

SKM YOGA

YOGA TEACHER TRAINING MANUAL

Compiled by Dr. Shivam Mishra | SKM Yoga Institute, New Delhi

SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

Yoga Shlokas from All 18 Chapters

Sanskrit Shlokas • Transliteration • English Meaning • Commentary

Karma Yoga

The Path of Action

Jnana Yoga

The Path of Wisdom

Bhakti Yoga

The Path of Devotion

Compiled & Authored by

Dr. Shivam Mishra

SKM Yoga Institute, New Delhi

www.skmyoga.in

WhatsApp: 8826476724 | Call: 8920921620

PREFACE

Dr. Shivam Mishra | SKM Yoga Institute, New Delhi

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is not merely a scripture. It is the most comprehensive and most practically applicable manual of yoga ever composed — a living conversation between a student standing at the threshold of his greatest test and a teacher who happens to be the Divine itself. Lord Krishna's teachings to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra address every form of yoga — karma, jnana, bhakti, raja, dhyana, sankhya — weaving them into a single, integrated vision of human transformation and liberation.

For yoga teacher training students at SKM Yoga, the Bhagavad Gita is not optional philosophical background reading. It is the essential living text that explains why we practice yoga, what yoga truly is at its deepest levels, how yoga practice transforms the practitioner, and what the ultimate goal of yoga is. Every yoga teacher who aspires to teach with genuine depth must understand the Gita's yoga teachings — not as ancient mythology but as immediately relevant, urgently practical wisdom for the modern human being.

This manual presents carefully selected shlokas (verses) from all eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita that focus specifically on yoga — its nature, its practice, its philosophy, and its fruits. Each shloka is presented with the original Sanskrit text, Roman transliteration, precise English translation, and an extended commentary of 150-200 words written specifically for yoga teacher training students. The commentary connects each shloka's wisdom to the actual experience of yoga practice and teaching, making the Gita's profound teachings immediately applicable in the yoga room, the teacher training studio, and daily life.

May every student who studies this manual develop a deep and personal relationship with the Bhagavad Gita — returning to it again and again throughout their career as a yoga teacher, finding new layers of meaning and new reservoirs of wisdom at every stage of their journey.

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Dr. Shivam Mishra
SKM Yoga Institute, New Delhi

Introduction: The Bhagavad Gita as a Yoga Manual

The Gita's Unique Position in Yoga Literature

The Bhagavad Gita occupies a unique and irreplaceable position in the history of yoga. While the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are the most systematic philosophical presentation of yoga, the Gita is the most human, most accessible, and most experientially immediate. The Yoga Sutras present yoga as a technical science; the Gita presents it as a living, breathing, heart-centered path — situated in the midst of life's most demanding circumstances rather than in an ashram or meditation cave.

The Gita is embedded in the Mahabharata (Bhishma Parva, chapters 23-40) and is presented as an urgent conversation between Arjuna, the great warrior, and Krishna, his charioteer and friend — who is simultaneously revealed to be the Supreme Divine. The battlefield setting is not incidental. It is the deliberate choice of a profound literary and philosophical genius: the teaching of yoga is placed precisely where human beings most need it — in the middle of their most extreme challenge, their deepest confusion, and their most urgent need for clarity.

The Yoga Chapters: A Map

The Gita's eighteen chapters each have traditional names that reflect their primary yoga topic. While every chapter contains yoga teachings, the following are particularly important for yoga teacher training students:

- ◆ Chapter 2 (Sankhya Yoga) — The philosophical foundation: nature of the Self, the indestructible Atman, and the first definition of yoga as equanimity
- ◆ Chapter 3 (Karma Yoga) — The yoga of selfless action: how to act in the world without generating binding karma
- ◆ Chapter 4 (Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga) — The yoga of wisdom: transcending action through knowledge
- ◆ Chapter 5 (Karma Sanyasa Yoga) — Renunciation and action reconciled
- ◆ Chapter 6 (Dhyana Yoga) — The yoga of meditation: the most detailed meditation instructions in the Gita
- ◆ Chapter 9 (Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga) — The royal knowledge: Bhakti and non-dual vision
- ◆ Chapter 12 (Bhakti Yoga) — The devotional path to liberation
- ◆ Chapter 13 (Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaga Yoga) — The field and the knower of the field
- ◆ Chapter 18 (Moksha Sanyasa Yoga) — The synthesis of all yoga paths

Chapter One

Arjuna Vishada Yoga

The Yoga of Arjuna's Grief — The Crisis That Begins the Teaching

Though traditionally not named a 'yoga' in the conventional sense, the first chapter is titled Arjuna Vishada Yoga — the Yoga of Grief. The Vishada (grief) of Arjuna is the essential prerequisite for all that follows: the student must be genuinely destabilised by life's deepest questions before the teaching of yoga can be received with full seriousness. For yoga teacher training students, this chapter teaches that every genuine student arrives at yoga through some form of Arjuna's crisis — and this crisis is not an obstacle to the path but the very doorway to it.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 1, Verse 28-29

***drishtvenam svajanam Krishna yuyutsum samupasthitam |
sidanti mama gatrani mukham cha parishushyati***

*drishtvenam svajanam krsna yuyutsum samupasthitam | sidanti mama gatrani mukham ca
parisusyati*

***"Seeing these my kinsmen, O Krishna, arrayed, eager to fight, my limbs
fail and my mouth becomes dry."***

Arjuna's physical symptoms — trembling limbs, dry mouth, shaking body, failing bow — are the physiological expressions of extreme psychological crisis. For yoga teachers, this passage is profoundly important: it demonstrates that the body and the mind are inseparably connected, and that unresolved inner conflict manifests immediately in the physical body. This is the embodied reality of the mind-body connection that yoga practice addresses. Arjuna is experiencing what we would today call an acute stress response — sympathetic nervous system activation, adrenal flooding, muscular weakness. His yoga practice has not yet given him the tools to meet this moment with equanimity. The entire Gita is Krishna's response to this crisis — and the yoga it teaches is precisely the practice that builds the inner resources to face life's most extreme moments without losing one's centre.

Chapter Two Sankhya Yoga

The Yoga of Knowledge — The Philosophical Foundation of All Yoga

Chapter Two is the philosophical cornerstone of the entire Gita. Krishna begins by addressing the indestructible nature of the Self (Atman), then introduces the foundational concept of yoga as equanimity (samatvam), and defines the Sthitaprajna — the person of steady wisdom who is the living embodiment of advanced yoga. This chapter contains more essential yoga shlokas than almost any other.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 20

***na jayate mriyate va kadachit nayam bhutva bhavita va na
bhuyah | ajo nityah shashvato yam purano na hanyate
hanyamane sharire***

*na jayate mriyate va kadachit nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah | ajo nityah shashvato yam
purano na hanyate hanyamane sarire*

"The Self is never born nor does it ever die; it has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. It is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, primeval. It is not slain when the body is slain."

This shloka is the philosophical foundation of all yoga practice. The understanding that the true Self — the Atman, the pure consciousness within us — is eternal, unborn, and deathless completely transforms the practitioner's relationship with the body, with aging, with illness, and with death. When a yoga teacher understands this teaching not merely intellectually but as a living reality experienced in meditation, it profoundly changes how they work with students. Fear of death — Abhinivesha, the fifth klesha of Patanjali — is the deepest root of human suffering. Krishna addresses it here directly by revealing the indestructible nature of the true Self. For yoga teachers, this shloka is the philosophical foundation of Savasana, Yoga Nidra, and every practice that invites the student to rest in awareness beyond the movements of body and mind.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 23

nainam chhindanti shastrani nainam dahati pavakah | na

chainam kledayanty apo na shoshayati marutah

nainam chindanti sastrani nainam dahati pavakah | na cainam kledayanty apo na sosayati marutah

"Weapons cannot cut this Self, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, and the wind cannot dry it."

