

UTTARA GITA

Chapter I The Knower of the Tattvas

Arjuna, after the successful outcome of the battle of Kurukshetra, amidst the pleasures of rank, riches and prosperity, had forgotten the priceless instructions imparted to him by Sri Krishna on the eve of that memorable battle. He now asked Keshava to expound again the secrets of the science of Brahman.

Arjuna spoke:

1. O Keshava, instruct me in the knowledge of that Brahman which is one without a second, without upadhi (limitation), beyond the akasha (space), source of all purity, that which is unapproachable by argument or unattainable by cognition, the Unknowable and the unknown, that which is absolutely free from births and deaths.
2. O Keshava, impart to me the knowledge of That which is the Absolute, the sole abode of eternal peace and purity, the instrumental cause and material cause of the universe, though itself causeless and free from all connection.
3. Tell me, O Keshava, the knowledge of That which dwells in every heart, and which combines the fact of knowledge and the thing knowable in Itself.

Sri Bhagavan said:

4. O thou long-armed one, who art the crest jewel of the Pandu dynasty, O Arjuna, thou art the most intelligent, because thou hast asked Me a question at once most sublime and magnificent – how to attain the knowledge of the boundless tattvas (principals of existence). Hence hear attentively, O Arjuna, what I wish to say on the subject.
5. He is called Brahman who, devoid of all desires, and by the mode of yoga, sits in that state of meditation in which he assimilates his own Self-mantra (pranava) with the hamsa (Paramatman).
6. For the human being, the attainment of the state of hamsa (I am He), within his own limits, is considered the highest wisdom. That which remains merely a passive witness between the hamsa and non-hamsa is the akshara purusha in the form of kutastha chaitanya (atmabuddhi). When the knower finds and sees this akshara purusha within himself, he is saved from all future misery of birth and death in this world.
7. The word kakim is the compound of ka + ak + in. The first syllable, ka, means happiness, the second, ak, means misery, and the third, in, denotes possessing; therefore, one that possesses happiness and misery, the jiva, is called kakim or kaki. Again, the vowel a at the end of the syllable ka is the conscious manifestation of mulaprakriti or the jiva form of Brahman; therefore, when this a disappears, there remains only the k, which is the one great indivisible bliss of Brahman.
8. He who is ever able to retain his life-breath within himself, both at the time of waking and rest, can extend the period of his life over a thousand years.
9. Imagine much of the manifested akasha as can be brought within the range of one's own mental view, as one undivided Brahman, then merge the atman into it, and it into your own self; this done, when the atman is made one with the akasha, think of nothing else – such as moon, stars and so on – in the sky.
10. Such a seeker of Brahman, after fixing his mind as shown, and shutting out all objective knowledge, should hold fast the support of unalterable wisdom, and think of the one indivisible Brahman, in the inner and outer akasha that exists at the end of the nose, and into which the life-breath merges.

