



THE STUDY OF THE BHAGAWAD GITA

in the light of Sri Aurobindo

Facilitator: Sampada Savardekar, PhD

Credits: 16. One Semester. Code: BGSA

Dr. Sampada Savardekar, is an ex-student of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (Pondicherry), Dr. Sampada Savardekar has completed her doctoral studies Sanskrit, with a doctoral thesis: "The Secret of Action in the Bhagawad Gita: A Critical Study". Her special interest is in extracting the essence of the ancient spiritual texts of India, as well as references found in Kavya and moulding the teaching to benefit the youth of today, through education and practical guidance.

Program Brief

The study of any scripture, however sacred, would prove futile if it cannot be relevant to today's human needs. That, which apart from being true to its own epoch, also holds within it the message for future humanity must be an ideal treatise, which can deliver modern man from his present state of spiritual bankruptcy. The aim of studying the Bhagawad Gita is to unravel the message always verifiable by experience it contains, the truth that is valid for all ages, and all mankind.

Course 1: The Crisis and the Query (6 Credits)

1. Introduction, the need of studying the Gita (10 days)

- To reflect upon the nature of the crisis in and around us
- To be clear about our approach to the Gita's study before beginning the study
- To introspect and ask ourselves what it is that we expect to receive from the Gita
- To understand why the Bhagawad Gita has been termed an immortal scripture by Sri Aurobindo
- To enable the student to focus upon the central aim of this study which is to try and derive from the Gita its living message, and not material for academic rumination



2. Arjuna's Crisis (10 days)

- To discern between the army on the side of Dharma and the army on the side of Adharma in the Mahabharata war
- To study the character of Arjuna and the cause of his sudden awakening
- To understand the cause of Arjuna's weakness and its link to the different planes of being
- To take a note of Arjuna's attitude in his approach to Śrī Kṛṣṇa for help and guidance, his humility and his wish to know the 'good' rather than the 'pleasant'
- To examine the concept of Ahimsā from Sri Aurobindo's point of view

3. Karma and the Concept of Yajna (10 days)

- To clarify the meanings of key terms like: Yoga, Sāṅkhya and Yajña
- To understand the concept of Yoga in the Gita and the role of Intelligent Will in Yoga
- To contemplate on the role of action in Yoga and challenge the misconception that action is a necessary obstacle on one's journey towards divinity and perfection
- To understand the deeper significance of sacrifice as portrayed in the Gita

4. Avataarhood and Vibhuti yoga (10 days)

- To understand the human and Divine births and their significance.
- To understand concept of Dharma and the Avatār's work in relation to re-establishing the fading Dharma.
- To understand the real reason for the descent of the Avatār.
- To see how in the Avatār, the Divine Consciousness and the instrumental personality are connected.
- To see the role of the Vibhūti and how he contributes in the Divine Plan.
- To introduce the ten mythological avatārs as a parable of evolution of consciousness upon earth.
- To define the crucial role that Arjuna has to play as a Vibhūti and as a representative of humanity.

5. Vishwarupadarshanam (The Gita's treatment of evil) (10 days)

- To understand the Divine Compassion and Grace which allows Arjuna to have the vision of the Lord's grand and splendid Divine Form.
- To become aware that the Supreme Divinity is not only all-Beauty and all-Bliss, but can also be destructive, cruel and merciless, when necessary
- To realise that evil and darkness are also created by the same Divine who is the source of Light and Beauty and that evil too is a tool that encourages and enables our progress.
- To realize that the work planned for Arjuna is part of the Divine's master-plan and



the Divine calls upon him to merely be the instrument.

- To clear the common misconception about the necessity of physical torture, penance or rituals in realizing the Divine.
- To realize the role of Bhakti in attaining to the Divine.

6. Assimilation and Assessment (10 days)

Course 2: The Secret of Deliverance (6 Credits)

1. Bhakti and Shraddha (10 days)

- To understand the importance given to Bhakti in the Gita and challenge the idea of Bhakti being subordinate to Jnana or Karma
- To develop a comprehensive concept of Bhakti founded in Faith (Śraddhā)
- To challenge the misinterpretation of Śraddhā as a religion or the pursuit of ritualistic worship
- To explore the threefold nature of Śraddhā
- To see the difference between Bhakti towards the Impersonal Brahman and the Bhakti toward a personal Godhead and know about the kind of Bhakti that Śrī Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to pursue

2. Gunas and Beyond (10 days)

- To understand the concept of the three guṇas
- To create an occasion for the student to reflect upon one's own nature and the play of the three guṇas and their impact on oneself.
- To understand that the signs of a person who is Guṇātīta or beyond the guṇas

3. Swabhava and Swadharma (10 days)

- To discuss the concept of dharma and its source.
- To generate an awareness about the true significance of the fourfold order of society and challenge its contemporary narrow and rigid interpretation.
- To understand the concept of svabhāva (inner nature).
- To reflect if our current personality is in harmony with our inner svabhāva.

4. Purushottamayoga (includes Jiva and Para-prakriti) (10 days)

- To understand the two natures in existence i.e., phenomenal nature and the spiritual nature
- To comprehend that although jīva is formed of the Parāprakṛti, she (Parāprakṛti) is not exhausted by it
- To be able to differentiate between the three poises of the One Divine: Kṣara, Akṣara and Puruṣottama



5. Conclusion and finale (10 days)

- To present a brief overview of the core-concepts of the Gita
- To bring to the forefront the harmonising power of the Gita and its similarity to the synthesising power of Sri Aurobindo
- To stimulate and inspire the reader to approach the Gita and Sri Aurobindo with the integral way of spiritual upliftment

6. Assimilation and Assessment (10 days)

Course 3: Research Practicum/Seminar/Project Work (4 Credits)