Following the previous shloka's declaration of the Self's immortality, Krishna now provides the philosophical rationale through the four elements — earth (implied in cutting), fire, water, and air. The true Self (Atman) transcends all material elements because it is not itself composed of material elements; it is pure consciousness. For yoga teachers, this shloka teaches the critical distinction between the physical body (sharira) — which is composed of the elements and subject to their effects — and the witnessing consciousness that inhabits and illuminates the body. This is the Sankhya distinction between Prakriti (nature, matter) and Purusha (consciousness) that underlies all of classical yoga philosophy. Teaching students to identify with the witnessing awareness rather than exclusively with the physical body is one of the deepest services a yoga teacher can perform.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 47

karmany evadhikaras te ma phaleshu kadachana | ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango stv akarmani

karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadachana | ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango stv akarmani

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty."

This is arguably the most famous and most frequently quoted verse of the entire Bhagavad Gita — and with good reason. It is the most precise and most practical definition of Karma Yoga ever formulated. The shloka contains three perfectly balanced instructions: act (do your duty fully), release the fruits (do not grasp for outcomes), and do not identify yourself as the ultimate cause. For yoga teachers, this teaching applies at the most immediate practical level: teach your best class, offer your deepest knowledge and presence, and release attachment to whether students return, whether they like you, whether they progress quickly, or whether

your efforts produce the results you hoped for. The yoga teacher who is attached to outcomes — to popularity, to student numbers, to reviews — will suffer. The teacher who practises this verse will know a profound inner freedom.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 48

***yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya |
siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate***

*yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya | siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva
samatvam yoga ucyate*

"Be steadfast in yoga, O Dhananjaya. Perform your duties and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga."

This shloka contains Krishna's first formal definition of yoga — and it is not a physical posture or a breathing technique but a quality of inner being: samatvam — equanimity, balance, the same inner disposition toward success and failure. This is profoundly important for yoga teachers to understand and communicate: the yoga being taught in a physical class is not ultimately about flexibility or strength but about developing this equanimity in the face of all of life's circumstances. Every challenging asana is training the practitioner to remain steady (sthira) and comfortable (sukha) — as Patanjali will later define — in the face of difficulty. The deepest purpose of the physical yoga practice is this inner cultivation of samatvam that Krishna describes. When yoga teachers understand this, every class becomes not merely physical training but a direct practice of Gita yoga.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 50

***buddhi-yukto jahatiha ubhe sukrita-dushkrte | tasmad
yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kaushalam***

*buddhi-yukto jahatiha ubhe sukrita-dushkrte | tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu
kaushalam*

"One who is united in intelligence casts off here both good deeds and bad deeds. Therefore strive for yoga. Yoga is skill in action."

This shloka offers another of the Gita's great definitions of yoga: yogah karmasu kaushalam — yoga is skill in action. This definition is at once simpler and more radical than it first appears.

It does not mean performing actions cleverly or efficiently. It means performing every action with the complete presence, full awareness, and inner steadiness of yoga — so that even the simplest action becomes a form of meditation. For yoga teachers, this teaching reveals that the yoga class is not separate from 'real life' — it is training in the quality of consciousness with which all life's actions are to be performed. The teacher who approaches every class as an act of devoted service, fully present and released from outcome, is practising this shloka in the most complete sense. Kaushalam (skill) is not a technique but a state of consciousness.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 55-56

***prajahati yada kaman sarvan partha mano-gatan | atmany
evatmana tushtah sthita-prajnas tadochyate***

*prajahati yada kaman sarvan partha mano-gatan | atmany evatmana tushtah sthita-prajnas
tadochyate*

***"O Partha, when a person completely casts off all the desires of the mind,
and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then he is called a person of steady
wisdom."***

The Sthitaprajna — the person of steady wisdom — is Krishna's portrait of the fully realised yogi, and the description begins here and continues through several verses. The Sthitaprajna is satisfied in the Atman by the Atman — not dependent on any external person, circumstance, object, or achievement for inner fulfilment. This is the direct opposite of the conditioned mind's constant seeking for satisfaction outside itself. For yoga teacher training students, the Sthitaprajna ideal is the north star of personal practice: every yoga session, every meditation, every moment of ethical discipline is a step toward this inner sufficiency. For yoga teachers, it also defines the quality of presence that the most inspiring teachers carry — an inner completeness that does not need students' approval, admiration, or gratitude, but radiates a quiet fullness that students experience as profoundly nourishing.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 2, Verse 70

***apuryamanam achala-pratistham samudram apah
pravishanti yadvat | tadvat kama yam pravishanti sarve sa
shantim apnoti na kama-kami***

*apuryamanam achala-pratistham samudram apah pravishanti yadvat | tadvat kama yam
pravishanti sarve sa shantim apnoti na kama-kami*

"As rivers flow into the ocean, which is ever being filled yet remains undisturbed, so too desires enter the peaceful sage without disturbing him. He attains peace, not the one who craves desires."

This magnificent ocean simile is one of the Gita's most beautiful descriptions of the liberated yogi's relationship with desire. The ocean does not refuse the rivers — it receives them all, completely, without disturbance, because its depth and vastness is far greater than any river can change. Similarly, the yogi of expanded consciousness does not fight desires, suppress them, or pretend they don't exist. They arise, are received, and dissolve — leaving the vast space of awareness undisturbed. For yoga teachers, this shloka teaches the crucial distinction between suppression and transcendence. Teaching students to suppress desires creates inner violence. Teaching them to expand their awareness — through consistent practice of asana, pranayama, and meditation — creates the ocean-like spaciousness in which desires no longer have the power to disturb.

Chapter Three Karma Yoga

The Yoga of Action – Living and Teaching as Sacred Service

Chapter Three addresses the most immediate practical question: since the ultimate reality is beyond all action (as Chapter Two established), should we simply withdraw from all activity? Krishna's answer is an unequivocal no — and the yoga of selfless action (Karma Yoga) he presents is one of the most original and most practically important contributions of the Gita to the history of spiritual thought.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 3, Verse 3

***shri bhagavan uvacha: loke smin dvi-vidha nishtha pura
prokta mayAnagha | jnana-yogena sankhyanam karma-
yogena yoginam***

*sri bhagavan uvaca: loke smin dvi-vidha nishtha pura prokta mayanagha | jnana-yogena
sankhyanam karma-yogena yoginam*

"The Blessed Lord said: In this world there are two paths I have taught from the beginning, O sinless one — the path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga) for the contemplative, and the path of action (Karma Yoga) for the active."

Krishna here acknowledges that different temperaments require different paths to the same destination. This is one of yoga philosophy's most democratic and inclusive insights: there is no single yoga path that suits all personalities. The contemplative, reflective personality inclines naturally toward Jnana Yoga — the investigation of the nature of the Self through inquiry and discrimination. The active, engaged personality inclines toward Karma Yoga — transformation through dedicated, selfless action. For yoga teachers, this teaching has profound practical implications: recognise which path speaks most naturally to each student, and teach accordingly. A student who is naturally action-oriented should not be forced into extended contemplative sitting before they are ready; their action orientation is itself the vehicle of their yoga, if it can be directed with selfless intention.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 3, Verse 19

tasmad asaktah satatam karyam karma samachara | asakto

hy acharan karma param apnoti purushah

tasmad asaktah satatam karyam karma samacara | asakto hy acaran karma param apnoti purushah

"Therefore, always perform action without attachment as your duty. By performing action without attachment, one attains the Supreme."