11. Freed from both nostrils, wherein the life-breath disappears, thereby fix thy mind, O Partha, and meditate upon the All-Supreme Ishvara.
12. Think of Shiva there as devoid of all limitations of life, immaculate but lustreless, without mind or intellect.
13. The signs of samadhi are the negation of all positive conditions of life and the complete subjugation of all objective thoughts.
14. Although the body of the meditator may now and then become somewhat unsteady at the time of meditation, yet he is to consider that the Paramatman is immovable. This is the sign of samadhi.
15. He that considers Paramatman as without matra, neither short nor long in meter, soundless unconnected with vowels or consonants, and beyond the point (bindu or anusvara), beyond the nada, the voice that rises from the throat, and beyond the kalas, or the different phases of the sound, is the real knower of the Vedas.
16. He that has acquired the supreme knowledge (vijñana) by the aid of jñana and has learnt to place the object of this knowledge in his heart, and has thus achieved peace of mind, such a person requires no yoga for further practice, and no meditation for further conception.
17. The syllable Aum with which the Vedas begin, which appears in the middle of the Vedas and with which the Vedas end, unites prakriti with its own Self, but that which is beyond this prakriti united to pranava is Maheshvara.
18. A boat is needed until one gets to the other side of the river, but when a man once crosses the stream, the boat is no longer needed for his purpose.
19. As a husbandman throws away the husks after threshing out the corn, so does also an intelligent person give up the study of books after he has gained knowledge from them.
20. As light is necessary to find a desired object in a dark chamber, but when once the object is found the light is necessarily put aside, so too when the object of supreme knowledge, kept hidden by the illusion of maya, is once found by the torch of knowledge, the knowledge itself is afterwards put aside as redundant.
21. As milk is not needed by a person already satiated with the drink of nectar, so also the Vedas are not needed by a man who has already known the Supreme Deity.
22. Thrice fortunate is the yogin who has thus satiated his thirst by the nectar of knowledge; he is henceforth bound to no karma, as he had become the knower of the tattvas.
23. He that has known the unspeakable pranava as the one continuous sound of a big gong or like one unbroken thread of oil without division and separation, comprehends the real meaning of the Vedas.
24. He who uses his own atman as one arani [a piece of wood that produces fire when rubbed] and pranava as the other, and constantly rubs the two together, he will very soon see the hidden fire thus produced by the friction of the two, even as he kindles the fire hidden in the bosom of the arani.
25. As long as one does not see within the sublime rupa purer than purity itself, which beams forth like a smokeless light, he should continue his contemplation with a steady mind, fixing his thoughts upon that rupa.
26. The jivatman, although seemingly distant from the Paramatman, is still very close to it; and though it has a body, it is still without a body; the jivatman itself is pure, omnipotent and self-evident.

27. Although it is apparently in the body, it is still not in the body; it is not affected by any change of the body, nor does it take part in any enjoyment pertaining to the body, nor can it be bound down or conditioned by anything that binds the body.

28. As oil exists in the seed and butter in cheese, as scent resides in the flower and juice in fruits; so does the jivatman, which permeates the entire cosmos exist also in the human body.

29. Like the fire hidden in the bosom of wood, and like the air that pervades the entire boundless akasha, atman, the dweller in the cave of manas, unseen and unperceived, becomes its own mover, and walks in the akasha of the human heart.

30. Though the jivatman dwells in the heart, and yet it has its abode in the mind; and though dwelling in the heart, it is itself devoid of mind. The yogin, who sees such an atman in his own heart with the help of his own mind, progressively becomes a siddha.

31. He who has become capable of holding his mind, wholly and without support, and fused with the akasha, and of cognizing the unmodifiable One, his condition is called the state of samadhi.

32. Though living upon air, he that daily practices samadhi to remain content with the drink of the nectar of yoga becomes capable of destroying the destroyer.

33. He that contemplates the atman as No-thing above, No-thing below, No-thing in the middle, No-thing all round, his condition is called the state of samadhi.

34. The yogin who thus apprehends the No-thingness of the atman becomes emancipated from all virtue and vice.

Arjuna asked:

35. Tell me, O Keshava, how yogins should meditate upon the colorless and formless Brahman, when the mind is incapable of cognizing that which it has never seen, and when all that can be seen is material, and consequently perishable?

Sri Bhagavan said:

36. That which is full above, full below, full in the middle and full all round is the all-pervading atman, and he who thus contemplates the atman is said to be in the state of samadhi.

Arjuna said:

37. Tell me, O Keshava, how the yogin should practice meditation, when the salamba which Thou has just described is unreal and that which is niralamba signifies No-thingness?

Sri Bhagavan said:

38. He who, having purified his mind, contemplates the pure Paramatman, and perceives his own Self as the one vast indivisible whole of the manifested cosmos, becomes serene by knowing Brahman.

Arjuna said:

39. All the letters have long and short metrical sounds, they are also joined by the bindu (anusvara), and the latter, when disjoined, merges itself into the nada, but wherein does thenada merge?

