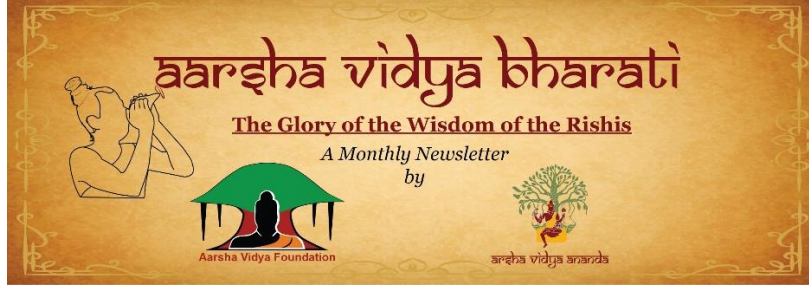

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Dec 2021

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [Dec 2021 issue](#) or read any of the [articles](#).

Living Our Traditions

Pārāyaṇam on Bhagavad Gita Jayanti

By Swamini Brahma Prajnananda

भगवद् गीता किञ्चिदधीता, गङ्गा जललव कणिकापीता।
सकृदपि येन मुरारि समर्चा, क्रियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ॥२०॥

*Bhagavad gīta kiñciddhītā, gaṅgā jalalava kaṇikāpītā |
Sakṛdapi yena murāri samarcā, kriyate tasya yamena na carcā||20||*

To the one who has studied the Bhagavad Gita even a little, who has sipped at least a drop of Ganga water, who has worshipped Lord *Murāri* at least once, there is no discussion with Yama, the Lord of Death. (Bhaja Govindam - Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya)

Extolling the glory of the Gita, Adi Shankaracharya in the above verse says that *kiñcit*, even a little of the Gita can help you see that you were always *amṛtam*, eternal. The Bhagavad Gita, which is the essence of all the Upanishads, was revealed by *Bhagavān* Krishna to Arjuna not in a remote cave, but in the thick and thin of the battlefield of life. Unfolded in 700 verses, generations have anchored their lives on the teachings to navigate and enrich their lives with meaning and purpose.



Every year we celebrate the Gita Jayanti and renew our commitment to fully allowing 'the Gita to go through us' (in Swami Chinmayananda's words) which is more important than 'us going through the Gita'.

Learning the *Śāstra* has primarily been an oral tradition and the Vedas were accurately transmitted and preserved through the unbroken lineage of *guru-śiṣya*

paramparā. A hallmark of the oral tradition is ‘*pārāyaṇam*’ a recitation or chant of some verses, sections or chapters of our *Śāstra*. In different homes across India every morning and evening, one hears the ringing of the bell, smells the wafting fragrance of the agarbatti and hears Sanskrit chants that elevate and purify. With devotion in their hearts and a commitment to worship, millions seek to tune their minds to the Rishis’ minds by chanting the very words that were revealed by them.

By repeated chanting the verses or sections or complete texts, memorisation takes place. Long before hard drives entered our world, here were and still are people in Veda *pāṭhaśālās* who have committed to memory thousands of verses. You can prompt them with any word or verse and they can chant from that word or verse onwards. In fact in earlier times, the meaning of the Gita or the Upanishad would be taught only to those who had memorised it. The culture of *pārāyaṇam* is alive even today and it is a part of our sacred duty to preserve it.

Bhagavān Krishna declares *Yajñānām japa yajñosmi..* japa is the best way to worship him. While japa generally refers to the repetition of a mantra, Vishnu Sahasranama, Lalita Sahasranama, Durga Sapatashati etc are considered complete chants too. The tradition of *pārāyaṇam* includes the chanting of texts like *Sundara Kāṇḍa* (Ramayana), *Bhāgavatam* where the entire *Bhāgavatam* is chanted during a week referred to as ‘*Bhagavat Saptāha*’, Shankara *bhāṣya* of *prasthāna-traya* (Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and Brahmasutras), Satyanarayana katha during Satyanarayana puja, sections from the *Purāṇa*-s etc.

How does *pārāyaṇam* (chanting-recitation) and especially Gita *pārāyaṇam* help?

- Chanting-recitation is a karma and hence **produces puṇya**, which is transformed into *sukha* - favourable situations in life.
- Chanting over a period of time leads to effortless memorisation which allows one to peg our **understanding** on the verses.
- Chanting increases your **connection** to *Bhagavān* who is a source of infinite strength and support.
- Chanting gives you **peace of mind and clarity of thought**. As a result your *kauśalam*, your competence in life situations and your acceptance of people also increases.
- *Artha sphuraṇam*, flashes of **insight** and meaning are known to take place during chanting
- Chanting contributes to *Citta-naiścalyam* – **steadiness** of mind and focus given the debilitating nature of digital distraction.
- Chanting and the vibrational quality of Sanskrit **improves speech**.
- Chanting has a direct impact on the functioning of the brain. Dr James Hartzell coined the term, ‘**The Sanskrit effect**’ and established that memorising Vedic mantras increased the size of brain regions associated with cognitive function such as long term and short term memory.
- Chanting **improves** the lung capacity and the functioning of the respiratory system.

- Chanting keeps the **culture alive**. Chants for different devatas - connects us to the culture and opens up the rich treasures of our ancient scriptures Bhagavad Gita, *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, Vedas.

Additionally, to preserve this pristine knowledge which aid in all the human pursuits of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*, chanting of the Vedas ensures that the knowledge is kept alive. What about digitisation? Sure, that is being done. But knowledge is kept alive by living it, by seeing the meaning and by having ready access to it whenever required and not just when there is electricity or a wi-fi connection. Of the 1131 shakhas (recensions of all the 4 Vedas) unfortunately only 11 *śākā-s* are available to us which are being chanted in different parts of India because the other *śākā-s* fell into disuse by the destruction of the education system and also our over dependence on the written word.

It is our rishi *Yajña*, (one of the big five sacred responsibilities) to keep this knowledge alive.

Let us chant a few verses or the entire Bhagavad Gita as our offering to *Bhagavān* on the day it was revealed.

Link to Zoom meeting on December 14th: [Please click here](#)

॥ ओं नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

Bhagavad Gita Jayanti



Sampurna Bhagavad Gita
Parayanam
(The complete chanting of the
Bhagavad Gita)

6 - 9 pm IST
14th December, Tuesday

The Bhagavad Gita teaches us how to live a happy life and the meaning of that happiness as oneself. We offer our chants with devotion to the jagatguru, Bhagavan Sri Krishna when he revealed the Gita.

To indicate your preferences to chant a few verses or a chapter please let Prashanth Mohan know. (prashanthmohan1982@gmail.com, Whatsapp - +61429499814) by 4th December.



Zoom Meeting ID: 81061623479
Passcode: gita
All are Welcome



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