The key word in this shloka is asaktah — without attachment. Krishna does not say 'perform no actions' or 'perform few actions' but 'perform your duties constantly, without attachment to their fruits.' The path to liberation is not withdrawal from life but deep engagement with life performed with inner freedom from grasping. For yoga teachers, this is a direct teaching about the spirit in which to teach. Teach every class, attend every student, prepare every session with complete commitment — and release attachment to outcomes, to popularity, to financial results, to whether your effort is recognised or rewarded. The yoga teacher who practises this verse will paradoxically find that their teaching becomes more powerful, more authentic, and more sustainably joyful than the teacher who grasps anxiously at results.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 3, Verse 27

prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvashah | ahankara-vimudhatma kartaham iti manyate

prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah | ahankara-vimudhatma kartaham iti manyate

"All actions are performed by the gunas of Prakriti (nature). One whose mind is deluded by the ego thinks: 'I am the doer.'"

This shloka introduces one of the most sophisticated and liberating insights in all of yoga philosophy: the sense of personal doership — 'I am doing this' — is itself a product of the ego (ahamkara) and is ultimately a form of ignorance (avidya). In reality, all actions are performed by the three gunas of Prakriti (tamas, rajas, sattva) operating through the body-mind instrument. The pure witness-consciousness (Purusha) is not actually the doer. For yoga teachers, this teaching is both humbling and deeply freeing. The teacher who understands this does not take credit for a student's transformation (which is the student's own work), nor do they blame themselves for a student's failures. The role of the teacher is to be a clear, sattvic instrument — reducing rajas and tamas in the teaching space so that students can access their own inner clarity.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 3, Verse 35

***shreyan sva-dharmo vigunah para-dharmac chva-nushtthitat |
sva-dharme nidhanam shreyah para-dharmo bhayavahah***

*sreyan sva-dharmo vigunah para-dharmat sv-anusthitat | sva-dharme nidhanam shreyah
para-dharmo bhayavahah*

"Better is one's own dharma, though imperfectly performed, than the dharma of another well performed. Better is death in one's own dharma; the dharma of another is fraught with danger."

The concept of svadharma — one's own path, one's own authentic dharma — is central to Krishna's teaching and has profound relevance for contemporary yoga teachers. In an era of social media comparison, constant exposure to other teachers' styles and successes, and enormous pressure to conform to popular yoga aesthetics, this shloka is a direct instruction: be authentically yourself, teach from your own genuine understanding and experience, follow your own honest path — even if it appears less polished or less popular than another's path. The teacher who imitates another's style, teaches what they think students want rather than what they genuinely know and believe, or compromises their authentic voice for popularity is following paradharma — another's dharma — and will experience the inner conflict and inauthenticity that Krishna warns is 'fraught with danger.'

Chapter Four

Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga*The Yoga of Wisdom in Action — The Sacred Transmission of Knowledge*

Chapter Four addresses the nature of Jnana Yoga — the yoga of wisdom — and its relationship to Karma Yoga. It also contains the famous avatara shloka (4.7-8) and the foundational teaching on the guru-shishya relationship. For yoga teachers, this chapter is particularly important as it defines the essential nature of genuine spiritual teaching.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 4, Verse 7-8

***yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata |
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamy aham ||
paritranaya sadhunam vinashaya cha dushkritam | dharmasamsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge***

yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata | abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamy aham || paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca duskrutam | dharmasamsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge

"Whenever there is a decline of dharma and rise of adharma, I manifest myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil, and for the establishment of dharma, I come into being in every age."

These famous shlokas on the periodic manifestation of the Divine are among the most quoted in all of Hindu thought. For yoga teachers, they carry a specific and practical message: the tradition of yoga is itself a recurring manifestation of dharma — the response of the cosmos to the human need for the path of liberation. Every authentic yoga teacher participates in this cosmic project of dharma restoration. When you teach honestly, compassionately, and deeply, you are — in a small but real way — a vehicle of this perennial re-emergence of yoga wisdom. This understanding should both humble and inspire the yoga teacher: humble them because the teaching is not personal property but belongs to the tradition; inspire them because even one teacher reaching a few students with genuine yoga wisdom is contributing to something much larger than themselves.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 4, Verse 34

***tad viddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya |
upadekshyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darshinah***

tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya | upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darsinah

"Know that by prostrating yourself, by sincere questioning, and by service, the wise who have seen the truth will instruct you in that knowledge."

This is the Gita's fundamental shloka on the guru-shishya relationship and the proper attitude for receiving spiritual knowledge. Three requirements are named: pranipata (humility — literally 'falling down before'), pariprasna (sincere questioning — not challenging but genuine inquiry), and seva (service to the teacher and tradition). The emphasis on humility and service reflects the understanding that spiritual knowledge cannot be transmitted to a mind filled with arrogance, defensiveness, or the pretense of already knowing. For yoga teachers at SKM Yoga, this shloka applies both as students — to how you receive knowledge from your own teachers — and as teachers — as a reminder that your students' humility and sincere questioning are precious gifts to be honoured and nourished, not taken for granted.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 4, Verse 38

***na hi jnanena sadrisham pavitram iha vidyate | tat svayam
yoga-samsiddhah kalenatmani vindati***

na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate | tat svayam yoga-samsiddhah kalenatmani vindati

"Verily, there is nothing in this world as purifying as knowledge. One who is perfected through yoga finds this knowledge within oneself in time."

Krishna declares that jnana — spiritual wisdom, the direct knowledge of the Self — is the supreme purifier, greater than any external ritual, pilgrimage, or austerity. And crucially, he states that this knowledge is found within oneself (atmani) — not in a book, not in another person, but in the depths of one's own being, discovered through yoga practice perfected over time (kalatmani). For yoga teachers, this shloka encapsulates the entire purpose of the yoga we teach: every asana, every pranayama, every meditation is ultimately a process of inner purification that progressively reveals the jnana — the luminous knowledge of one's own essential nature — that was always already present. The yoga class is not a fitness

session; it is, properly understood, a purification process leading to self-knowledge.

Chapter Five

Karma Sanyasa Yoga*Renunciation and Action — The Yogi Who Acts Without Binding*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 5, Verse 4-5

***sankhya-yogau prithag balah pravadanti na panditah | ekam
apy asthitah samyag ubhayor vindate phalam****sankhya-yogau prithag balah pravadanti na panditah | ekam apy asthitah samyag ubhayor
vindate phalam****"Only children, not the wise, speak of sankhya (renunciation) and yoga
(action) as different. He who is truly established in even one of them
obtains the results of both."***

Krishna explicitly reconciles the apparent conflict between the path of renunciation (sankhya/jnana) and the path of action (karma yoga) — declaring them ultimately identical in their final result. The person truly established in Karma Yoga naturally develops the inner non-attachment of the Jnana Yogi; the person truly established in Jnana Yoga naturally acts with the selfless engagement of the Karma Yogi. For yoga teachers, this shloka is deeply reassuring and clarifying: you do not need to choose between deep practice and active teaching service. Teach deeply, serve selflessly — and in doing so, you are simultaneously practising both the yoga of action and the yoga of knowledge. The division is in the mind of the beginner, not in the reality of genuine practice.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 5, Verse 24

***yo ntah-sukho ntararamah | tathantarjyotir eva yah | sa yogi
brahma-nirvanam brahma-bhuto dhigacchati****yo ntar-sukho ntar-aramah | tathantar-jyotir eva yah | sa yogi brahma-nirvanam brahma-
bhuto dhigacchati****"The yogi whose happiness is within, whose recreation is within, whose
light is within — that yogi, being one with Brahman, attains Brahma-
nirvana (liberation in Brahman)."***

This shloka describes the inner orientation of the truly advanced yogi — one who has found the source of happiness, rest, and light entirely within themselves. The happiness sought

externally — in pleasure, in approval, in achievement — is impermanent and ultimately unsatisfying. The happiness of the Brahma-bhuta yogi is drawn from the inexhaustible inner well of the Atman itself. For yoga teachers, this is both an aspiration and a teaching tool. As an aspiration: cultivate your inner life consistently through daily practice so that your happiness, rest, and illumination come increasingly from within. As a teaching tool: help students recognise that every time yoga practice brings a moment of inner peace, spaciousness, or quiet joy, they are touching the happiness that is always available within — not dependent on any external condition.

