

## PAIRS OF OPPOSITES IN BHAGAVAD GITA

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### **Abstract:**

Every ambitious individual meets obstacles on the route to achievement. Similar to pendulums, emotions such as happiness and depression, confidence and uncertainty, etc., swing back and forth. This has always existed. The purpose of this study is to present the pair of opposites described in the Bhagavad Gita so that readers are always aware of this inescapable truth. The existence of polar opposites is owing to the nature of the cosmos, which is composed of prakriti and purusha, daivi and asuri. Prakriti is ever-present and ever-changing, always assuming the shapes of sattva, rajas, and tamas. As the mind is likewise a component of prakriti, there are also virtuous mental states linked with the manifestation of each guna (attribute). Each guna's manifestation is related to both positive and negative mental states (attribute). Lord Krishna emphasises once more the significance of creating the culture and practise of perceiving and approaching everything with equanimity if one desires his life and spiritual efforts to be prosperous, uniformly advancing, and beneficial.

**Keywords:** Pair of Opposites, Equanimity, Thrigunas, Practical Guide, Purusha and Prakriti

### **Introduction**

The life of an ambitious individual is laden with difficulty. Everything you can imagine—happiness, anguish, pleasure, agony, success, failure, exhilaration, sadness, conviction, and doubt—swings from one extreme to the other. Something similar also exists in perpetuity. This world is composed of yin and yang, light and dark, daivi and asuri, and other pairs of opposites. At all times, prakriti is revealing itself as sattva, rajas, or tamas. Mind, like the rest of prakriti, is subject to the different gunas (attributes) that comprise the totality. There are moments of vigour and vitality as well as times of lethargy and exhaustion; seasons of wonderful health as well as times of horrible health. This is an example of Prakriti functioning.

The lack of sraddha and visvas (unwavering faith in God) is the fundamental reason of this yo-yoing, but the individual spiritual seeker's ignorance of the proper processes for performing sadhana also contributes to the problem. Complete faith in God (sraddha) is a prerequisite for attaining the knowledge that leads to liberation. The Vedic proverb cautions that those who lack

trust in others will perish. In the Bhagavad Gita, Shree Krishna emphasises the significance of establishing confidence — faith in God and faith in oneself — in one's sadhana, the efficacy of one's spiritual practise, one's spiritual life, and the ultimate Goal. Then alone can your spiritual path bear fruit and continuously advance.

### **Pair of Opposites in the Bhagavad Gita**

Numerous chapters of the Bhagavad Gita are devoted to Shree Krishna eliminating the ignorance, false assumptions, and illusions at the basis of Arjuna's struggle and confusion. What transpires with Arjuna reflects on everyone. We tend to misunderstand the pairs of opposites that exist in the physical world, which is one of the things that makes life difficult, if not horrible. In the face of life's many inconsistencies, the Gita instructs its readers to maintain equanimity or a level head. (Garg 201)

In the Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 14, it is written:

*O Kunti's son, when our senses interact with objects in the external world, we feel fleeting emotions like happiness or sadness. temporary, much like the changing of the seasons. If you want to become king of Bharat, you'll have to learn to put up with these people.*

When sensory organs come into contact with their respective sense-objects, it is possible to perceive heat, cold, pain, and pleasure. Both of these are ephemeral and transient. Therefore, Arjuna, you will need to determine how to cope with them. Shree Krishna cautions Arjuna not to be diverted from his duties and responsibilities by the contradictory information his senses present (Kiriyakere 28).

Chapter 2, verse 15 of the Bhagavad Gita states:

*Arjun, the most righteous person on Earth, is the only one deserving of salvation since he or she is immune to happiness and sadness.*

Those who are immune to such emotions and can maintain steady degrees of pain and pleasure are best suited for an eternal existence.

In other words, those who have transcended the material conception of life are vigilant in the world of consciousness and remain in equilibrium regardless of how extreme the outward conditions may be. They are more efficient since they are not interrupted. (Narasingha 38)

Lord Krishna has already proven the futility of death to persuade Arjuna to fight in the Kuruksetra conflict, and now He displays the futility of the world's opposites.

In the succeeding Chapters of the Gita, all kinds of life, including humans, animals, and inanimate objects, are seen as equal and deserving of respect.

When discussing polarities, two fundamental truths must be acknowledged. It is essential to comprehend the polarities on all levels of existence, from the physical to the emotional to the mental. In the womb of Mother Nature, nothing can be born without its polar opposite also being born. For our entertainment, Mother Nature has designed a two-player game. Second, all events are ephemeral and have no enduring consequence. Over time, one event is typically succeeded by its antithesis. Nothing remains constant for very long. The duration of a cycle may differ between instances. It is possible for the duration to change over time.

