



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta: A Brief Journey into the Evergreen Text.

Article by: -

Raunak Chaturvedi | Student, B.B.A.-LL.B.(HONS.) | Amity University, Kolkata

### Abstract:

Let us imagine a situation where we need to act against our wishes. Where although the victims of our actions are dear to us, we still need to act in order to restore order in our environment. Let us consider a situation where we know that we have to act in a particular manner, but, still we can't because we are afraid of the fact that if we do act in that way, it is going to jeopardize our own existence within that social system. When we think that whatever is happening is an injustice to us. When we believe that, 'It is I who is doing. I am the actual doer.' When, we simply can't align ourselves with the fact that whatever is happening, has happened and will happen is nothing but a repurcussive outcome of what we are doing, had done and will be doing or are doing, respectively. In such a situation, we often ask a question. We are tormented by those two extremely dangerous and life eating words. What if? It is these two words that are the main cause of the *Geeta* which has been considered as the Holy Book for the religion of Hinduism. It is because *Arjun* had uttered 'what if', that *Shree Krishna* had sung this knowledge dripping *Geeta* in order to quench the spiritual thirsts of the generations to come. Through this article, we will try to understand the main philosophy behind this evergreen text and also, with the help of some personal examples, see how much it is applicable.

### Introduction:

When the British came to India, then, they thought that in order to understand Hindu philosophies, the best way was to study their Holy Text or Holy Book. But, when they tried to find the same, then, they realized that unlike the Abrahamic faiths, Hinduism didn't have any specific Holy Book, like The Bible or The Qur'an. The *Vedas* were as important as the *Upnishads*, the *Purans* were equally important as the *Shastras* and *Sutras*. So, amidst this big mess, they then decided to find the book, which would match the most with the Abrahamic texts. And they found the *Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta*. They were able to relate to it, as like The Bible, in the *Geeta* too, there was this one entity(*Krishna*), who claimed to be the Supreme. He said that no one was above Him and whatever happened was because of His own will. This declaration was synonymous to the British with their Abrahamic God, so, they declared *Geeta* as the Holy Book. But, they forgot the fact that though synonymous to the Abrahamic Bible or Qur'an, the *Geeta* was extremely different. Firstly, it talked about time being cyclical in its movement. Unlike the Abrahamic time flow, where time is linear or they followed a linear paradigm, in *Geeta* a cyclical paradigm is followed and strongly propagated. This emphasized upon the fact that everything was cyclical and would come and go back eventually, only to repeat this process. *Geeta* also talked about the functioning of the universe as a system and not something which was governed by some hegemonic entity who would ruin its subjects if it's orders weren't followed. The main feature of *Geeta* and of Hinduism per se is that even God is a part of this universe's functions. Even God can't escape the rules of the universe. The rules which have been created for the benefit of all. But, these rules are not strict in their attributes. There is no such concept of eternal damnation. The simple theory that is followed is that of *karma* and *karmaphal*. It simply means that whatever you do, you will have to reap it's result accordingly. However, the interesting part is that

God too is involved within this Doctrine. Even He is assuming different forms and working, or doing *karma* in order to motivate the normal beings to do so too. He is all powerful. There is nothing in this Creation that He can't achieve or access, but, still, He takes various forms and involves Himself with the workings of the universe in order to show that even the Supreme Entity is inescapable from the results of His deeds. The *Geeta* is basically a conversation between the warrior prince, *Arjun* and his charioteer, *Shree Krishna*, who is actually God who has come to vanquish the evil through him. *Arjun* is tormented by the fact that in order to regain his rightful claim over the kingdom of *Hastinapur*, he will have to fight his cousins, the *Kauravas*, who have all his teachers, nephews, friends, uncles, etc., on their side. The *Geeta* recorded is actually the narration given of this conversation given by *Sanjay*, the servant of *Dhritrashtra* to him, who is the king of *Hastinapur* and the father of the *Kauravas*. So, it would never be possible for us to say that what was the actual dialogue that had passed between the two of them. *Krishna* had provided the two opponents two choices. One was to have Him (*Narayan*) and the other was to have His army (*Narayani*). The *Pandavas* chose *Narayan* and the *Kauravas* the *Narayani*. However, still, the *Pandavas* won because when He rides your chariot, then, no one can stop you from triumphing. We will see further in this article that why all this happened, how was *Krishna* a game-changer and also, that what did He actually say to all and for all.

### Keywords:

Bhagvad Geeta, Shree Krishna, Karma Yog, Bhakti Yog, Gyan Yog, Mahabharat.

