

Gems from Guru Gita (An ancient Hindu Scripture)

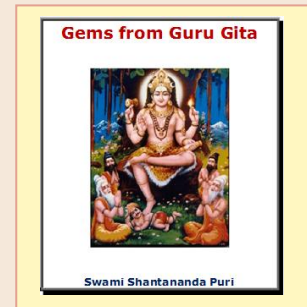
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The Universal Guru Dakshinamurti (Lord Shiva)

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An introduction to “Gems from Guru Gita”

According to certain people ‘Guru Gita’ where a Guru’s glory is extolled, forms part of ‘Skandapurana’ and consists of three chapters, totalling 352 verses. It is in the same way as Srimad Bhagvad Gita forms part of ‘Mahabharata’. Here we present the free translation of 64 verses which have been selected as the best and representative one.

The text is in the form of a conversation between Suta (narrator of Puranas) and other great sages. Sutanarrates it as a conversation between Lord Shiva and his consort the divine mother ‘Parvati’. Here Parvati asks three questions- all ultimately relating to the glory of a Guru and the entire text is in answer to these questions. This selection starts with those questions.

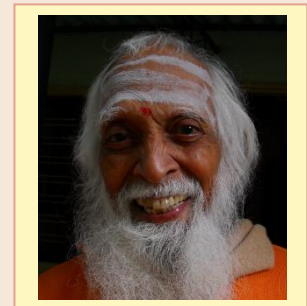
In the Hindu culture, the personal Guru who gives initiation and instructs his disciple on the path of liberation has been given a unique and most revered status, which will be really hard for people from other cultures to understand. Only a person who has had the good fortune of having a sadguru (a realised soul as his Guru) and who has experienced how at every step in his life the grace of the Guru his pushing him up in an incredible manner, will be able to understand that the glory of a Guru can never be over-exaggerated. In my own life, how the compassion and grace of my Guru not only took me to the heights of spiritual success but also had helped me in an incredible manner by protecting me in times of crisis and danger in my normal worldly life too have all been narrated in my book “Fragrant Flowers” available on the website*. A Guru is treated verily as God Himself. How else can we treat an instructor who has been able to transform us entirely from the dwarf of a mortal to the giant of the immortal and highest divinity (God himself in the parlance of a layman)? The entire process of instruction is not based on intellect or pre-conceived concepts. It is a plane beyond intellect and words, to which a disciple is transported through the grace of the Guru. Some are likely to think that the Guru will do everything, they need not do any sadhana themselves and they can go and be enjoying the worldly life as ever. This is a wrong

idea. We have to do our best, do the japa for 10 to 12 hours a day initially till the japa becomes automatic and goes on at all times even when we are engaged in worldly activities. Japa is then converted as meditation and finally it takes you to the Samadhi stage. No other separate meditation is required. We are fully divine but we are unable to recognise it and unable to bring it out. To illustrate it, if there is a dry log of wood very big and long, it is unable to bring out externally the fire element which is inside it. If you take burning matches to it and light, it catches fire and burns for hours. Thus a match stick fire is required to kindle the fire inside the log of wood. In the same way, we are as full of the divine powers as the Supreme Lord Himself. In order to bring it out, a Guru plays the role of a match stick. When Bhagawan Ramana Maharshi was asked by somebody as to whether a Guru is essential, the former quipped back –“Does a small child require a mother?” Even the great Acharya Sankara, the founder of Advaita philosophy had to have a Guru. Lord Krishna, though fully aware of his divinity went to a Gurucalled ‘Sandipini’. In Buddhism too, the masters play an important role. Let us go through the selections from Guru Gita and enjoy them so that many may be induced to go through the entire Guru Gita in original (which is also available on website).