Some examples of pairs of opposites found in the Bhagavad Gita or elsewhere include: like and dislike; pleasure and pain; joy and sorrow; victory and defeat; heat and cold; honour and dishonour; love and hatred; and attraction and aversion. It is impossible to list all of them. The happiness of having a child quickly outweighs any discomfort encountered during labour and delivery. The joy of reuniting with loved ones is quickly replaced by the agony of dreading their departure. It is stated that both pain and pleasure originate from pleasure. This is true in both prosperous and perilous times.

Lord Krishna intends to introduce us to the rules of a non-attribute-based existence on a higher plane. He is thereby moving us all from the Saguna God to the Nirguna God and His World via His teachings. It is all part of the Gita's strategy to softly elevate the reader.

Neither would be feasible or relevant without the other. According to the Gita, life exists due to the existence of death. What is the point of celebrating one while mourning another? Nonexistence and existence are inseparable; neither can exist without the other. It is a cycle from the unmanifest to the manifest and back again, in a cycle that has lasted for at least a few billion years and is never-ending.

Because of the contrast between them, opposites have something to teach us. Similarly, it is difficult to appreciate abundance without first experiencing want. One must have experienced happiness in order to comprehend its antithesis. Given the existence of the opposite occurrence, one should be aware, grateful, and prepared to deal with it.

### **Beyond Dualities**

Those who have attained enlightenment are drawn to the notion of transcending duality. The existence of polarities in the cosmos cannot be wished away, but it is possible to elevate one's awareness to the point where it is neither confused nor misled by these seeming inconsistencies via practise.

Chapter 4, verse 22 of the Bhagavad Gita declares that those who accept their wealth without bitterness or envy have attained enlightenment and transcended duality. They are free to experiment without concern for the repercussions. As a result of this enlightenment, this lack of desire, and this lack of self-identity, the soul and nature have merged. The divine labourer signifies equality, forthly. The Gita refers to him as *dvandvatita*, or a one who has transcended duality. As we have seen, he considers both success and failure, victory and defeat, equally. In him, not only these dualisms but all dualisms are defeated and reconciled (Aurobindo 158)

True renunciates, also known as *Sanyasis*, are individuals who, as mentioned in Gita Chapter 5, Verse 3, have transcended duality.

*One who has neither hatred nor love in their heart is described as a Samnyast (or renunciate - renouncer of activities) in the verse. This is why you no longer have to worry about tyranny, O'mighty armed one (Arjun) (otherwise caused by action).*

This sloka offers one of the most radical claims made by Krishna. For Krishna, an ascetic is a person who has abandoned avarice, envy, and pride. Asceticism is demonstrated to be a feasible

lifestyle option for individuals who seek to remain active members of contemporary society. Only genuine objectivity is essential (Bhatia 221)

Specifically, verse 18 of Chapter 5 of the Gita states: *Whoever has divine understanding may discern with equal clarity a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater.*

The Gita raises the concept of non-duality by include animals in the awareness of a non-judgmental individual. What does it mean when the wise hold a learned Brahmin, an elephant, a cow, a dog, or an outcast in the same regard?

The wise sees no difference between individuals. Because he can see the Absolute's grin in everyone's eyes, he does not mind that people are different from him. True wise men and women treat all living creatures with kindness and compassion. Nobody is excluded from participation; all are welcome (Rama 219)

The passage says that one should attain a vantage position from which they can observe all of creation as if it were on the same plane of existence, including persons of diverse social levels, intrinsic skills, and Sattvika, Rajasika, and Tamasika temperaments. Despite its apparent simplicity, this argument is of the highest quality for one crucial reason. Despite the tremendous diversity of the universe, only those who have acquired greatness and wisdom can recognise the unity of all things. All things have either a divine or natural origin. One cannot enjoy it partially. Regardless of how they appear to the outside world, a mother's love and concern for her children do not change.

The capacity to maintain composure under pressure is a crucial talent for those seeking enlightenment. Follow any of the four branches of yoga - Karma, Gnan, Samnyasa, or Dhyana — to attain enlightenment (Yoga of Meditation). This is why the Gita addresses mental tranquilly throughout its entirety.

The knowledgeable are aware that despite the seemingly boundless variety of the natural world, there is essentially only one universal law that regulates everything. All life on Earth was created and is sustained by God or Mother Nature. Piecemeal approval will not suffice.

Being a true Karma Yogi demands not just altruistic actions, but also the cultivation of a serene mentality.

Verse 7 of chapter 6 elaborates on this thought.

