Introduction to Bhagavad Gita
“Whenever I have read any part of the Vedas, I have felt that some unearthly and unknown light illuminated me. In the great teaching of the Vedas, there is no touch of sectarianism. It is of all ages, climbs, and nationalities and is the royal road for the attainment of the Great Knowledge.”

-Thoreau
“When I read the Bhagavad Gita and reflect about how God created this universe, everything else seems so superfluous.”

- Einstein
**VEDIC KNOWLEDGE**

**SRUTI**
- **VEDAS**
  - Rg, Yajur, Sama, Atharva
- **UPAVEDAS**
  - Dhanurveda, Ayurveda, Gandharvaveda, Sthapatyaveda

**SMRTI**
- **VEDANGAS**
  - Kalpa Sutras
  - Smriti Sutras
  - Upvedas
  - Veda Sutras
  - Upanishads
  - Mantra Sutras
  - Brahmanas
  - Aranyakas

- **Ritual Sutras**
  - Connected to Kalpa-vedanga
- **Tantras**
  - Spoken by Lord Siva to Parvati

- **Pancaratras**
- **Puranas**
- **Itihasas**
- **Darsanas**

- **Itihasas**
  - Mahabharata
  - Ramayana

- **18 Major**
- **18 Minor**

- **Samhitas**
  - Mantras

- **Brahmanas**
  - Ritual explanation of mantras

- **Aranyakas**
  - Esoteric explanation of mantras

- **Upanshads**
  - Jnana-kanda philosophy of Brahmans

- **Kalpa Sutras**
  - Ritual details

- **Siksa Sutras**
  - Pronunciation

- **Vyakarana**
  - Grammar

- **Nirukta**
  - Etymology

- **Chandas**
  - Meters

- **Jyotis**
  - Astronomy-time calculation

**Dharma Sutras**
- Law books

**Dharma Sutras**
- Including Manu-samhita and others

**Samhitas**
- Mantras

**Srauta Sutras**
- Ritual explanation of mantras

**Aranyakas**
- Esoteric explanation of mantras

**Upanishads**
- Jnana-kanda philosophy of Brahmans

**Kalpa**
- Ritual details

**Siksa**
- Pronunciation

**Vyakarana**
- Grammar

**Nirukta**
- Etymology

**Chandas**
- Meters

**Jyotis**
- Astronomy-time calculation

**Bhagavad Gita**

**Vedanta (Vyasa)**
- Metaphysics

**Mimamsa (Jaimini)**
- Hermeneutics

**Nyaya (Gautama)**
- Logic

**Vaisesika (Kanada)**
- Metaphysics

**Yoga (Patanjali)**
- Sadhana

**Sankhya (Kapila)**
- Metaphysics
Background
Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O Sañjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?

- BG 1.1
Arjuna said: O infallible one, please draw my chariot between the two armies so that I may see those present here, who desire to fight, and with whom I must contend in this great trial of arms.

– BG 1.21-22

Śaṇjaya said: O descendant of Bharata, having thus been addressed by Arjuna, Lord Kṛṣṇa drew up the fine chariot in the midst of the armies of both parties.

– BG 1.24
“I don’t want to fight.”

- BG 1.28-2.8
“Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.”

- BG 2.7
History of Bhagavad Gita
The Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvān, and Vivasvān instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikṣvāku.

- BG 4.1
Which Bhagavad Gita?
This supreme science was thus received through the chain of *disciplic succession*, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.

- BG 4.2
Our disciplic line

Knowledge passed down “as it is”.
Examples of unauthorized commentaries

“the war within, the struggle for self-mastery that every human being must wage if he or she is to emerge from life victorious”
- Eknath Easwaran

“an allegory in which the battlefield is the soul and Arjuna, man's higher impulses struggling against evil.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

“this Kurukshetra War is only an allegory. When we sum up its esoteric significance, it means the war which is constantly going on within man between the tendencies of good and evil.”
- Swami Vivekanannda

Krishna was a historical figure, but his significance in the Gita is as a “symbol of the divine dealings with humanity", while Arjuna typifies a “struggling human soul.“
- Aurobindo

"It is not the story of some people that lived sometime ago but a characterisation of all people that may live at any time in the history of the world.
- Swami Krishnanannda

“Vyasa saw the danger and deftly chose Lord Krishna as his mouth-piece to give out the immortal message of the Geeta amidst the din and roar of a national war to a confused and confounded hero of the day.”
- Swami Chinmayananda
How do we approach Bhagavad Gita?
Necessary Qualifications

- Humility and submission
- Self-honesty
- Accepting Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Bhagavad-gītā is a treatise which is especially meant for the devotee of the Lord.
Revision

- 5 reasons that Arjuna gives for not fighting?
- How old is Bhagavad Gita?
- How do we know which Bhagavad Gita is authorized?
- What are the necessary qualifications for approaching Bhagavad Gita?