II Aum Sri Ganeshaye Namah II

GEMS FROM “GURU GITA”

Parvati’s questions to Lord Shiva:-



1. Oh Lord! You are yourself the Supreme Lord worshipped by ‘Brahma’ the creator, ‘Vishnu’ the sustainer and all other Gods. Yet how is it that I have often found you making salutations to somebody else (not present in person)? Who is that blessed person? (Sloka-12)
2. You are the Lord who knows all the dharmas (laws relating to dos and donts). Please tell me about the glory of the ‘Guru’ (the Spiritual master), which is considered as the best of the injunctions of the scriptures. (Sloka-14)
3. Lord! I prostrate before you. Be gracious enough to tell me the path by which the individual soul will be able to identify itself with the Brahman, the Supreme Being. (Sloka-15)
4. The Guru (Master) who instructs you in spirituality is verily Lord Shiva Himself. Verily Lord Shiva is the Guru (master) himself. The one who considers them as separate from each other is a great sinner. (Sloka-20)

5. I always pay my salutations to that Guru whose feet are capable of taking people across the ocean of this world of birth and death and also of rescuing them from the sufferings due to the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain. (Sloka-27)
6. Japa (Chanting), penance, holy vows, pilgrimage to holy places, fire sacrifice and charity etc. will all be rendered futile if one does not understand the true nature of a Guru? (Sloka-24)
7. Oh Parvati, let me tell you, the best way for an individual soul to become identified with the totality i.e. the Supreme Brahman is to seek refuge in and serve the holy feet of the Guru, by which process one's mind gets purified of all its sins-the main sin being our considering the body as the Self.(Sloka-28)
8. I bow to that Supreme soul called Guru (master) by whose grace alone all our sorrows, sufferings and delusions get dispelled. (Sloka-35)
9. One should always remember the form of the Guru, chant the name of the Guru, follow the instructions (commands) of the Guru and one should never think of anybody else (other than the Guru). (Sloka-39)

Chapter I: Who is a Guru?

10. The syllable 'Gu' in Sanskrit means 'darkness' and 'Ru' means the dispeller. As the Guru destroys the darkness of ignorance of a disciple, he is called the Guru. (Sloka-45)
11. The syllable 'Gu' also means the one who is completely unconditioned and beyond all the modes (Gunas) and 'Ru' denotes one who is beyond all forms. As the Guru is bereft of all Gunas and form, he is called a 'Guru'. (Sloka-46)
 Note:- Gunas or modes are threefold and form the basic building blocks of the personality and character of a person. The 'Tamoguna' represents sloth, laziness and sleepiness. The 'Rajoguna' represents all activities, aggressiveness, dynamism, etc. The 'Sattvaguna' represents peacefulness, light, harmony, etc. These are all the basics on which we react to external stimuli, events etc. The one who is beyond the Gunas has no reaction at all.
12. A person learning to do spiritual practice (sadhana) should occasionally offer clothes, bed, vehicles and ornaments (for Guru's wife) and other articles of use (of course within the person's means) which would please the Guru.
 Note:- Normally, a Guru was never paid any fees, salary or donation in the past. They were not at all greedy for money. Hence these offerings in kind were prescribed. (Sloka-50)
13. I bow to that Guru who uplifts and rescues all those who, having ascended the trees of Sansara (the phenomenal world) fall into the ocean of a hell full of suffering and miseries.(Sloka-57)

