

THE
BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

ANNIE BESANT & BHAGAVAN DAS

PREFACE TO FIFTH EDITION

THE *Bhagavad Gītā* is one of the most important basic texts for the study of Hinduism, and has attracted the attention and admiration of thinkers throughout the world. The first edition of this great world scripture with the English translation and notes by Annie Besant and Bhagavan Das was published in 1905; since then many other excellent editions and expositions of the text have come out; still the *Bhagavad Gītā* by Annie Besant and Bhagavan Das holds a unique place.

The English translation combines accuracy and clarity, and preserves to a remarkable degree the emotional content of the original. The section dealing with the Grand Vision is rendered in verse form. The words in each verse are taken one by one in the prose order, and their literal meaning explained, pointing out the derivation of all difficult words and compounds. The major variations in the text are given in footnotes, and Appendix I discusses the relative importance of the different readings. Some parallel passages from other world scriptures are pointed out in Appendix II which also contains some expository notes and references for further

CONTENTS

(SETTING FORTH THE ARGUMENT OF GĪTĀ)

| | PAGE |
|---|----------------|
| INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON SANSKRIT GRAMMAR | ... xv—xxxix |
| <i>Gītā-māhātmyam</i> —Greatness of <i>Gītā</i> as described in <i>Varāha-purāna</i> | ... xli—xlvi |
| <i>Gītā-karādi-nyāsaḥ</i> —Tantra way of 'practising' <i>Gītā</i> | ... xlvii—xlix |
| <i>Gītā-dhyānam</i> —'Thought-Form' of <i>Gītā</i> for purposes of meditation | ... 1—liii |
| CHAPTER I. <i>Arjunaviśāda-yoga</i> .—Arjuna inspects the rival forces. He experiences a sudden surge of overwhelming grief at the awful prospect and speaks to Kṛṣṇa of evils consequent on the the war of kinsfolk | ... 1—22 |
| CHAPTER II. <i>Sāṃkhya-yoga</i> .—Arjuna refuses to fight. Kṛṣṇa counsels Arjuna not to grieve over mere destruction of transient bodies, because the inner Self can never be slain—or even because bodies must die in any case—and so to | |

perform the duty of Kṣātriya with untroubled mind—thereby gaining fame in this and happiness in the other world, incidentally—though duty should be performed for its own sake and not for any ulterior reward, as it is performed by sages of steady mind. Arjuna asks for a more particular description of such. Kṛṣṇa complics, laying stress on attainment of Wisdom, Right Understanding, Right Knowledge, *Buddhi*, and absence of selfish desire

... 23—56

CHAPTER III. *Karma-yoga*.—Arjuna asks how these are compatible with such terrible action as that of slaughter. Kṛṣṇa sets forth a preliminary reconciliation of the two: 'Perform the action that is duty, but without attachment', and makes an allusion to the system of the World-Wheel, which gives rise to various Dharma-s, duties. Arjuna enquires why men fail in duty. Kṛṣṇa replies, cursorily as yet

... 57—75

CHAPTER IV. *Jñānavibhāga-yoga*.—Kṛṣṇa again lays stress on need for Wisdom, Right-Thought, Right-Reason, by light of which alone can duties be ascertained which have to be performed without

further consideration of consequences; and in this connection describes many forms of Yoga. He adverts to His own previous incarnations, in reply to a question of Arjuna's (and so incidentally strengthens the allusion, made before, to world-cycles, without an understanding of which true enlightenment is not possible) 76—94

CHAPTER V. *Karma-saṁnyāsa-yoga*.—Arjuna repeats his question as to the inconsistency between 'renunciation' and 'action'. Kṛṣṇa answers (indirectly), by describing the happy condition of those who renounce fruits of action but continue to perform it as duty, knowing that all proceeds from the Supreme Self 95—107

CHAPTER VI. *Adhyātma-yoga*.—Kṛṣṇa continues his description of the Yogin. Arjuna asks how the condition may be attained. Kṛṣṇa answers: 'By dispassion and perseverant practice.' Arjuna asks: 'What are the consequences of failure in Yoga?' Kṛṣṇa replies: 'A better birth, greater opportunity, devotion to the Supreme Self, and final attainment of Mokṣa' ... 108—129