Sri Bhagavan said:

40. Light exists in the Voice of the ceaseless Sound and manas in that Light; the space wherein the manas disappears is the Supreme Foot of Vishnu.

41. Directed towards the Unknowable, wherein the Sound of the pranava, led on high by the life-breath, disappears, that space is called the Supreme Foot of Vishnu.

Arjuna said:

42. Tell me, O Keshava, when the life-breath leaves this body of five elements, and the tenement itself is again reduced to them, where go the virtue and vice of the man, and whom do they accompany?

Sri Bhagavan said:

43. The destiny produced by the consequences of virtue and vice, the essence of the five bhutas – the mind, the five senses and the controlling devatas of the five organs of karma (action) – all these by reason of the ahankara of the mind accompany the jiva as long as it remains ignorant of the knowledge of the tattvas.

Arjuna said:

44. O Krishna, the jiva, in the state of samadhi leaves all the moving and motionless objects of this world, but what is it that leaves the jiva so as to remove the name of jiva-ship?

Sri Bhagavan said:

45. The pranavayu always passing between the mouth and the nostrils; the akasha drinks [absorbs] the prana; and thus when the prana is once absorbed the jiva does not figure again as jiva in the arena of this world.

Arjuna said:

46. The akasha that pervades the whole cosmos also encompasses this objective world; it is, therefore, both in and out of everything. Now tell me, O Krishna, what is It that is beyond this akasha?

Sri Bhagavan said:

47. O Arjuna, the akasha is called shunya (void) because it means the want or absence of things or of anything. This akasha has the attribute of sound but that which gives it the power of sound, though Itself soundless, is the unknown and unknowable Brahman.

48. The yogins see the atman within them; this they do when they shut out all external senses; for such a person, when he leaves his body, his [lower] buddhi passes on and with the passing of his buddhi his intelligence also disappears.

Arjuna asked:

49. It is evident that the letters are pronounced by means of the teeth, lips, palate, throat and so on. Therefore, how can they be termed indestructible, when their destructibility is apparent even on their face?

Sri Bhagavan said:

50. That letter is called indestructible which is self-pronouncing, which is neither vowel nor consonant, which is beyond the eight places of pronunciation, which is not subject to long or short accents, and which is thoroughly devoid of the ushman varnas [the four letters sha, sha, sa and ha].

Arjuna said:

51. Tell me, O Krishna, how, by shutting out their external senses and knowing that Brahman which lies concealed in all matter and all substance, the yogins realize nirvana mukti.

Sri Bhagavan said:

52. The yogins see the atman within when they shut out all their external senses; for such a person when leaving the body, his buddhi passes on, and with the passing of the buddhi his ignorance also vanishes.

53. As long as the tattvas are not known to a person, so long it is essential for him to practice concentration of mind by shutting out external senses, but once he thoroughly attains the knowledge of the tattvas, he identifies himself with the Universal Soul.

54. From the nine openings of the body, the waters of knowledge pass out, and consequently one cannot know Brahman unless one becomes as pure as Brahman.

55. The body itself is exceedingly impure, but that which takes a body [the jivatman] is purity itself; he who knows the difference in the real nature of these two never troubles himself with the question of purity, for whose purity should he search after?

Chapter II Nadis and Lokas

Arjuna asked:

1. Tell me, O Keshava, what is the evidence when one, knowing Brahman as the all-pervading and all-knowing Parameshvara, considers himself to be one with It?

Keshava said:

2. As water in water, as milk in milk and ghrita in butter, so the jivatman and Paramatman become one in union without any distinction or difference.

3. He who with undivided attention attempts to unite the jivatman with the Paramatman, according to the manner prescribed by the shastras, to him the all-pervading and universal Light shows itself in due time.

4. When, by acquiring knowledge, the knower becomes the object of knowledge itself, then he frees himself from all bondage by virtue of his knowledge, and needs no more practice of yoga or of meditation.