14. Guru is verily Brahman, the creator. He is Lord Vishnu, the sustainer. He is also Lord Shiva, the destroyer. He is verily the Supreme Being (called the Parbrahman). I bow to such a Guru. (Sloka-58)
15. Salutations to that Master (Guru) who had shown me the way to that Supreme Being who pervades the entire universe and remains as the only indivisible subject. (Sloka-60)
16. My prostrations to that Guru who is capable of releasing his able disciple from all bondages within just a second or half by making him realise his Self as verily Lord Shiva (the Supreme Being) and attain liberation. (Sloka-63)
17. I bow to that Guru who has revealed the entire truth behind the mind, the objects of the mind and the three states i.e. the waking state, the dream state and the sleeping states etc. (Sloka-69)
18. Salutations to that Guru who has been able to burn to ashes all the bondages due to the (reactions of the) actions (Karma) performed in the numerous past births by the glory of his fire of knowledge. (Sloka-75)
19. My Lord is also the Lord of the entire world and He protects us all. My Guru is the master for the entire world. My Guru is not only my Self but is also the Self of all the beings.(Sloka-78)
20. When the God is displeased with us, the Guru will protect us from the dire consequences of such displeasure. If the Guru is displeased, nobody can protect us from his ire. One should seek refuge in the Guru. (Sloka-88)
Note:- Ramakrishna Paramahansa told that one should be like a dog which though beaten by its master, comes back to him every time wagging its tail. However badly treated by a Guru one should never feel hurt but seek shelter at the Guru's feet.
21. One should always prostrate before the Guru with eight limbs of his body touching the ground (known as sashtanga namaskar), in the latter's presence. By this means one acquires steadfastness and all the qualities and nature of the Guru himself. (The significance of this prostration is given below). (Sloka-97)
22. The eight limbs mentioned above for the genuflexion are our hands, feet, knee, chest, head, eyes, mind and speech.(Sloka-98)
Note: There are three types of energy which work in us. The will power (creating desires)-known as Ichha Shakti, the power of knowledge (jnan shakti) and the power of action (kriya shakti). Hands, feet, knee, speech, eyes, etc. represent action. The head represents the seat of desires. The chest and the mind represent the seat of knowledge (All this power emanates from the spiritual heart at the right side of the middle of the chest). By placing them on the ground, we are offering all our powers to the Lord saying "none of the powers are mine, they are thine alone". This is a method of abandoning our ego which is the main impediment in our spiritual goal.
23. One can meditate on the form of one's Guru. One can worship the feet of his Guru. The name of the Guru can be chanted for the Japa purpose. The grace of the Guru can lead you to liberation (Moksha). (Sloka-86)

24. In the spiritual world many people practice hundreds of types of pranayama (breath control exercises) and similar exercises for a long time, which are difficult to be performed and some of which result in incurable diseases, resulting in sorrows and where it is very difficult to achieve full expertise. What need is there for such sadhanas? There is a method by getting which the wind of unrest which forcefully keeps us bound, gets extinguished. In order to get it, let us seek a Guru. (Sloka-100)
25. The goal of liberation can be achieved completely by devotion to a competent Guru without the need of any knowledge. For people who adopt the path of the Guru, there is no means for liberation which can equal a Guru. (Sloka-101)
26. If a disciple fails to do any service to the Guru, he cannot get liberation even if he be a performer of sacrifices or a practitioner of yoga or tapasaya i.e. penance. (Sloka-107)

Chapter-II: How to behave with a Guru & How to meditate on him.

27. I bow to that SADGURU who is of the form of Bliss of Brahman. He gives pleasure to all. There is nothing else apart from him. He is of the form of consciousness. He is beyond the pairs of opposites like joy and sorrow, all-pervasive and subtle like the space, the ultimate meaning denoted by the Mega statements of the scriptures like 'you are that', eternal, the only one, the pure, the unmoving, the witness of all knowledge and beyond all mental concepts. He is also bereft of all three gunas like sattva guna, rajoguna etc. (Sloka-111)
28. The meditation should be done in the manner indicated above and also as follows-I bow to that Guru who is the Brahman(the supreme being)itself, eternal, pure, invisible to the naked eyes, without form, without being tainted by any association , of the form of knowledge, of the form of consciousness and bliss. (Sloka -119)
29. Having thus meditated on the Guru, the knowledge arises in one by itself. Then one should contemplate that one has been liberated by the Guru's instructions. (Sloka-125)
30. A wise disciple should never talk loudly in the presence of a Guru. He should never tell a lie before his Guru. (Sloka-132)
31. At all stages one should practice non-dualism i.e. one should think that nothing else exists apart from the Supreme Being. At no time, a disciple should apply non-dualism before his Guru. Even after we have reached the goal, we should never consider ourselves as equal to the Guru. (Sloka-134)
32. Even if a person has understood the entire truth, when once he abandons or disowns his Guru, he will be subject to an extreme distraction of mind at the time of death. (Sloka-136)

Note: It is extremely essential that one should not think of anything but God at the time of his death and should not get distracted.