Chapter Six

Dhyana Yoga / Atma Samyama Yoga*The Yoga of Meditation — The Complete Practice Instructions*

Chapter Six is the meditation chapter — the most detailed practical instructions for yoga and meditation practice in the entire Gita. It covers the conditions for practice, the posture, the breath, the attitude, the common obstacles (particularly the restless mind), and the extraordinary possibility of the highest states of meditation. For yoga teachers, this chapter is essential reading and re-reading.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 6, Verse 5

***uddhared atmanatmanam natmanam avasadayet | atmaiva
hy atmano bandhur atmaiva ripur atmanah***

*uddhared atmanatmanam natmanam avasadayet | atmaiva hy atmano bandhur atmaiva
ripur atmanah*

***"Let a person lift themselves by the Self; let them not degrade themselves.
The Self alone is the friend of the self, and the Self alone is the enemy of the
self."***

This foundational shloka on self-effort and self-responsibility is one of the most empowering teachings in the entire Gita. Liberation is not granted by external grace alone — it requires the full engagement of one's own will, discipline, and practice. The same inner nature that can pull you downward through indiscipline, distraction, and self-deception can also uplift you through practice, self-knowledge, and consistent effort. For yoga teachers, this is both a personal motivation and a crucial pedagogical principle: ultimately, no teacher can do the inner work for a student. The teacher can create conditions, offer guidance, and provide inspiration — but the student must do the work. Teachers who understand this maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid taking excessive responsibility for students' progress or lack thereof. Each student is their own best friend or worst enemy.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 6, Verse 11-12

***shuchau deshe pratishthapya sthiram asanam atmanah |
naty-ucchritam nati-nicham chelaja-krina-uttaram ||***

***tatraikagram manah kritva yata-chittendriya-kriyah |
upavisyasane yunjyad yogam atma-visuddhaye***

sucrau dese pratisthapyas thiram asanam atmanah | naty-uccritam nati-nicam celajina-kusa-uttaram || tatraikagram manah krtva yata-cittendriya-kriyah | upavisyasane yunjyad yogam atma-visuddhaye

"In a clean place, having established a firm seat – neither too high nor too low – covered with cloth, deerskin, and kusha grass – there, making the mind one-pointed, with the activities of mind and senses controlled, let him practise yoga for the purification of the self."

Krishna's instructions for the yoga meditation seat — the Asana — are remarkable in their practicality and their priorities. Note that the first requirement is shuchau deshe — a clean, pure place. Then the seat itself: stable, of moderate height, with specific materials for insulation and comfort. Then the inner preparation: one-pointed mind, controlled senses. For yoga teachers, these verses reveal that the concept of Asana in classical yoga is primarily about the meditation seat — a stable, comfortable posture for inner practice — exactly as Patanjali defines in Yoga Sutras II.46. The selection and preparation of the meditation space is itself a yoga practice. Creating a sattvic, clean, stable environment for students is part of the teacher's role and is directly sanctioned by this shloka.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 6, Verse 13-14

***samam kaya-shiro-grivam dharayann achalam sthirah |
samprekshya nasi-kagram svam dishas cha-navalokayan ||
prasantatma vigata-bhir brahmachari-vrate sthitah | manah
samyamya mac-chitto yukta asita mat-parah***

samam kaya-siro-grivam dharayann acalam sthirah | sampreksy nasi-kagram svam disas canavalokayan || prasantatma vigata-bhir brahmachari-vrate sthitah | manah samyamya mac-citto yukta asita mat-parah

"Holding the body, head, and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of the nose without looking in other directions – with a tranquil mind, free from fear, established in brahmacharya, controlling the mind and thinking of Me, let him sit in yoga, intent on Me."

These two shlokas provide the most specific physical meditation instructions in the Gita: erect but relaxed spine (body, head, and neck in one line), still, gaze directed to the nose tip (nasikagram drishti), inner state of prasanta (deep tranquility) and vigata-bhiih (fearlessness).

The alignment instructions — sama kayasirogrivan — are the direct Gita antecedent of the physical alignment principles taught in every yoga class today. For yoga teachers, these shlokas demonstrate that posture for meditation is not arbitrary: the erect spine enables the free flow of prana through the central channel (sushumna nadi), the stillness of the gaze supports one-pointedness, and the inner state of fearlessness and tranquility must be cultivated alongside the outer posture.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 6, Verse 17

***yuktahara-viharasya yukta-ceshtasya karmasu | yukta-
svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkha-ha***

*yuktahara-viharasya yukta-cestasya karmasu | yukta-svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati
dukkha-ha*

***"Yoga destroys all suffering for the one who is moderate in eating,
recreation, exertion in actions, sleeping, and waking."***

This shloka introduces the principle of yukta — balance, moderation, appropriate measure — as the foundational lifestyle principle of the yoga practitioner. Not extremes of austerity or indulgence, but the middle path of mindful moderation in all areas of life: diet (ahara), recreation (vihara), physical activity (cheshtasya), sleep (svapna), and waking activity (avabodha). For yoga teachers, this is one of the most practically useful shlokas to share with students. Yoga is not only the hour on the mat — it is a complete lifestyle orientation of conscious moderation. The student who eats mindfully, sleeps consistently, exercises appropriately, and maintains balance in work and rest will find their yoga practice deepening naturally. This shloka connects directly to the Niyama of Shaucha (purity/cleanliness of lifestyle) in Patanjali's Ashtanga system.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 6, Verse 19

***yatha dipo nivata-stho nengate sopama smrita | yogino yata-
chittasya yunjato yogam atmanah***

yatha dipo nivata-stho nengate sopama smrita | yogino yata-cittasya yunjato yogam atmanah

***"As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker — this simile is used for the
yogi of controlled mind who practises union with the Self."***

The lamp-in-a-windless-place simile is one of the most beautiful and precise images in all of yoga literature. A lamp in still air burns with a perfectly straight, unwavering flame — luminous, stable, and clear. The controlled mind of the yogi in deep meditation has exactly this quality: luminous (aware), stable (unmoved by passing thoughts or sensations), and perfectly clear (no distortion of the inner light). For yoga teachers, this simile is a powerful teaching tool that students can hold in their mind during meditation practice. The 'wind' that disturbs the lamp is the activity of the senses and the restless vrittis (fluctuations) of the mind. The 'stillness' that allows the lamp to burn steady is the cultivated inner quietude developed through consistent practice of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, and pratyahara.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 6, Verse 34-35

***chanchalam hi manah krishna pramathi balavad dridham |
tasyaham nigrham manye vayor iva sudushkaram || shri
bhagavan uvacha: asamsayam maha-baho mano
durnigraham chalam | abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena cha
grihyate***

*canchalam hi manah krsna pramathi balavad dridham | tasyaham nigrham manye vayor iva
suduskaram || sri bhagavan uvaca: asamayam maha-baho mano durnigraham calam |
abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena ca grhyate*

"Arjuna: The mind is restless, turbulent, strong, and obstinate, O Krishna. I think it is as difficult to control as the wind. | Krishna: Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed one, the mind is difficult to control and restless. But it can be restrained through practice (abhyasa) and non-attachment (vairagya)."

This exchange between Arjuna and Krishna is one of the most practically important passages in the Gita for yoga practitioners and teachers. Arjuna voices the universal human experience of the restless mind — and is immediately reassured by Krishna that this is the natural condition of the uncultivated mind, not a personal failing. The solution Krishna offers — abhyasa (consistent, sustained practice) and vairagya (non-attachment to outcomes and sense objects) — is exactly the same two-fold prescription Patanjali offers in the Yoga Sutras (I.12). For yoga teachers, this passage is essential: it validates students' struggles with the restless mind rather than dismissing them, and it offers the only genuine remedy — patient, consistent practice over time.