*Those yogis who have perfected their thoughts are immune to extremes of temperature, mental states (such as happiness and sadness), and social standing (whether they are honoured or disgraced). Because of their dedication to God, these yogis are composed and steadfast.*

The centred Yogi is able to ride the ups and downs of life, from the delights of one moment to the agonies of the next. The individual advances along the path to Self-realization when he has given up all occupations and is unaffected by pairings of opposites. (Sivanada 127)

Self-mastery (or, more specifically, self-control) and steadfastness in the supreme self become possible when one has mastered one's lower self (or, more specifically, one's lower nature or senses) and one's lower nature or senses have been defeated. Specifically, this verse's ramifications are deep. It emphasises the importance of mastering one's senses (the inferior self) and staying stable in the superior in order to develop a level mind. Peace and contentment are impossible

without the cultivation of self-control. The three pairs of opposites listed in verse 7 of Chapter 6 are cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and honour and dishonour. Heat and cold refer to the physical body or person, pleasure and pain to the emotional plane, and honour and dishonour to the intellectual plane; these phrases were chosen and employed for this purpose.

As this passage says, one who is fully equanimous is unaffected by any and all pairs of opposites. The ascent to the next tier is gradual. It is more effective to take concrete efforts while attempting to reconcile opposites than to deal with the emotions involved. It is far easier to overcome emotional opposites than logical ones. Finding intellectual common ground between seemingly conflicting concepts is the hardest challenge.

It is more difficult to prioritise one's own needs for food and clothing than to resist the temptation to be sidetracked by the suffering of others. In order to promote a noble cause, selfless people are willing to sacrifice physiological niceties such as adequate diet and comfortable clothing, but they would never sacrifice their loved ones. With sufficient personal development, one can reach a point when he is indifferent to his family's happiness or unhappiness. Even atypical individuals are concerned with their reputation, name, and status due to the possibility of favourable or negative effects. The desire for fame is so deep in the minds of financially and spiritually successful people that they actively pursue it. They must be remembered forever, both now and after they have passed away.

### **Equanimity**

As described in Chapter 6, Verse 9 of the Gita, equanimity can be applied to a vast array of interpersonal relationships. According to this verse, yogis harbour no malice toward anyone, whether their apparent foes or perceived benefactors. Those yogis who can demonstrate the same amount of insight into their loved ones, coworkers, and opponents are highly esteemed. Those who can maintain neutrality between good and evil are also held in high esteem.

Exceptional is the individual who can retain equanimity regardless of whether they are interacting with a benefactor, friend, foe, neutral, arbiter, hater, nice person, or sinner (Gambhirananda 231) One who can retain a balanced attitude toward all interested parties — friends, rivals, allies, neutrals, and even adversaries — deserves special recognition (Tapasyananda 171,172)

This verse aims to dissolve barriers, boundaries, or distinctions between different types of human connection. Those with a balanced perspective view every individual as of equal worth, regardless of their behaviour. Nobody is exceptionally popular or unpopular. The distinction between the elite and the lowest members of society has dissolved. It is not merely a philosophical assertion; it is supported by strong reasoning. All religions have long claimed that the cosmos is indivisible and that there is one Creator; science has now proved this. If this is the case, then it follows that a single being cannot simultaneously possess both good and bad characteristics. Every living creature contains an imprint of the Supreme Being. This implies that the unmanifest gives rise to an abundance of forms, or manifestations.

Those who are able to embrace and practise equanimity also get the benefits, as doing so induces inner tranquility. Maintaining a feeling of balance in one's life is not only good to oneself and

others, but it is also morally and scientifically acceptable. Sin and sinner, or crime and criminal, are still studied and fought against in contemporary East and West cultures. The goal of criminal justice reform is not only to punish criminal behaviour, but also to restore the sanity of the offender by techniques such as education and counselling. Our objective is to convince him to return to the correct path. If he truly despised him, he would be an even more dangerous criminal. Gandhi intended this when he said, "Hate the sin, not the person."

Lord Krishna expands the realm of equanimity mentioned in Chapter 6, Verses 7 and 10 to the lifeless universe of creation in Chapter 6, Verses 8 and 9. Those yogis who have learnt to manage their senses and are satisfied with their level of insight and discernment are able to disregard any external stimuli that might attempt to distract them from their practise. From their standpoint, the most valuable metals and the dirtiest stones are equivalent. A Yogi is a person who is spiritually endowed, has conquered their senses, and possesses an abundance of knowledge and specific sciences. (Srivastava 222)

Consequently, a "Self-realized" yogi is one who is at peace with their own level of Brahman knowledge, is equanimous (unchanging), has mastered their senses, and views all things as equal regardless of their size or colour.