5. He in whom the light of knowledge always shines forth has his buddhi constantly fixed on Brahman, and with the fire of supreme knowledge he is able to burn down the bonds of karma.

6. Such a knower of the tattvas, through the realization of the Paramatman that is pure as the spotless akasha and without a second, lives in the Supreme Self without any upadhi, as water enters into water.

7. Atman is sukshma like the akasha and therefore it cannot be seen by the eyes, nor can the inner atman which is like the vayu be seen either; but he who has been able to fix his inner atman by the niralamba samadhi, and has learnt to direct inward his external senses, can know the unity of the atman and the Antaratman.

8. Wherever a jnanin may die, and in whatever matter his death may occur, he becomes one with the atman when he leaves his body, even as the akasha in the pot becomes one with its parent akasha when the pot is broken, regardless of where or how it breaks.

9. Know by the twofold experience of conscious witnessing and unconscious ignorance that the atman which pervades the whole body is beyond the three states of consciousness – waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep.

10. He who has been able to dwell with his mind for one moment on a single point (bindu) frees himself from the sins of his past hundred births.

11. On the right side spreads the pingala nadi which is bright and shining like a great circle of fire; this product of virtue is called the vehicle of the devas (devayana).

12. On the left side stretches forth the ida, the brightness of which nadi is comparatively less like the disk or circle of the moon; it dwells with the breath of the left nostril, and is called the vehicle of the pitris (pitriyana).

13. Like the backbone of a vina or harp, the long tract of bone with many joints that stretches from the seat right up to the head of a human being is called the merudanda (spinal cord).

14. There is a minute aperture or hole that passes right through this merudanda from the muladhara to the head; it is through this hole that there passes a nadi which the yogins call the brahmanadi or sushumna.

15. Sushumna is a fine nerve that passes between the ida and pingala; from this sushumna all the jnananadis [sensory nerves] take their birth. Hence it is called the jnananadi.

16. The sun, the moon and the other devatas, the fourteen lokas of Bhur, Bhuvas etc., the ten Dikas [directions], east, west, etc., the sacred places, the seven oceans, the Himalaya and other mountains, the seven islands of jambu, etc., the seven sacred rivers, Ganga, etc., the four Vedas, all the sacred philosophies, the sixteen vowels and twenty-four consonants, the Gayatri and other sacred mantras, the eighteen Puranas and all the Upapuranas included, the three gunas, mahat itself, the root of all the jivas, the jivas and their atman, the ten breaths, the whole world, in fact, consisting of all these, exists in the sushumna.

17. As various nadis have sprung up from the sushumna, the receptacle for the inner soul of all jivas, and are stretched out in all directions of the physical body, therefore it is considered to be like a huge tree reversed. The tattvajnanins alone are able to walk on every branch of this tree by the help of pranavayu.

18. In this human body there exist seventy-two thousand nadis which admit of sufficient space for entrance into them through vayu; the yogins alone become acquainted with the true nature of these nadis by the virtue of their yogakarma.

19. Having closed up the nine portals of the body, and being acquainted with the source and nature of the nadis that stretch up and down the seats of the several organs of sense, the jiva, rising to the state of superior knowledge with the aid of the life-breath, attains moksha.

20. On the left side of the sushumna, and near the point of the nose, there exist the Indraloka called Amarvati; and the bright luminous sphere that exists in the eyes is known by the name of Agniloka.

21. Near the right ear exists the Yamaloka known by the name of Samyamani, and on its side exists the sphere of the Nairritadeva, called by the name of Nairritaloka.

22. On the west and situated in the back, there exists the sphere of Varuna called by the name of Vibhavari; and on the side of the ears the sphere is known as Gandhavati, which is the seat of the Vayu.

23. On the north side of sushumna, extending from the throat up to the left ear, and in the sphere of Kubera known by the name of Pushpavati, exists the Chandraloka.