Chapter Seven

Jnana Vijnana Yoga*Knowledge and Realisation – The Nature of the Divine and Maya*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 7, Verse 4-5

***bhumir apo nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva cha |
ahankara itiyam me bhinna prakritir ashtadha || apare yam
itas tv anyam prakritim viddhi me param | jiva-bhutam maha-
baho yayedam dharyate jagat***

*bhumir apo nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva ca | ahankara itiyam me bhinna prakritir
astadha || apare yam itas tv anyam prakritim viddhi me param | jiva-bhutam maha-baho
yayedam dharyate jagat*

***"Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect, and ego – these are My
eight-fold divided lower nature. Beyond this is My other higher nature, O
mighty-armed, by which this universe is sustained – the Jiva
(consciousness)."***

Krishna presents the Sankhya cosmological framework that underlies all classical yoga: the material universe (Prakriti) is composed of eight principles — five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space) and three inner instruments (mind, intellect, ego). These constitute the Apara Prakriti — the lower nature. Beyond this is the Para Prakriti — the higher nature, which is consciousness itself (jiva-bhuta). For yoga teachers, this taxonomy is practically useful because it maps directly to the Pancha Kosha model of Taittiriya Upanishad and to the layers of experience addressed in yoga practice. The asana practice works primarily with the physical elements; pranayama with the pranic; meditation with the mind, intellect, and the ego-sense. Understanding which level of Prakriti each practice addresses makes the teacher's guidance more precise and more meaningful.

Chapter Eight Akshara Brahma Yoga

The Imperishable Absolute — The Practice of Remembrance at Death

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 8, Verse 5-7

***anta-kale cha mam eva smaran muktva kalevaram | yah
prayati sa mad-bhavam yati nasty atra samshayah || yam
yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram | tam tam
evaiti kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah || tasmad sarveshu
kaleshu mam anusmara yudhya cha | mayy arpita-mano-
buddhir mam evaishyasy asamsayah***

*anta-kale ca mam eva smaran muktva kalevaram | yah prayati sa mad-bhavam yati nasty
atra samsayah || yam yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram | tam tam evaiti
kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah || tasmad sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhya ca |
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mam evaishyasy asamsayah*

***"Whoever remembers Me alone at the time of death and leaves the body —
he attains My state. Whatever state of being one remembers at the end,
that very state does one attain. Therefore, remember Me at all times and
fight. With mind and intellect surrendered to Me, you will come to Me
without doubt."***

These three related shlokas teach the yoga of constant remembrance — the practice of keeping one's awareness anchored in the Divine (or in the highest spiritual reality) throughout all activity, so that the quality of consciousness at the moment of death is naturally elevated. The yogic understanding expressed here is that the direction of consciousness at death — which is determined by the dominant habits of consciousness cultivated throughout life — determines what happens next. For yoga teachers, the practical teaching is this: yoga practice is training the mind to remember what is most real. Every moment of practice that draws attention inward, every pranayama that quietens the mental chatter, every Savasana that teaches rest in pure awareness — all of this is training in the constant remembrance that this shloka prescribes.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 8, Verse 8

***abhyasa-yoga-yuktena chetasa nanya-gamina | paramam
purusham divyam yati parthanuchintayan***
abhyasa-yoga-yuktena cetasa nanya-gamina | paramam purusham divyam yati parthanu-

cintayan

"With the mind engaged in the yoga of constant practice, not moving to anything else, meditating on the Supreme Divine Person – to that Divine, O Partha, one attains."

This shloka introduces the term abhyasa yoga — the yoga of constant, sustained practice — as the method for maintaining the remembrance described in the previous shlokas. Nanyagamina — the mind not going anywhere else — is the definition of ekagrata (one-pointedness) that Patanjali also emphasizes in the Yoga Sutras. For yoga teachers, this shloka reinforces the centrality of regularity and consistency in practice. It is not the intensity of occasional practice but the sustained, unhurried, daily application of attention to the practice that produces the depth being described. This is why every authentic yoga tradition emphasises daily practice, however brief, over irregular intensive sessions. The mind trained by daily practice gradually develops the quality of nanya-gamina — the natural tendency to return to inner awareness rather than being perpetually scattered.

Chapter Nine

Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga*Royal Knowledge, Royal Secret — The Path of Devoted Action*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 9, Verse 22

***ananya-chintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate | tesham
nityabhiyuktanam yoga-kshemam vahamy aham****ananya-cintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate | tesham nityabhiyuktanam yoga-kshemam
vahamy aham*

"For those who worship Me with complete devotion, meditating on My transcendental form — to those who are constantly engaged in this way, I carry what they lack and preserve what they have."

This is one of the most beloved shlokas in the entire Gita and the foundation of the Bhakti Yoga teaching: Krishna personally promises to take care of the welfare (yoga-kshema — both the acquisition of what is needed and the preservation of what is possessed) of those who are completely devoted to him. The condition is ananya — undivided, exclusive, non-dual devotion. This is the bhakta's version of viveka-vairagya: the complete orientation of all one's attention toward the Divine. For yoga teachers, this shloka contains a profound teaching about surrender: the practitioner who has truly surrendered attachment to outcomes — who has genuinely released the ego's anxious management of results — discovers that what is genuinely needed manifests without forced striving. This is not passivity but the active, trusting rest in divine support that transforms the quality of all one's efforts.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 9, Verse 27

***yat karoshi yad ashnasi yaj juhoshi dadasi yat | yat tapasyasi
kaunteya tat kurushva mad-arpanam****yat karosi yad asnasi yaj juhosi dadasi yat | yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva mad-
arpanam*

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give away, whatever austerity you practise, O son of Kunti — do it as an offering to Me."

This is perhaps the most practical and most immediately applicable shloka in the entire

Bhagavad Gita for yoga practitioners and teachers. Krishna extends the principle of Karma Yoga to encompass absolutely every dimension of life — not just formal spiritual practice but every meal, every action, every gift given, every austerity performed. When every action is offered to the Divine as a dedicated act, there is no separation between 'practice' and 'ordinary life' — all of life becomes yoga. For yoga teachers, this shloka is a call to bring the quality of yoga consciousness into the whole teaching relationship: the preparation of the teaching space, the design of the class sequence, the cup of tea offered to a student after class, the email response to a student's question — all of these, performed with the spirit of mad-arpanam (offering to the Divine), become yoga practice. This is the living reality of Karma Yoga.

Chapters Ten & Eleven

Vibhuti Yoga & Vishvaroopā Darshana Yoga*Divine Manifestations & The Cosmic Form — The Totality of the Divine*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 10, Verse 10-11

***tesham satatam yuktanam bhajatam priti-purvakam | dadami
buddhi-yogam tam yena mam upayanti te || tesham
evanukampartham aham ajnana-jam tamah | nashayamy
atma-bhava-stho jnana-dipena bhasvata***

*tesam satatam yuktanam bhajatam priti-purvakam | dadami buddhi-yogam tam yena mam
upayanti te || tesam evanukampartham aham ajnana-jam tamah | nashayamy atma-bhava-
stho jnana-dipena bhasvata*

"To those who are constantly devoted and who worship Me with love, I give the yoga of wisdom (buddhi yoga) by which they come to Me. Out of compassion for them, I destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of knowledge, abiding in their souls."