CHAPTER VII. *Jñāna-yoga*.—Kṛṣṇa describes natures of Wisdom and Unwisdom,

and Glories of the Self (knowledge of which constitutes that Wisdom whereby the possessor thereof performs his duty unflinchingly)

... 130—143

CHAPTER VIII. *Akṣara-Brahma-Yoga.*—

(Subject-matter of previous chapter is continued.) Arjuna asks what is the nature of Brahma, of Adhyātma, Adhibūta, and Adhidaiva. Kṛṣṇa describes these, and also incidentally mentions how Brahma may be reached by living as well as departing Jiva

... 144—157

CHAPTER IX. *Rājavidyā-rājaguhya-yoga.*—

Kṛṣṇa continues his statement of 'The Royal Secret, Final Wisdom,' possession of which confers Immortality, *viz.*, recognition of and devotion to the Supreme Self as oneself, and also describes the results of devotion to minor personal gods (Īśvara-s of systems, etc.)

... 158—173

CHAPTER X. *Vibhūti-yoga.*—Glories of the Supreme Self

... 174—191

CHAPTER XI. *Viśvarūpadarśana-yoga.*—

Kṛṣṇa compresses into one illuminating vision all the results of long explanations, and makes Arjuna see directly that He and all his fellow-beings are part of

the Life of *Īśvara*, that they are what they are by His gift (in the personal aspect of the Supreme Self, manifesting as an Individual *Īśvara*), that it is their duty to endeavour, feebly as they may, to repay this great debt by obeying His will, and that His will, in the present instance, is destruction of militarist *Kṣatriya*-s ... 192—222

CHAPTER XII. *Bhakti-yoga*.—Arjuna, perceiving the difference between Unmanifested Eternal and manifested *Īśvara*, incidentally asks which is the better method, fixing the mind on the one or the other. *Kṛṣṇa* answers: 'The former is more difficult, and by that method too, *Jiva*-s have to pass to the stage and state of a personal *Īśvara*.' He thereby stimulates deeper enquiry, to which He leaves the discovery that the two systems are really not distinct, that the *one* system is to fix mind on the Eternal, and, in *subordination* to that supreme fact, to work by the will of the *Īśvara* to whose cosmic system we belong ... 223—232

CHAPTER XIII. *Kṣetrakṣetrajñavibhāga-yoga*.—*Kṛṣṇa* expounds the difference between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* as part

of the supreme science, the wisdom, which raises the Jīva above doubt and makes him steady in action as Arjuna should be ... 233—248:

CHAPTER XIV. *Guṇatrayavibhāga-yoga*.—
Subject of preceding chapter is continued and the three *guṇa-s* of Prakṛti are dealt with ... 249—261:

CHAPTER XV. *Puruṣottama-yoga*.—
Kṛṣṇa carries on the subject of the 13th discourse, and deals specially with Puruṣa, in the aspect of Abstract Self as well as of a manifested Īvara ... 262—271:

CHAPTER XVI. *Daiṁāsurasampadvibhāga-yoga*.—Kṛṣṇa goes on to describe, as another essential part of the highest science, and having, further, an immediate bearing on the issue before Arjuna, dual nature of all creatures of Īvara, divine and demoniac, good and evil. He tells how the former class, to which Arjuna belongs, necessarily perform their duty, in accordance with Śāstra, spiritual science, (and battle against the latter to prevent them from harming the innocent) ... 272—283:

CHAPTER XVII. *Śraddhātrayavibhāga-yoga*.—
—Arjuna asks and Kṛṣṇa describes,

what is the essence of all true action and what is not, also what characterises all true, untrue, and mixed action according as predominant motive-nature is Sāttvika, Rājasa, or Tāmasa ... 284—296

| | |
|---|-------------|
| CHAPTER XVIII. <i>Saṁnyāsa-yoga</i> .— Kṛṣṇa sums up, finally, the whole teaching regarding combination of renunciation of fruit of action with performance of duty (as assigned by a social organisation, based on differences of human temperament, in accordance with the predominance of one or other of the three <i>guṇa-s</i>), which is the only means of securing ultimate happiness. Arjuna's doubts are solved; he is convinced and satisfied, and expresses his readiness to do his duty of battling with the unrighteous | ... 297—330 |
| APPENDIX I | ... 331—336 |
| „ II | ... 337—371 |
| INDEX | ... 373—460 |
