhya theories.

Fifteenth chapter is the Yoga of the supreme person (20 verses):

In the fifteen chapter of GītāKṛiṣṇa explain the theology in the Vaishnava Bhakti tradition of Hinduism. Kṛiṣṇaconfers the essence of God, He explains the nature of mortal body as well as the atma of being. According to Franklin Edgerton, the combination of the Ślokas of this chapter with the Ślokas of other chapters makes the view point of Gītā dualistic. The ultimate summary of the Gītā leads to monoism, the one God.

Sixteenth chapter is the Yoga of division between the divine and the demoniacal properties (24 verses):

In the sixteenth chapter, the department of Devasur property is described. From the very beginning, the universe has been conceived in Rigdeva as the goddess and demonic powers. One good and other one bad, this is a fantasy of two forms

of creation. One is light, the other is darkness. One is immortal, the other is mortal. One is truth, the other one is false. Lord Kṛiṣṇa said that a person with devilish nature, who is obsessed with a variety of concerns, goes to hell. People with devilish nature consider themselves superior and they are very arrogant. Such human beings, while indulging in wealth and false dignity, perform a yagna for name-only with pride without any scripture. Jealousy with devilish nature, cruel people and inferior in human beings, I keep engaged such inferior human beings in the ocean of the world constantly in the devilish vagaries.

Seventeenth chapter is the Yoga of the division of the threefold faith (28 verses):

In the seventeenth chapter, Lord ŚrīKṛiṣṇa stated that the सत्, रजandतम in which these three qualities are manifested, their faith or loyalty becomes illustrate in this life. It is related to these three qualities, सत्, रजandतम, that is, the virtue in which one arises his devotion or loyalty to life becomes the same. यज्ञ, तप, दान, कर्म are all conducted with three types of devotion. Even diet is of three types. The Gītā has explained their differences and characteristics here. Just as the status attained by यज्ञ, तप, दान is also called 'सत्' and whatever action is done for the pleasure of that God is also definitely called "सत्". Whatever is accomplished in the form of यज्ञ, तप, दान without reverence is all called 'असत्', so it is neither beneficial in this birth nor beneficial in the next life.

Eighteenth chapter is the Yoga of liberation through the path of knowledge and self-surrender (78 verses):

The eighteenth chapter summarizes all the teachings of the Gītā. The intellect which properly recognizes religion-unrighteousness, bondage-salvation, instinct-retirement, is the true wisdom and is the true achievement of human beings. There is no one among the human beings of the earth and among the gods of heaven who is saved by these three qualities of nature. It is necessary to walk well after watching a man so that he can protect his intellect and instinct from evil and can identify what should be done and what should not be done. Those people, who pay head to this GītāŚāstra with devotion, get free from all sins.

In conclusion, the Bhagavad Gītā serves as an invaluable guide, offering profound insights into the cycle of life and death. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the realities of our existence. As a divine song by Lord Kṛiṣṇa, it elucidates a philosophy of life that not only alleviates stress but also enriches our understanding and appreciation of life.

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