### Word Guide:

The word(s) which convey the same meaning have been mentioned here:

1. God/Krishna- Parameshwar, Sacchinadand Bhagwan, Supreme Soul, Parabrahma, Parampita, Narayan.

### What was the Situation:

We must see the fact that *Arjun* was a warrior by birth and was on the verge of fighting with his own family members, fighting to kill them. The *Geeta*'s beginning shows us the amount of animosity between the two cousin families, that is the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas*. *Dhritrashtra* asked *Sanjay* to use his divine vision to see and narrate the happenings of the battlefield. While asking him to do so, he referred to *Pandavas* as *Pandu*'s sons and not his nephews. We also see that at that very moment, *Duryodhan*, after seeing the *Pandav* army, is both filled with pride and jealousy. Pride of the fact that all the big warriors like *Bhishma*, *Dronacharya*, *Kripacharya*, *Karna*, *Ashwatthama*, etc., were on his side, along with a huge army of 11 contingents. He was jealous of the fact that the *Pandavas* had managed to arrange a huge army too, of 7 contingents and also, the master of politics, *Shree Krishna* was on their side. He therefore ordered his commanders to surround and protect *Bhishma*, as for him he was the most important possession currently. In this scenario, as per *Arjun*'s request, when 'charioteer' *Krishna* drove the chariot to the middle of the battlefield, the fact that his blood was against him dawned upon *Arjun*. He was terrified to imagine the amount of sin that he would have to experience. He thought that there was no peace in killing one's own family and also said that the glory of victory in this battle was actually a throne upon a thousand corpses, which he would not earn even if he is given the kingdom of the three celestial realms. Under this 'righteous' dilemma, he asked *Shree Krishna* to help him to see the reality.

### What Parameshwar said about Karma Yog:

'Yog' is a term that is Sanskrit in its origin and means 'to unite'. This means that via our activities or 'karma' we can unite with *Parameshwar* or God. *Geeta*'s most significant feature is *Shree Krishna*'s elaboration on the three types of union that are possible for any organism. He slowly and gradually explains all the three along with some more information about the functions of the universe and how it functions as a system. Firstly, he talked about 'karma yog', i.e., alignment of the mind(soul) with God via one's actions. The interesting part that needs to be noted is the fact that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This theory of *karma* and *karmaphal* forms the basis of *Geeta* and also of the Hindu thought system. *Krishna* said that knowledge, credit and the informed person are the three media of doing any action. This means that the appropriate knowledge or in this context, the knowledge of emotions or feelings with which the karma is done is important, the fact that credit is to be received for it is second and that the person who is going to do or is doing it must be informed about the knowledge is necessary. Now, *Krishna* divided knowledge

into three categories. First was *Satwa*, then *Rajas* and finally *Tamas*. These three are the emotional elements which govern the committing of any action at all times for all organisms. Like he said, *Satwa* meant that the person was free from the mental vices, he sees the picture of *Parameshwar* in all, he is philanthropic by his virtues, never tries to hurt anyone, worships the *Devas* and does the three types of austerities-*mansik*, *vachik* and *sharirik*. *Mansik* meant that person didn't let any bad thoughts about himself or others to come inside his mind, he would always be immersed within the sea of love. *Vachik* meant that he would not say anything ill for anyone and always try to reduce the miseries of others by way of his sweet utterances. *Sharirik* meant that the person would always eat appropriately, sleep and wake up on time. He would not eat more or fast more. Anyways, *Rajas* meant the person who was uncertain about the course of his actions. He would always try to analyse, compare the various diversities, would do his actions not for the sake of doing them, unlike *Satwik*, but, would do them for the fruit that is to be received, for fame, popularity. They also perform austerities, but, they do it transiently and that is of no use. The *Tamasik* are the worst kind of people. Gossipy, complaining and short-tempered, it is their habit to start unnecessary quarrels, they don't understand the philosophies of *Satwik* people, they consider the lie to be the truth and most interestingly, whatever is unrighteous is righteous for them. We will look into these people more elaborately later, but, for the sake of *karma yog*, we understood that there are basically these three types of people who do their karma accordingly. With the above elaboration, one would think that the *Satwik* people always receive the best fruits or results, the *Rajasik* are the ones who get mixed results and the *Tamasik* are the ones who get the worst. Well, this is true, but, not entirely. It is true in the sense that they will get the respective results, but, it isn't necessary that they will get them in this lifetime.