33. A disciple should not drink liquor in his Guru's ashram (residence), nor roam about. He should not give initiation to others in his Guru's ashram and nor should he lecture or swear in the Guru's name. (Sloka-139)
34. One should not transgress the command of one's Guru irrespective of whether one likes it or not. Night and day a person should carry out his Guru's command and remain like a slave in the presence of his Guru. (Sloka-141)

Chapter-III : A Guru's characteristics.

35. The one who wears the insignia of a monk like the ochre cloth and a sacred staff with the only purpose of earning reverence, respect and worship from other people cannot be called a monk (Sannyasi) at all. A monk is one who is after getting the ultimate knowledge and he is not bothered about impressing other people. (Sloka-152)
36. Those who have understood the Mega sentences (mahavakyas) of the Vedas (like 'you are that') on account of rendering service to the Guru are real monks. The rest are all actors who wear the garb of a monk. (Sloka-153)
37. A real Guru is one who instructs his disciple on the Supreme being who is eternal, formless and bereft of all Gunas and thus inculcates the state of identification with the Supreme being by making it shine in his disciples just like a lamp used to light up another lamp.(Sloka-154)
38. By the grace of the Guru one is able to get the infinite bliss by seeing his own Self ravelling in itself. Then by practising equality and by the path of liberation the knowledge of the self is attained. (Sloka-155)
- 39. Who is the person who gets the knowledge of Brahman?**
The one who is in solitude, devoid of any desires, full of peace, bereft of both worry and jealousy and is like a child, is called a 'Brahmajnani' i.e. one who has the knowledge of the Brahman, the Supreme being. (Sloka-174)
40. The person who practises daily by affirming to himself "I am the only one who is unique unparalleled & having no other as second to me" having complete faith in his Guru's words, need not seek a forest to live in.(Sloka-180)12
41. If one does ritualistic worship of Lord Siva (or any God)without understanding the truth relating to the real form of the Lord Siva (or any God), that worship will not be of any value and will serve no purpose like a lamp painted in a picture.(Sloka-193)
42. All actions for his spiritual practice will bear fruit by the glory of the person's initiation (deeksha) obtained from the Guru. One will gain all by gaining a Guru. **Not to have a Guru is a childish act and a person without a Guru will achieve nothing.** (Sloka-194)
43. Hence with all effort one should avoid company of all other people, should abandon the reading of all confusing scriptures as also allied books and should seek refuge in a Guru alone.(Sloka-196)