24. In the left eye and in line with the direction of the ishanya exists Shivaloka, known by the name of Manomani; the Brahmapuri that exists in the head should be considered as the microcosm in the human body, because it is the root and origin of the jnananadi sushumna, therefore called Manomaya Jagat, the world of the mind.

25. Like the dreadful fire at the time of pralaya, the Eternal dwells at the sole of the foot; the same all-pure Eternal imparts blessings both above, below, in the middle, inside and outside [the body].

26. The lower portion or the sole of the foot, is called Atala; the upper portion or the top is called Vitala; the upper part of the joint between the leg and the foot is called Nitala, and the knee is called Sutala.
27. The lower portion of the thigh is called Mahatala; the upper portion of it is called Rasatala, and the loin is termed Talatala. In this way it is right to know the seven Patalas that exist in the human body.
28. In the Patala where the serpents live in coils, and below the navel, is the place known by the name of Bhojindra. This dreadful place, like a burning hell and doomsday fire, is termed Mahapatala; in this sphere the Eternal, known by the name of jiva, displays itself in serpentine coils like a circle.
29. Bhurloka exists in the navel, in the armpit exists the Bhuvras, whilst the Svargaloka with the sun, moon and stars, dwells in the heart.
30. The yogins realize perfect bliss by imagining the seven lokas, the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and the innumerable other lokas, like Dhruva and so on, in the heart.
31. In the heart dwells the Maharloka, the Janaloka exists in the throat, the Taparloka between the two eyebrows, whilst the Sattvaloka exists in the head.
32. This Brahmanda dissolves itself into water, the water is dried up by fire, the air swallows up the fire, and the akasha drinks the air in turn.
33. But the akasha itself is assimilated in the mind, the mind in buddhi, the buddhi in ahankara, the ahankara in chitta in kshetrajna.
34. The yogins who contemplate Me with one mind as 'I am He' are saved from the sins collected during a hundred million kalpas.
35. As the akasha of the pot is absorbed in the mahakasha when the pot is broken, so also the ignorance-bound jivatman is absorbed in the Paramatman when ignorance is destroyed.
36. He who has been able to acquire the knowledge of the tattvas such that the jivatman is absorbed in the Paramatman, even as the akasha of the pot is absorbed in the mahakasha, becomes undoubtedly free from the chain of ignorance, and goes into the sphere of the Light of Supreme Knowledge and Wisdom.
37. If a man practices asceticism and severe austerity for a thousand years, standing on one leg only, he cannot realize one-sixteenth part of the benefit gained by meditation (dhyanyoga).
38. As long as one does not acquire the knowledge of the tattvas, so long should he attentively perform all good acts, observe purity of body and mind, perform religious sacrifices, and acquire experience and knowledge by visiting sacred places.
39. At the time when the body oscillates backward and forward, the Brahmana who hesitates to believe that he is Brahman fails to understand the great subtle atman even if he be conversant with the four Vedas.
40. Although cows may be of different colors but the color of their milk is one and the same, even so in the case of the jiva, the bodies may look different but the atman is one and the same in all.
41. Food, sleep, fear and sexual desire, man has in common with brutes; it is only the addition of knowledge that makes him a man; if, therefore, he is devoid of this he is but equal to a brute.

42. In the morning a man performs the necessities of life, in the middle of the day he fills his stomach with food, in the evening he satisfies the cravings of his sexual desire and afterwards falls into the embraces of deep sleep – such is the case with beasts also.

43. Hundred millions of jivas and thousands of nadabindus are constantly destroyed and absorbed in the All-Purity.

44. Therefore, the conviction that “I am Brahman“ is known to be the sole cause of emancipation (moksha) for great souls (mahatmas).

45. Two words bind and liberate the jivas respectively: the firm belief of ‘I‘ and ‘mine‘ holds fast and binds the jiva down, and the absence or want of the same liberates him from all bondage.