E.g.: Some people are born poor, some are born super rich. Some are born deformed, some are one of the most beautiful beings. The same parent couple who is saintly in their attributes, can have devilish children who torment them.

These are nothing but the fruits, or the *prarabdh* of a person. *Prarabdh* is the account of anyone's deeds. What is remaining to be given, good or bad, is the *prarabdh*. It is the balance that remains for the person to be taken after doing anything, either from the previous lifetimes or from this very.

Then, the question arises that then why shall we do anything at all? Just like *Arjun* had said. He had suggested that then a person should simply become a sage. Leave the world and become a mendicant. But, to this *Krishna* had said that the path to renunciation does not lie in leaving, but, accepting. If a person does his daily activities with all the dedication, if he is always concentrating on Him (*Krishna* in this context), if he is doing all his activities with a view that he is doing it for Him, then, he will attain freedom from the bondages of this world. *Krishna* had said that He provides marvellous results to such people. One interesting part that he mentions is that if a person attains victory over the three psychological elements, that is *Satwa*, *Rajo* and *Tamo* gun, then, these people get *Sacchidanand Bhagwan*, or the Supreme Soul whose consciousness is in peace and supreme bliss due to being situated in truth. So, the formula of *karma yog* is very simple. It is formula number 18. The *Mahabharat*, the *Geeta*, the number of days the battle lasted, the number of armies involved, all resemble with the number 18. Why, because each body is a house with 9 gates. Two eyes, two nostrils, one mouth, two ears, one anus and one genital orifice. These are the nine gates to the surrounding world, which result in *karma* by the body. But, when the body is doing *karma* for only itself, then, it is doing the karma for 9 gates. But, when the body does *karma* for someone else, then, both the bodies are involved and the number of gates becomes 18. This is the formula of 18, that is doing the deeds for other people, not bothering oneself about the result and immersing oneself in the thoughts of God.

### What was Parameshwar's view on Bhakti Yog:

The discussion went on and *Krishna*, instead of saying *Parabrahma*, or *Parampita*, started to refer Himself as them. He simply started to say that He is everything, He is Supreme. At this juncture, all the three people, *Arjun*, *Dhritrashtra* and *Sanjay* were puzzled, as only *Narayan*, the Supreme Preserver and guardian of the universe had the capability to talk like that. *Krishna* said that he had told about the concept of *karma yog* to *Surya*, the Sun God, he told that to his son *Ikshavaku*, who then told it to the *rajarshis*. This concept had been extinct from the Earth for quite a long time and had been secretive, but, as *Arjun* was His true devotee and friend, He had told all this to him. *Arjun* promptly asked that *Suryadev* was ancient whereas *Krishna* was modern, so, how He could tell that to *Suryadev*? Then, from this point the conversation started to take the shape of one between a devotee and God. *Krishna* said that this was

because of *awagaman*, or reincarnation. Even Arjun had undergone many births, like Him, but, He knew and he didn't. *Krishna* started to elaborate on *Bhakti yog*, or alignment through emotion. Here He said that the true relation between a *bhakt* and a *Bhagwan* is one where just like the devotee worships Him, God also worships His devotee. It is like clapping, which can't be done without two hands. *Krishna* then started to elaborate on the fact that everything was His existence, or He was within everything. For instance, He was also rain and sunlight, shadow and light, He was the existence and the existing, the teacher and the student, the one who cries and the one who makes one cry, He was the one who created problems like the web of a spider and He was the one who untangled it, He was mother, father, teacher, grandfather, *Govind*, *Shyam*, guardian, sustainer, friend, the one who was available at all places wherever He would be called. He was creation and He was destruction, whatever good, bad, auspicious, inauspicious, happened only and only when He would provide His consent to it. He was the one who used to burn in the form of the Sun, He was the one who would rain in the form of a cloud, He was the one who managed and ruled everything, He was everything. The most interesting sentence that was uttered in this phase is reproduced as follows:

*'Whenever I walk upon the bosom of Earth in my mortal form, the idiotic people doubt Me and My virtues.*

*But, who will understand the powers of Me, God, without being a devotee of Mine?'*

This line in itself proved that *Krishna* claimed that He was the Supreme, no one was above Him. He was the one who meant everything. He was everything and He did everything. This revelation in itself showed us that this entity, who was the Supreme amongst them all, had voluntarily taken this mortal form and was doing activities along with these mortal beings. From this we came to understand the fact that why He did not pick up a weapon and rather preferred to be a charioteer. He was God. And God is just. He would not fight a fight that was the outcome of the sufferer's own actions. Moreover, He was Supreme and He would never fight someone who was below Him. But, He could guide the people who were righteous, which He was doing by being their charioteer. Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that the chariot is the vehicle of the body, the master is the soul, the charioteer is the mind. The mind gets distracted by the attractions of the world and so, the chariot is driven towards such fads. But, when *Krishna* rides the chariot, then only we get to understand the true reality, the true aspects and outcomes of all things.