These two shlokas reveal a dimension of the Divine's role in the yoga practitioner's journey that goes beyond what individual effort alone can accomplish. Krishna promises that for the consistently devoted practitioner, the Divine itself bestows buddhi yoga — the yoga of discriminative intelligence — from within. And further: out of compassion (anukampartham — not because the practitioner has earned it but purely from Divine love), the inner darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the lamp of jnana. For yoga teachers, this teaching carries a profound implication: a point comes in practice where the effort of the individual practitioner is supplemented by a grace that comes from within — an inner illumination that is not the product of technique or effort but of sustained devotion and surrender. This inner dimension of yoga is the deepest and most transformative.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 11, Verse 54

***bhaktya tv ananyaya shakya aham evam-vidho rjuna | jnatum
drashtum cha tattvena praveshtum cha parantapa***

*bhaktya tv ananyaya sakya aham evam-vidho rjuna | jnatum drashtum ca tattvena praveshtum
ca parantapa*

"By undivided devotion alone, O Arjuna, can I be known in this form, truly seen and entered into, O scorcher of enemies."

After the overwhelming vision of the Cosmic Form (Vishvarupa) in Chapter Eleven — which Arjuna cannot bear and begs Krishna to retract — Krishna reveals the paradox: the ultimate reality cannot be grasped by intellectual power, by mystic abilities, or even by austerity, but only by ananya bhakti — undivided, non-dual devotion. This shloka is the philosophical justification for placing Bhakti Yoga as the highest path in the Gita's teaching. For yoga teachers, this is a powerful teaching about the limits of technique and the necessity of the heart's opening. Students can perform every asana perfectly, master every pranayama, memorise every philosophical text — and still remain at a distance from the deepest reality. The opening of the heart in genuine devotion and loving surrender is what finally bridges the remaining distance.

Chapter Twelve

Bhakti Yoga

The Yoga of Devotion — The Qualities of the Beloved Devotee

Chapter Twelve is the Bhakti Yoga chapter — the shortest and in many ways the most devotionally intense chapter of the Gita. It begins with Arjuna's question about which form of worship is higher — the worship of the Personal Divine (saguna) or of the Impersonal Absolute (nirguna) — and ends with Krishna's description of the qualities of the devotee who is most dear to him, which constitutes one of the most complete portraits of the realised yogi in the entire Gita.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 12, Verse 13-14

***adveshtaa sarva-bhutanam maitrah karuna eva cha |
nirmamo nirahamkarah sama-duhkha-sukhah ksami ||
santushyah satatam yogi yatatma dridha-nishchayah | mayy
arpita-mano-buddhir yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah***

*advesta sarva-bhutanam maitrah karuna eva ca | nirmamo nirahamkarah sama-duhkha-
sukhah ksami || santustah satatam yogi yatatma drdha-niscayah | mayy arpita-mano-
buddhir yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah*

"He who has no hatred for any being, who is friendly and compassionate, free from possessiveness and ego, equal in pleasure and pain, and patient — always content, self-controlled, firm in conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me — that devotee is dear to Me."

This and the following shlokas of Chapter Twelve constitute the most complete portrait of the yogic character in the entire Gita. The qualities named here — advesha (freedom from hatred), maitri (friendliness), karuna (compassion), nirmama (freedom from possessiveness), nirahamkara (freedom from ego), sama-duhkha-sukha (equanimity in pleasure and pain), kshami (patience/forgiveness) — are not merely ideal aspirations but the actual psychological states that consistent yoga practice is designed to cultivate. For yoga teachers, this list is both a personal character ideal and a practical curriculum: ask yourself how fully your teaching and personal practice are developing each of these qualities. They are the measurable fruits of genuine yoga, far more reliable than flexibility or the ability to perform advanced asanas.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 12, Verse 15

***yasmann odvijate loko lokan nodvijate cha yah |
harshamarsha-bhayodvegair mukto yah sa cha me priyah***

yasmann odvijate loko lokan nodvijate ca yah | harshamarsa-bhayodvegair mukto yah sa ca me priyah

"He from whom the world does not shrink and who does not shrink from the world, who is free from joy, impatience, fear, and anxiety – that person is dear to Me."

This shloka describes a quality of equanimity so complete that it is reciprocal: the yogi does not disturb the world, and the world does not disturb the yogi. This is not cold indifference but the deep inner steadiness of one who has found an unshakeable inner ground. The four qualities to be transcended — harsha (excessive elation), amarsha (impatience/irritation), bhaya (fear), and udvega (anxiety/agitation) — are recognisably the most common emotional disturbances that cause suffering in ordinary human life. For yoga teachers, this shloka describes the inner quality that students sense in a truly settled, experienced teacher — someone whose presence is itself calming, whose equanimity is palpable, who neither creates disturbance in the teaching space nor is easily disturbed by it. This inner equanimity is cultivated through years of consistent practice, not through technique alone.

Chapter Thirteen

Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaga Yoga*Field and Knower of the Field — Prakriti, Purusha, and True Knowledge*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 13, Verse 1-2

***shri bhagavan uvacha: idam shariram kaunteya kshetram ity
abhidhiyate | etad yo vetti tam prahuh kshetra-jna iti tad-
vidah || kshetra-jnam chapi mam viddhi sarva-kshetreshu
bharata | kshetra-kshetrajnayor jnanam yat taj jnanam
matam mama***

*sri bhagavan uvaca: idam sariram kaunteya ksetram ity abhidhiyate | etad yo vetti tam
prahuh ksetra-jna iti tad-vidah || ksetra-jnam capi mam viddhi sarva-ksetresu bharata |
ksetra-ksetrajnayor jnanam yat taj jnanam matam mama*

"The Blessed Lord said: This body is called the field (kshetra). The one who knows it is called the knower of the field (kshetra-jna) by those who know this. Know Me also as the Knower of the Field in all fields. Knowledge of the field and its knower — this I hold to be true knowledge."

This foundational shloka of Chapter Thirteen introduces the philosophical framework of Kshetra and Kshetrajna — the field (the body-mind-ego complex, identical with Prakriti) and the Knower of the Field (pure consciousness, identical with Purusha and ultimately with the Divine itself). This is the Gita's version of the Sankhya Purusha-Prakriti distinction that underlies all of classical yoga. For yoga teachers, this framework is immediately applicable in teaching: every yoga class is, in philosophical terms, an exploration of the field (kshetra) — the body, the breath, the sensations, the thoughts — and a progressive development of the student's capacity to identify as the Knower of the Field (kshetrajna) rather than with any specific content of the field. This is the shift from ego-identification to witness-consciousness that all yoga ultimately aims to facilitate.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 13, Verse 27-28

***samam sarvesu bhutesu tishthantam parameshvaram |
vinashyatsv avinashyantam yah pashyati sa pashyati ||
samam pashyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam ishvaram | na
hinasty atmanatmanam tato yati param gatim***

*samam sarvesu bhutesu tistantam parameshvaram | vinasyatsv avinasyantam yah pasati sa
pasati || samam pashyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam isvaram | na hinasty atmanatmanam tato*

yati param gatim

"He truly sees who sees the Supreme Lord equally dwelling in all beings, the imperishable within the perishable. Seeing the same Lord everywhere equally, he does not injure the Self by the self, and thereby reaches the Supreme Goal."

This shloka encapsulates the vision of the fully realised yogi: the ability to perceive the same Divine presence equally in all beings, in all places, at all times. This is not philosophical theory but a direct description of the perceptual reality of the advanced meditator whose sense of self has expanded beyond personal ego-boundaries. For yoga teachers, this vision of equality (samatvam) in all beings is the philosophical basis of the deep compassion and non-judgmental presence that the best teachers carry. When you genuinely perceive the same consciousness in the student struggling at the back of the class and the advanced student in the front row, your teaching transforms. This perceptual equality — seeing the Divine equally in all — is both the fruit of consistent practice and the seed of genuine ahimsa.