46. When the mind becomes free from all desires and passions, then only the idea of duality ceases. When there arises that state of Advaita feeling [all in One and One in all], there dwells the Supreme Foot of Brahman.

47. As a hungry person simply wastes his energy in vain when he strikes the air with blows, so too a reader of the Vedas and other shastras simply wastes his time and energy if, notwithstanding his study, he fails to realize “I am Brahman.“

Chapter III Aham Brahmasmi

1. Shastras are innumerable, and it takes a long time even to grasp their real meaning; life is short, but the obstacles are many; therefore, the intelligent should only take the real meaning as a swan (hamsa) separates the milk out of milky water.

2. The Puranas, the Bharatam, the Vedas, the various other shastras, wife, children and family, are simply so many obstacles on the path of practice of yoga.

3. Dost thou desire to know all by thine own experience—that this is knowledge, and that this is worth knowing—then thou shalt fail to know the end of the shastras even if thine age be over a thousand years.

4. Viewing life to be very impermanent, seek to know only the indestructible Sat (Existence); give up the unnecessary reading of books, and worship Truth.

5. Out of all the beautiful objects that exist in this world, most are intended either to please the tongue or give sexual pleasure. Thou canst relinquish the pleasures of both; then where is the need of this world?

6. The sacred rivers, after all, are but waters, and the idols worshipped are but nothing but stones, metals or earth. Yogins go neither to the former nor worship the later, because within themselves exist all sacred places and the synthesis of all idols.

7. Fire (Agni) is the god of the twice-born who are given to sacrifice; the sages call the atman within them their god. Whilst the less intelligent worship their idols, the yogins see Brahman equally everywhere, in the fire, within themselves, in idols and all around.

8. As a blind man cannot see the sun although it lights up the whole world, so too those spiritually blind cannot perceive the Omnipresent Eternal Peace that encompasses the entire cosmos.

9. Wherever the mind goes, it sees the Paramatman there because all and everything is filled with the one Brahman.

10. As the serene bright sky may be seen with all its forms, names and colors, so too he who is able to realize the idea that “I am Brahman“—in spite of all forms, names and colors is—alone able to see verily the eternal Paramatman.

11. The yogin, whilst meditating, should affirm “I am the whole universe“; in this manner he shall see that Paramatman, the abode of Supreme Bliss, with the Eye of Knowledge.

As long as he contemplates the akasha and identifies himself with it, so long shall he consider the all-pervading Paramatman, like the akasha itself, as the mighty and subtle background from the portal of moksha, the all-full abode of nirvana. The eternal Paramatman dwells in the heart of all jivas, in the form of the ray of wisdom in man; this Paramatman should be known as the Brahmatman of the yogins who know the Paramatman.

12. He who has been able to identify himself with the whole cosmos—as the one Brahman—should carefully avoid the desire to eat every man’s food and to barter all sorts of goods.

13. Where the yogins stay for one second or even half a second, that place becomes sacred like Kurukshetra, Prayaga and Naimisharanya, because the thought of spirituality even for one brief second has a greater effect than one thousand million sacrifices.

14. The yogin who apprehends this cosmos as nothing but the one Brahman at once destroys both virtue and vice, and consequently for him there is neither friend nor enemy, happiness nor misery, gain nor loss, good nor bad, honor nor dishonor, praise nor blame; all these become alike to him.

15. When a patched-up cloak with a hundred holes in it is able to keep off the summer’s heat and winter’s cold, then what is the necessity for wealth and riches for a man whose heart is devoted to the worship of Keshava?

16. O Arjuna, the yogin should not brood about, or concern himself with, his maintenance. If, however, such a thought is needed at all, then let him beg for alms simply maintain his body, and protect himself from cold by the clothes of charity. To him diamonds and stones, green vegetables and course rice, and all other objects in this world are of equal value.

17. O Arjuna, he who does not covet material objects never takes birth again in this world.