

Ten Essential Verses of the Bhagavad Gītā Swami Dayananda Saraswati¹

Introduction to the Gītā

**aśocyānavaśocastvaṃ prajñāvādāṃśca bhāṣase |
gatāsūnagatāsūṃśca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ || 2-11||**

tvam – you; *aśocyān* – those who should not be grieved for; *avaśocaḥ* – grieve; *prajñāvādān* – words of wisdom; *bhāṣase* – you speak; *ca* – and; *paṇḍitāḥ* – the wise; *gatāsūn* – those from whom the breath has left; *agatāsūn* – those from whom the breath has not yet left; *ca* – and; *na anuśocanti* – do not grieve

You grieve for those who should not be grieved for. Yet you speak words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for those who are living or for those who are no longer living.

Nature of the Self (*tvam*)

**vedāvināśinaṃ nityaṃ ya enamajamavyayam |
kathaṃ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha kaṃ ghātayati hanti kam || 2-21||**

pārtha – Oh! Son of *Prthā* (Arjuna); *enam* – this; *avināśinaṃ* – indestructible; *nityam* – timeless; *ajam* – unborn; *avyayam* – that which does not undergo decline; *yaḥ veda* – the one who knows; *saḥ* – that; *puruṣaḥ* – person; *katham* – how; *kam* – whom; *hanti* – kills; *kam* – whom; *ghātayati* – causes to destroy

Oh! Son of *Pūthā*, the one who knows this (self) to be indestructible, timeless, unborn, and not subject to decline, how and whom does that person kill? Whom does he cause to kill?

**prajahāti yadā kāmānsarvānpārtha manogatān |
ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñastadocyate || 2-55||**

pārtha – Oh! Son of *Prthā*; *yadā* – when; *sarvān* – all; *manogatān* – as they appear in the mind; *kāmān* – desires; *prajahāti* – gives up; *ātmani* – in oneself; *eva* – alone; *ātmanā* – with oneself; *tuṣṭaḥ* – one who is happy; *tadā* – then; *sthitaprajña* – a person of ascertained knowledge; *ucyate* – is said to be

When a person gives up all the desires as they appear in the mind, Oh! *Pārtha*, happy in oneself, with oneself alone, that person is said to be one of ascertained knowledge.

¹ Translation and meaning from the *Bhagavadgītā Home Study Course*, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1999. For a detailed commentary on these verses, please refer to the *Bhagavadgītā Home Study Course* book.

Nature of Īśvara (tat)

**mayā tatamidaṃ sarvaṃ jagadavyaktamūrtinā |
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṃ teṣvavasthitaḥ || 9-4||**

maya – by me; *avyakta-mūrtinā* – whose form can not be objectified; *idam sarvam jagat* – this entire world; *tatam* – is pervaded; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all beings; *mat-sthāni* – have their being in Me; *na ca aham* – and I am not; *teṣu avasthitaḥ* – based in them

This entire world is pervaded by Me whose form can not be objectified. All beings have their being in Me and I am not based in them.

The two-fold committed life-styles

**loke'smin dvidihā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha |
jñānayogena sāṅkhyānāṃ karmayogena yoginām || 3-3||**

anagha – Oh! Sinless One; *asmin* – in this; *loke* – world; *dvidihā* – two-fold; *niṣṭhā* – committed life-styles; *purā* – in the beginning; *mayā* – by me; *proktā* – was told; *jñāna-yogena* – in the form of the pursuit of knowledge; *sāṅkhyānāṃ* – for the renunciates; *karmayogena* – in the form of the pursuit of action; *yoginām* – for those who pursue activity

Oh! Sinless One, the two-fold committed life-style in this world, was told by Me in the beginning – the pursuit of knowledge for the renunciates and the pursuit of action for those who pursue activity.

Karma-yoga: Īśvara is the author of the results of action

**karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana |
mā karmaphalāheturbhūrmā te saṅga'stvakarmaṇi || 2-47||**

karmaṇi – in action; *eva* – only; *te* – your; *adhikāraḥ* – choice; *phaleṣu* – in the results; *mā kadācana* – never; *karma-phala-hetuḥ* – the cause of the results; *mā bhūḥ* – do not be; *akarmaṇi* – in inaction; *te* – your; *saṅgaḥ* – attachment; *mā astu* – let it not be

Your choice is in action only, never in the result thereof. Do not be the author of the results of action. Let your attachment not be to inaction.

Karma-yoga: Doing one's duty is worshipping the lord

**yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānāṃ yena sarvamidaṃ tatam |
svakarmanā tamabhyarcya siddhiṃ vindati mānavaḥ || 18-46||**

yataḥ – from whom; *bhūtānāṃ pravṛttiḥ* – (is) the creation of the beings; *yena* – by whom; *sarvam idam* – all this; *tatam* – is pervaded; *tam* – him; *svakarmanā* – through

one's own duty; *abhyarcya* – worshipping; *mānavaḥ* – the human being; *siddhim* – success; *vindati* – gains

Through one's own duty, worshipping him from whom is the creation of the beings, by whom all this is pervaded, a human being gains success.

***Sannyāsa-yoga: vividiṣā-sannyāsa*²**

**sannyāsastu mahābāho duḥkhamāptumayogataḥ |
yogayukto munirbrahma nacireṇādhiḡacchati || 5-6||**

mahābāho – O Mighty Armed! (Arjuna); *ayogataḥ* – without *karma-yoga*; *sannyāsaḥ* – renunciation of action; *āptum* – to accomplish; *duḥkham* – difficult; *tu* – whereas; *yogayuktaḥ* – committed to the life of *karma-yoga*; *munir* – one who is capable of reasoning; *na cireṇa* – not after a long time (quickly); *brahma* – Brahman; *adhiḡacchati* – gains

Renunciation of action, O Arjuna, is difficult to accomplish without *karma-yoga*. Whereas, one who is capable of reasoning, who is committed to a life *karma-yoga*, gains Brahman quickly.

***Sannyāsa-yoga: jñāna-karma-sannyāsa*³**

**sarvakarmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī |
navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvanna kārayan || 5-13||**

vaśī – one who is self-controlled; *dehī* – the indweller of the physical body; *manasā* – mentally (by knowledge); *sarva-karmāṇi* – all actions; *sannyasya* – having renounced; *nava-dvāre pure* – in the nine-gated city (the body); *eva* – indeed; *na kurvan* – not acting; *na kārayan* – not causing (others) to act; *sukham* – happily; *āste* – remains

The indweller of the physical body, the one who is self-controlled, having renounced all actions mentally (by knowledge), remains happily in the nine-gated city (the body) neither performing action, nor causing (others) to act.

**sarvadharmānparityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja |
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayaiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ || 18-66||**

sarva-dharmān – all *karmas*; *parityajya* – giving up; *mām-ekaṁ* – Me alone; *śaraṇaṁ vraja* – take refuge; *sarva-pāpebhyah* – from all *karmas*; *tvā* – you; *ahaṁ mokṣayaiṣyāmi* – I will release; *mā śucaḥ* - do not grieve

Giving up all *karmas*, take refuge in Me alone. I will release you from all *karma*; do not grieve.

² *Sannyāsa* taken by a qualified seeker to know the self.

³ *Sannyāsa*, renunciation of all action by knowledge (*jñāna*) that the self is not the doer.