To achieve true self-actualization, one must transcend the world's value system and arrive at a point where the three most disparate physical substances—clout, stone, and gold—appear equivalent. Even people who have committed their entire lives to fasting, meditation, and devotion cannot achieve it.

### **Discussion**

Self-discipline (of the senses and mind) and genuine insight (oneness with nature) are the two fundamental ingredients for graduation and attaining a level of self-realization that makes giving up precious metals as simple as giving away a clod or stone. You've attained the pinnacle of self-awareness. Truth-seekers (as opposed to self-serving individuals) in various phases of their journeys, such as physicists who recognise the underlying unity of all matter, are far behind yet also deserve respect and encouragement. They are significantly different from the vain and self-centered materialists. It has been a very long time since this team made any progress toward their goal. ( Garg 212 )

If you look attentively, you will find many pairs of opposites functioning together in nature. Positive and negative charges oppose one another in electric current, an essential component of human life. The simultaneous existence of two diametrically opposite objects is highly unusual, despite the fact that it may appear obvious. Magnetism is another another kind of energy. In magnets of all sizes and shapes, the north and south poles, which are perpetually at opposition with one another, exist. In addition, our experience and study indicate that circular motion generates two opposing forces, centrifugal and centripetal. The universe consists of both gravity and antigravity. This is how the cosmos maintains its balance and counterweights.

Scientists have established the existence of anti-matter due to Newton's discovery that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. It is generally believed, based on the findings of international scientific research, that matter and antimatter are formed from pure energy, but only

in pairs. Particle accelerators can reproduce the earliest surge of energy in the universe to test the veracity of various Big Bang ideas. Scientists and saints share the goal of restoring the singularity to its original condition. The initial objective of the scientist is to understand more about cosmic background noise. Once this is achieved, one can proceed to the next and possibly final step: determining the ultimate explanation for the nature of the universe. Since the beginning of time, humanity has been at the beginning of a journey toward knowing and realising the unity of all things. Never-ending is the cycle of unravelling mysteries. Due to the ongoing expansion, it is possible that the Universe will undergo a contraction (as opposed to expansion). No one would even know what or where to look, let alone why.

Given the numerous ways in which humans fall short, it may be preferable to settle for the fact that saints and scientists agree on the existence of a fundamental unity in nature, despite apparent differences. In Hinduism, it is also widely accepted that the male and female deities Purusha and Prakrti were previously wedded.

Recognizing the existence of polar opposites and the underlying unity in nature despite the existence of opposites is a precondition for attaining the level of realisation, whereby one can enjoy the advantages of knowing essential oneness. It will not make much of a difference how well-informed you are. Instead of travelling to your destination, you examine a road map or travel guide. You must maintain your composure in the face of opposing forces that are trying to pull you in opposite ways, possibly causing your ship to crash. When seeking refuge from a storm, sailors frequently travel for calmer waters. Pilots often climb to higher altitudes, where the air is less turbulent, when flying in stormy conditions. As a species, we must enhance our awareness to the point where inconsistencies can have positive outcomes and prompt us to reevaluate our ideas. Nature possesses an inherent duality over which we have no control. A person can only be immune or impervious to these pressures if he changes his perspective on life. This is only possible through self-improvement and a change to a level where inherent unity predominates over conflict. Even if you fail, you will enjoy trying. No amount of work is ever wasted when directed effectively. If there are no opportunities for advancement, a person cannot be demoted. This is what the Gita offers, and what our lives demonstrate.

## Conclusion

The Gita presents its lessons in the form of a guidebook for daily living. In the pursuit of higher realms of consciousness, no amount of effort is ever wasted. After leaving the base camp, one has begun a sincere effort. Even if someone fails to reach the pinnacle, they are better off than they were before trying. Even if you do not receive the desired grade, you have developed as a person and a student regardless of the outcome of your efforts. Until they produce a result, whether positive or negative, all actions continue to exist in the world.

If you can soar above dichotomies, you will achieve inner serenity and heightened concentration. Both good and evil, beauty and ugliness, cleanliness and filth, enjoyment and agony are examples of polar opposites. There is no such thing as "beautiful" or "beauty" without "ugly" or "bad," and vice versa. Certainly, our perceptions of what is "great," "beautiful," and "horrible" have changed

considerably over time. Thus, it is apparent that psychological discomfort is inescapable unless one has a "good" or "bad" mentality. A person's anxiety can only be eradicated when there are no more "Pair of Opposites" in his or her life. Using relative concepts such as "good" and "bad" is to live in an illusion. To achieve the "Absolute Good," one must transcend the domain of opposites. Our instructors and canonical books have always pointed the way toward seekers of the Truth.

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