Chapter Fourteen

Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga*The Three Gunas – Understanding the Forces That Govern All Experience*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 14, Verse 5

***sattvam rajas tama iti gunah prakriti-sambhavah |
nibadhnanti maha-baho dehe dehinam avyayam****sattvam rajas tama iti gunah prakriti-sambhavah | nibadhnanti maha-baho dehe dehinam
avyayam****"Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas – these gunas born of Prakriti – bind the
eternal embodied self in the body, O mighty-armed."***

This shloka introduces the three gunas — the three fundamental qualities or forces that constitute all of Prakriti and through which all human experience is filtered. Sattva (clarity, purity, luminosity), Rajas (activity, passion, restlessness), and Tamas (inertia, heaviness, darkness) are not merely theoretical categories but the most practically useful framework in yoga for understanding the quality of mind, the quality of food, the quality of action, and the quality of teaching at any given moment. For yoga teachers, the three-guna framework is one of the most valuable diagnostic tools available. Is this student's restlessness a rajasic energy needing to be channelled or calmed? Is their resistance a tamasic heaviness that needs warming and activating? Is their clarity a sattvic state to be honoured and deepened? Understanding gunas allows intelligent, responsive, personalised teaching rather than one-size-fits-all instruction.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 14, Verse 26

***mam cha yo vyabhicharena bhakti-yogena sevate | sa gunan
samatitya etan brahma-bhuyaya kalpate****mam ca yo vyabhicarena bhakti-yogena sevate | sa gunan samatitya etan brahma-bhuyaya
kalpate****"And he who serves Me with unwavering Bhakti Yoga – transcending
these gunas, he becomes fit to attain Brahman."***

Having described how the three gunas bind human consciousness, Krishna now reveals the

path to transcending them: vyabhicharena bhakti yoga — unwavering, constant devotional service. This is perhaps the Gita's most direct statement about the transformative power of Bhakti Yoga: it is the means of transcending the gunas themselves — not suppressing tamas and rajas while clinging to sattva, but transcending all three and reaching the state of Brahman-consciousness (Brahma-bhuyaya) that is beyond all the modes of nature. For yoga teachers, this shloka reveals the deepest purpose of all the purifying practices — asana, pranayama, ethical living — which are essentially means of reducing tamas and rajas and increasing sattva. But even sattva is still within the guna-framework. The final transcendence comes through the bhakti of completely surrendered service and love.

Chapter Fifteen

Purushottama Yoga*The Supreme Person – The Cosmic Tree and the Eternal Self*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 15, Verse 15

***sarvasya chaham hridi sannivishtho mattah smritir jnanam
apohanam cha | vedaish cha sarvair aham eva vedyo vedanta-
krid veda-vid eva chaham***

*sarvasya caham hridi sannivisto mattah smrtir jnanam apohanam ca | vedais ca sarvair
aham eva vedyo vedanta-krd veda-vid eva caham*

***"I am seated in the heart of all beings. From Me come memory, knowledge,
and their removal. I alone am to be known by all the Vedas; I am the
author of the Vedanta and I am the knower of the Vedas."***

This extraordinary shloka contains one of the Gita's most intimate declarations: the Divine is not distant, not in some heavenly realm, but seated directly in the heart (hridi) of every being. It is from this inner Divine presence that memory (smriti), knowledge (jnanam), and their dissolution (apohanam) arise. This teaching has direct practical implications for yoga practice: the knowledge that arises in deep meditation is not an individual achievement but a revelation of the Divine intelligence already present in the heart. For yoga teachers, this shloka teaches the most important thing: that when you sit with a student in silence at the end of class — in Savasana, in pranayama, in meditation — you are holding space for the student's encounter with their own innermost Divine Self. This is the sacred dimension of teaching yoga.

Chapter Sixteen

Daivasura Sampad Vibhaga Yoga

Divine and Demonic Qualities — The Ethical Foundation of Yoga

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 16, Verse 1-3

***abhayam sattva-samshuddhi jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih |
danam damash cha yajnash cha svadhyayas tapa arjavam ||
ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah shantir apaishunam | daya
bhuteshv aloluptvam mardavam hrir achapalam || tejah
ksama dhritih shaucham adroho nati-manita | bhavanti
sampadam daivim abhijatasya bharata***

*abhayam sattva-samsuddhir jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih | danam damas ca yajnas ca
svadhyayas tapa arjavam || ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah santir apaisunam | daya
bhutesu aloluptvam mardavam hrir acapalam || tejah ksama dhritih saucam adroho nati-
manita | bhavanti sampadam daivim abhijatasya bharata*

"Fearlessness, purity of mind, steadfastness in yoga of knowledge, charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of scriptures, austerity, uprightness; non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, equanimity, non-slandering, compassion for all beings, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness; vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of envy, and absence of pride — these are the qualities of one born to divine nature, O Bharata."

These three shlokas together constitute the most comprehensive ethical charter in all of yoga literature — twenty-six divine qualities that Krishna describes as the character of one born to the daivi sampat (divine nature). These qualities are not merely religious ideals but the actual psychological character traits that advanced yoga practice cultivates. Comparing this list with Patanjali's Yamas and Niyamas reveals that they are essentially the same ethical vision expressed in different frameworks. For yoga teacher training students at SKM Yoga, this list is an essential self-examination tool: which of these twenty-six qualities are genuinely present in your life? Which are still undeveloped? The honest answer to these questions defines the actual work remaining in your yoga practice — and no amount of advanced asana can substitute for the cultivation of these inner qualities.

Chapter Seventeen

Shraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga*Three Types of Faith – How the Gunas Shape Practice and Character*

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 17, Verse 14-16

***deva-dvija-guru-prajna-pujanam shaucham arjavam |
brahmacharyam ahimsa cha shariram tapa uchyate ||
anudvega-karam vakyam satyam priya-hitam cha yat |
svadhyayabhyasanam chaiva van-mayam tapa uchyate ||
manah-prasadah saumyatvam maunam atma-vinigraha |
bhava-samsuddh ity etat tapo manasam uchyate***

deva-dvija-guru-prajna-pujanam saucam arjavam | brahmacharyam ahimsa ca sariram tapa uchyate || anudvega-karam vakyam satyam priya-hitam ca yat | svadhyayabhyasanam chaiva van-mayam tapa uchyate || manah-prasadah saumyatvam maunam atma-vinigraha | bhava-samsuddhir ity etat tapo manasam uchyate

"Worship of the Divine, the twice-born, the teacher, and the wise; purity, uprightness, brahmacharya, and non-violence – this is called physical tapas. Speech that does not cause anxiety, truthful, pleasant, and beneficial; and the practice of sacred study – this is called the tapas of speech. Clarity and calmness of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, and purity of being – this is called the tapas of the mind."

Chapter Seventeen presents one of the Gita's most practically applicable teachings: the three-fold classification of Tapas (austerity/discipline) into bodily, verbal, and mental. This three-fold framework maps beautifully onto the entire structure of the eight-limbed yoga path. Physical tapas corresponds to the practices of Asana, Shatkarma, and the physical Yamas and Niyamas. Verbal tapas corresponds to the practices of mantra, prayer, and the ethical discipline of speech (satya, ahimsa in speech). Mental tapas corresponds to Dharana, Dhyana, and the Samadhi practices. For yoga teachers, this shloka is invaluable for explaining to students why yoga practice extends far beyond the physical postures: genuine tapas encompasses the entire field of body, speech, and mind — and the yoga class is, properly understood, the training ground for all three.