44. There are people who create confusion by arguing on philosophies (Darshana). Such Gurus are not fit to be saluted and should be abandoned from a distance. One should seek refuge in wise people.(Sloka-200)
45. One should abandon such a Guru who lacks in real knowledge of the truth, one who is given to lying and one who is a hypocrite. He does not know himself as to what is peace of mind and is he going to bestow peace on others? (Sloka-198)
46. By being engaged only in the activities of the material world, a person never attains the real knowledge and falls deep into the ocean of the phenomenal world (samsara). If once he attains that knowledge, all his actions amount to inaction and finally he ceases from all actions. (Sloka-210)
- Note:- The Guru Gita ends here and a few verses remain where it deals with the effect and comparative merit of various types of 'meditation seats' and other accessories.
47. One should spread a white woollen seat over a seat made of Durvha or Kusa grass and sitting on it should do one's Japa (chanting of mantra given by a Guru) with an one-pointed mind.(Sloka-218)
48. While sitting for Japa, normally a white woollen piece (kambal/blanket) is preferred but when one's aim is to attract and bring some persons under one's control, a red one can be used. One should adopt a posture called 'padmasana' (interlocking both the feet over each other), which will bestow peace. (Sloka-219)
49. During Japa, if one sits over a towel or a piece of cloth, it will result in poverty. If a stone-seat is used, there is a possibility of being subject to an ailment or disease. If he sits on the plain ground, he gets sorrows and a wooden seat renders the japa futile. (Sloka-220)
50. If one sits over a deer-skin or a seat made of Kusa grass, one achieves the higher knowledge, liberation if seated on a tiger skin, and when one sits over a woollen piece, one gets success in all endeavours. (Sloka-221)
51. If one faces the north while doing japa, one gets peace, facing east gets control over specific persons, facing south meets death early while when facing west gains money. (Sloka-223)
52. One gets early success in japa if it is done in a cremation ground, underneath a bel tree, underneath a banyan tree or near a mango tree.(Sloka-240)
- 53-54. If a person does japa without using a seat (asana), that action will not bear proper fruit. When a person chants this Guru Gita while travelling, while engaged in a battle or at the time of danger from an enemy, he will become successful. If chanted at the time of death (with faith devotion and sincerity) it will result in Moksha (liberation). (Sloka-242-243)
55. One gets success in the spiritual path and liberation by doing japa only. One should not do any bad deed while doing japa (say beating a child who happens to disturb one at that time) & nor should one do japa in an unclean place (e.g. sitting near a latrine).(Sloka-239)

Chapter-IV: Miscellaneous points regarding Japa, Guru, Initiation, glory of Guru etc.

56. Just as the river water merges in the ocean or milk from one vessel merges with the milk in another vessel if poured in it and as the space inside a pot merges with the outside space when the pot is broken, the individual soul merges in the Supreme Being, at the time of liberation. (Sloka-250)
57. A realised man of knowledge is always happy at all times-night or day (he has no change of moods). He lives in the eternal silence (as there is no other world or objects apart from him) and in all three worlds he is equally happy (the three worlds exist only for the ignorant who sees the realised person). (Sloka-254)

Who is a real Guru?

58. There are many Gurus who are experts in relieving his disciple of his money. Such a Guru is rare indeed who can relieve his disciple of the miseries and sufferings of his heart (due to the involvement in this world). (Sloka-269)
59. The real Gurus are always exuding peace, pure, of moderate speech, completely having got rid of desires(including lust and passion) and anger and given to excellent conduct, having conquered their senses (beyond all temptations). (Sloka-271)
60. He alone is fit to be a Guru who reveals in himself the Supreme Brahman who is an indivisible integrated form of bliss, ever liberated and free from all bondages. (Sloka-287)
61. The one whose very sight instils peace and confidence to face all toils and tribulations and makes our mind happy is a Supreme Guru. (Sloka-292)
Note: This is an acid test to find out a real Guru. Who is fit for getting initiation from a Guru?
62. When a person abandons all bad company and all bad actions (actions declared as bad and prohibited in the scriptures), this is an indication of the pure state of his mind. Such a person deserves to be initiated (deeksha) by a Guru.(Sloka-308)
63. The one who is striving to leave of all mental worries, is bereft of anger and pride and he abandoned the idea of non-dualism is fit for being initiated (deeksha). (Sloka-309)
Note:- The perception that there is only one Supreme being(of infinite energy) who has become the entire world as also all the beings (and as such there is nothing else apart from the one Supreme Lord) is called non-dualism. The subject alone is the only truth and there are no other objects apart from it.
64. I prostrate always to the holy feet of my Guru who is of the form of my own Self and by whose grace I have come to understand "I am all. The world and all else is all superimposed on me through a delusion". (Sloka-351)

**** HARIOM ****