*'Whenever there is the destruction of dharm, I come. I come in My various forms. I come and hold the hands of the saints. I come and penalise the bad, who had tortured the meek. My forms are divine and heavenly, they are many and all are for the restoration of dharm.'*

And this is only possible by *yog*. *Bhakti yog* phase went on to witness the description of the major divine forms of *Krishna* in this world, as requested by *Arjun*. *Krishna* said that He was *Vishnu* amongst the sons of *Aditi*, *peepal* amongst the trees, *Gayatri* amongst the poetic metres, *Shukra* amongst the poets, *Brihaspati* amongst the *purohits*, *Skanda* amongst the commanders, *Shiva* amongst the *Rudras*, *Vasuki* amongst the snakes, *Shesh* amongst the serpents, etc. He said that He is everywhere, in all directions, He is all encompassing and complete, standing before *Arjun* and He asked him to pick up his bow and fight.

At this stage the most dramatic part of this dialogue appears. The same *Krishna* who was being referred to as a 'charioteer' was now being referred to as 'Bhagwan'. *Arjun* had realised that *Krishna* was none other than *Narayan(Vishnu)* Himself, the Supreme Soul that controlled the whole universe. So, he asked Him to show him His Supreme form in all its aspects and glories, or the *Virat Swaroop*. *Krishna* said that for this *Arjun* will have to have divine vision, which he was provided with. *Arjun* was astounded by what he saw. There were innumerable heads, hands, legs and divine serpents. This Supreme Being wore extremely beautiful clothes which were giving the smell of divine perfumes. Fire was coming out of the various mouths and the teeth were monstrous in their shape, people were being sucked in from one mouth and then, thrown out from the other. *Brahma*, the creator aspect of the Supreme Being, was seated upon a lotus. The grandeur of this form was awesome and terrifying at the same time. It had a form and at the same time was formless and endless. No one had ever seen *Vishnu* in His complete glories ever before. *Arjun* was so terrified that he asked Him to come back to His friendly two armed form and also asked for his forgiveness. He had realised that he had insulted Him, the almighty, though occasionally and now referred to Him as the Father of the Creation and the Supreme Lord and teacher. He also asked Him to forgive his baseless arguments

which had occurred earlier and may insulted His divine existence. Then, when, *Krishna* assumed His four armed *Vishnu* form, then, He told *Arjun* that this *Virat Swaroop* had never been witnessed by anyone before.

*'No ritual, austerity or penance can make Me show this form to anyone. Many saints and sages were finished but couldn't witness it, no Deva or any other entity had ever seen it.'*

Then, He said to *Arjun* that He had given death to the perpetrators of the law and justice. He had given them death for crossing all the limits of devilry. The boat of their sins had capsized and now *Arjun* was chosen by Him to kill them. He also mentioned that He Himself was capable of finishing them. His destructive forms included a volcano and his ferocious form included *Mahakaal*. But, He asked *Arjun* to take this credit and kill the felons. He also says that,

*'If someone has to get my love, then, he will have to come by putting his head to the ground, meaning by abandoning his arrogance.'*

We may understand *bhakti yog* by observing the fact that *Krishna* now revealed His identity as the all-encompassing, Supreme Soul who did, knew and made everything. So, He asked everyone to concentrate on His Divine form, thinking that everything was included within this. This would make the person realise the fact that everything that was happening was not happening ignorantly, it was being witnessed by someone, someone who would be there to conduct justice with the people who were tormented for doing their duties righteously, to punish them who had crossed all lines of being a vile being. So, by emotionally aligning ourselves with the Supreme, we could achieve renunciation from the cycle of births and deaths(*awagaman*).