Chapter Eighteen

Moksha Sanyasa Yoga

Liberation through Renunciation – The Final Synthesis of All Yoga Paths

Chapter Eighteen is the longest and most comprehensive chapter of the Gita — a final synthesis of all its teachings presented with extraordinary philosophical thoroughness. It returns to every major topic — action, knowledge, renunciation, devotion, the three gunas, duty, and liberation — and draws them together into a final vision of integrated yoga.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 18, Verse 45-46

sve sve karmany abhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah | sva-karma-niratah siddhim yatha vindati tac chrinu || yatah pravritir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam | sva-karmana tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati manavah

sve sve karmany abhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah | sva-karma-niratah siddhim yatha vindati tac srnu || yatah pravrttir bhutanam yena sarvam idam tatam | sva-karmana tam abhyarchya siddhim vindati manavah

"Each person attains perfection by engaging in their own duties. Hear how one attains perfection through delight in one's own work. By worshipping through one's own work the One from whom all beings have come and by whom all this is pervaded, a person attains perfection."

These two shlokas present the final and most complete synthesis of Karma Yoga: not only should you perform your own duty (svadharma) with full engagement, but every action performed as an act of worship to the Divine who pervades all things becomes the means of liberation itself. This is the ultimate vision of Karma Yoga: the entire life as a continuous act of sacred offering, with every activity — teaching yoga, preparing food, raising children, serving the community — performed as worship of the Divine immanent in all things. For yoga teachers, this is the highest possible framing of their work: every class taught with full presence, every student served with genuine care, every moment of preparation performed with devotion is an act of sva-karma-archana — worshipping the Divine through one's own work.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 18, Verse 54

***brahma-bhuta prasannatma na shochati na kanksati |
samah sarvesu bhutesu mad-bhaktim labhate param***

*brahma-bhuta prasannatma na socati na kanksati | samah sarvesu bhutesu mad-bhaktim
labhate param*

"Becoming one with Brahman, with a serene Self, not grieving, not desiring, equal to all beings, one attains supreme devotion to Me."

This shloka describes the state of Brahma-bhuta — the consciousness established in Brahman — and reveals a beautiful and often overlooked paradox in the Gita's teaching: from the state of Jnana (knowledge of Brahman), supreme Bhakti (devotion) naturally and spontaneously arises. The Jnana Yogi who recognises their identity with Brahman does not become cold or detached — they discover the deepest, most unconditional love and devotion as the natural expression of that recognition. Prasannatma — the serene Self — neither grieves for what is lost nor craves what is absent, perceives all beings equally, and from this unconditional inner fullness offers supreme devotion to the Divine. This is the integration of all yoga paths that the Gita has been building toward throughout eighteen chapters.

Bhagavad Gita • Chapter 18, Verse 65-66

***man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru |
mam evaishyasi satyam te pratijane priyo si me || sarva-
dharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja | aham tvam
sarva-papebhyo mokshayishyami ma shuchah***

*man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru | mam evaishyasi satyam te
pratijane priyo si me || sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja | aham tvam
sarva-papebhyo mokshayishyami ma shuchah*

"Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, bow down to Me. So shall you come to Me. I promise you truly, for you are dear to Me. Abandoning all dharmas, take refuge in Me alone. I shall free you from all sins; do not grieve."

These final shlokas — the charama shloka (the ultimate verse) of the Bhagavad Gita — represent the highest and most unconditional expression of the devotional path. After all the philosophical exposition of the previous seventeen and a half chapters, Krishna concludes with the most direct, most personal, and most all-encompassing instruction: surrender completely. Sarva-dharman parityajya — abandoning all sense of personal responsibility for

managing one's own liberation — take refuge in the Divine alone, and the Divine will accomplish the liberation that all personal effort has been preparing for. For yoga teachers, this shloka is both the final destination of the entire teaching and a constant companion in the daily practice of teaching itself: release the anxiety of trying to be the perfect teacher, of producing the perfect results, of managing every aspect of the student's journey. Surrender the work to the Divine, teach with full presence, and trust the grace that accomplishes what effort alone cannot.

Summary: Key Yoga Shlokas at a Glance

Reference	Core Teaching	Yoga Relevance
BG 2.20	The Self is eternal and indestructible	<i>Philosophical foundation of non-identification with body</i>
BG 2.47	Right to action, not to fruits	<i>Core Karma Yoga principle for all yoga teachers</i>
BG 2.48	Equanimity is called yoga	<i>First formal definition of yoga in the Gita</i>
BG 2.50	Yoga is skill in action	<i>Second definition: yoga as quality of consciousness in action</i>
BG 2.55-56	The person of steady wisdom	<i>Portrait of the advanced yogi; personal practice goal</i>
BG 2.70	The ocean and the rivers	<i>Non-attachment to desire; the depth of yogic consciousness</i>
BG 3.19	Act without attachment always	<i>The Karma Yoga daily discipline for teachers</i>
BG 3.35	Better one's own dharma	<i>Authenticity in teaching; follow your own path</i>
BG 4.7-8	Avatar shloka — Divine manifestation	<i>Yoga as eternal dharma; teacher's participation in tradition</i>
BG 4.34	Prostrate, question, serve the teacher	<i>The guru-shishya relationship; how to receive knowledge</i>
BG 4.38	Knowledge is the supreme purifier	<i>Purpose of all yoga practice — leading to self-knowledge</i>
BG 5.24	Happiness within, recreation within	<i>The inner sufficiency of the advanced yogi</i>
BG 6.5	Lift yourself by yourself	<i>Self-responsibility and self-effort in yoga practice</i>
BG 6.11-12	Instructions for meditation seat	<i>Classical guidelines for setting up meditation practice</i>
BG 6.17	Moderation in all things	<i>Lifestyle principle: yukta ahara, vihara, sleep, action</i>
BG 6.19	The unwavering lamp	<i>Simile for the concentrated meditative mind</i>
BG 6.34-35	The restless mind and its remedy	<i>Abhyasa and vairagya as the universal answer to distraction</i>
BG 8.5-7	Remember Me at the time of death	<i>Yoga as training in constant awareness; Savasana depth</i>
BG 9.22	I carry what they lack, preserve what they have	<i>Divine support for the completely devoted practitioner</i>
BG 9.27	Offer everything as worship	<i>All life as yoga; teaching as sacred service</i>
BG 10.10-11	I give yoga of wisdom; I dispel darkness	<i>Grace in yoga practice; the inner dimension of transformation</i>
BG 12.13-15	Qualities dear to the Divine	<i>The complete character portrait of the realised yogi</i>
BG 13.1-2	Field and Knower of the Field	<i>Prakriti-Purusha; the philosophical</i>

		<i>framework of yoga anatomy</i>
BG 13.27-28	See the Divine equally in all beings	<i>The vision of equality underlying ahimsa and compassion</i>
BG 14.5	The three gunas bind the embodied Self	<i>Diagnostic framework for understanding human experience</i>
BG 15.15	I am in the heart of all beings	<i>The Divine as the inner teacher; sacredness of silent practice</i>
BG 16.1-3	Twenty-six divine qualities	<i>The ethical character curriculum of authentic yoga practice</i>
BG 17.14-16	Three-fold tapas: body, speech, mind	<i>Complete framework of yoga discipline beyond physical practice</i>
BG 18.45-46	Perfection through one's own duty as worship	<i>Final synthesis of Karma Yoga; teaching as worship</i>
BG 18.54	Brahma-bhuta leads to supreme devotion	<i>Integration of Jnana and Bhakti; the fruit of all yoga</i>
BG 18.65-66	Surrender completely; I will free you	<i>The ultimate charama shloka; final teaching of the Gita</i>

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Yada yada hi dharmasya – The Gita lives in every sincere yoga teacher.

Contact SKM Yoga

Website: www.skmyoga.in

WhatsApp: 8826476724

Call: 8920921620

Author: Dr. Shivam Mishra

SKM Yoga Institute, New Delhi

YTT Courses at SKM Yoga

200-Hour Yoga Teacher Training

300-Hour Advanced YTT

500-Hour Master TTC

Bhagavad Gita & Yoga Philosophy

Vedic Studies & Sanskrit