### **What did Parameshwar say about Gyan Yog:**

This can be considered to be the most informative segment of the *Geeta*. We may understand this by the fact that all the dialogues now dealt with the working of the universe as a system. The segment of *Gyan yog* began with the information by *Parameshwar*, that this body was *Kshetra* (environment, dominion) and the soul that rested within was the *Kshetraghna* (resident, tenant). Whosoever understood this fact that the body and everything else was a *Kshetra* was termed to be a *Kshetraghna*. *Kshetraghna* was the name given to the soul of the person. This *Kshetraghna* was pure, clean and amazing, but, the *Kshetra* was filled with dirt and flaws. He said that the texts referred to in the *Geeta* were the *Brahma Sutra* and the *Vedas*. Now one of the most interesting bifurcation that He gave was that one's *Kshetra* was made up of fourteen different factors. These included *ahankar*(arrogance), *buddhi*(intelligence), *mool* (person's roots), *prakriti* (person's nature), *roop*(form), *ras* (emotional element), *gandh*(smell), *sparsh*(touch), *Shakti*(energy), *sukh*(happiness), *dukh*(sadness), *ichcha*(desires), *dwesh*(jealously) and *chetna*(consciousness). He asked people to remove pride, not to bully any organism, be forgiving and have a simple dialect and be pure both from outside and inside. Subjects should not be the subject of attachment and one should have a flawless devotion, to see liked and disliked with the same vision, seeing them as His form. Then, as mentioned earlier, after the *Kshetra-Kshetraghna* division, the second most important division given was that of the three psychological elements(*supra*). The elaborate characteristics of these three have already been provided, but to add a few more, we may say that *Satwik* people eat simple food items, *Rajasik* like salty, bitter and sour, like the *rakshasa* and the ones with a foul smell and which is old is loved by *Tamasik*. *Satwik* people worship the *Devas*, *Rajasik* like the *rakshasa* and worship the *yaksha* and *Tamasik* worship ghosts and ghouls and never do anything for the public good. Then, we also come across the fact that there are three types of donations.

E.g.: The ones given with the best of feelings without any malice and greed are *Satwik*. The ones given with the feeling that the donor should get good results and also, should be praised by the people are called *Rajasik* and the ones which are given with the feeling to insult others and also to demean them are *Tamasik* donations.

The keyword that needs to be remembered while understanding *Gyan yog* is empathy. We will have to empathise with the other person. It is just like the formula number 18. We will have to understand the situation of the other, we will have to understand the problem and the status of the other, only then, union is possible. We need to understand that all beings are governed by these three elements at all times.

To sum this segment, we must see that the fact *gyan*, or knowledge is the key term for this alignment. We must have the knowledge of the facts that we are *Kshetraghna* and that everything else is our *Kshetra*. The *Kshetra* is the circumference and the *Kshetraghna* the centre. But, in practicality, the reversal of roles takes place. The *Kshetra* becomes the centre and the *Kshetraghna* the circumference, meaning that the *Kshetra* governs our souls as mentioned in the example of the chariot earlier.

E.g.: We work day in and night, for what, maybe because we want to buy a bigger car, maybe an exotic vacation. We don't work for our satisfaction. Needs do exist, they need to be fulfilled, but, these needs are not the governing factors of our lives. Self-actualisation through one's profession should be the goal. The rest all will be fulfilled automatically.

To conclude, we may look at the closing statements of *Shree Krishna*. He says that whatever has to be gained, lost, is governed by Him. He is the one who makes everything happen. *Arjun* does not need to be afraid of the world to do his duty, because the caretaker of the world is there for his help. All the entities, whether living or dead are like seasons. These relations, friends, relatives are all seasonal in their existence. They come and they go. So, like seasons, we must enjoy their benefits and shortcomings and when they go, not mourn for their loss. As they will come back again, as is the trend. Whatever moments are there happening currently are transitory, they won't be the same tomorrow. They are bound to end. But when, that is the question of one's *prarabdh*. For some, those moments end early, for some, it takes death. And finally, if someone rejects to follow his duty, then, remember that *Krishna* won't be upon your chariot...

### Conclusion:

To sum-up, we may say that the main problem that arisen in today's world is the fact that the self has become more important. People have become more self-centred. In such a self-absorbed scenario, this Book asks us to follow the formula number 18 through which we can unite with Him. The fact that this alignment can be done by three ways, viz., actionally, emotionally and knowledgeably is the most important feature of this text. We may say that the *Geeta* is a universally applicable text and also, it doesn't incriminate the people who don't abide by it, but, simply tells that they will get the results accordingly, but, are always welcome to the right path.

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank my parents, without whose love and support, it wouldn't have been possible for me to write this article.

### References:

1. Pattnaik, Devdutt. *my Gita*. New Delhi, 2015, Rupa Publications India.
2. *Shrimad Bhagvad Geeta*, Gorakhpur, *Geeta Press*.