

The Guru Gita:

A Translation By Reverend Jaganath Carrera

Background

The *Guru Gita* is a part of a larger text, the *Skanda Purana*, compiled between the 6th and 15th centuries.

It takes the form of a dialogue between Lord Siva, Lord of the Universe and His Royal Consort, the Goddess Parvati.

It begins with Parvati observing Siva expounding the Supreme Truth to the sages. She is astonished when she sees that while the sages were bowing to her husband, He in turn was reverently bowing to someone else.

Opening Verses

OM. Hear now the hymn, *The Guru Gita*; sung by Lord Siva. It sings the song of the Supreme Self manifesting as the Guru. The mantras that are the source of all speech, power, and stable strength are its foundation.

Repeat this hymn each day to obtain the Guru's grace.

Opening Meditation

Meditate on the guru as seated in the crown of the head, surrounded by the sacred mantras, *ham* and *sah*, which abide in all beings and that are the cause of the universe.

The guru, the source of the universe, freely chooses to appear in living form on earth.

Meditate on the feet of the guru, who is Siva, who reveals the Supreme Truth as a lamp removes darkness, who is eternal, all pervasive, and who is the visible form of the Imperishable.

I sing this song to fulfill the four great values of life: prosperity, enjoyment, righteousness, and liberation.

The Guru Gita Begins

1. On the summit of Mount Kailash, the crest jewel of all mountains, the axis of devotion and abode of oneness, the Goddess Parvati, Siva's royal wife, reverently bowed to Him and said . . .

2. Salutations to You, O Lord, God of gods, who is higher than the Highest. O guru of the universe, eternally Auspicious One! Great Lord, *initiate me* in the knowledge of the guru.

3. Please teach me the surest way for the embodied soul to become one with the Absolute. At Your feet I pray: show your compassionate grace to me.

4. *Lord Siva replied:*

O dear Goddess, You are my very Self! Because I love You, I will speak. Your question, which has never been asked before, will be helpful to all creation.

5. In the entire universe *there is no knowledge more subtle and elusive . . .* Listen as I reveal this Truth to you: Apart from the guru, there *is* no other Brahman. O Beautiful One, what I say is true, it is the truth.

6-7. The wisdom of the highest scriptures, the doctrines of all sacred texts, the epics of the gods and wise sagas of life, the science of mantras, yantras, and so on, powerful incantations, the wisdom passed to each generation, the sacred teachings of those who worship the Absolute as Divine Father or Mother, and other revered works – all these doctrines and creeds only bring the downfall of those whose minds are restless and deluded.

8. Those who offer sacrificial rites, make vows, repeat mantras, or engage in penance, pilgrimages, or charity, *still go adrift* without knowing the essential nature of the Guru.

9. The guru is not different from pure, unbounded consciousness, the Self. This is the truth. Without a doubt, this is the truth. Knowing this, the wise ceaselessly strive to realize the true nature of the guru.

11. All harmful desires and past deeds will be completely washed away by *service* at the feet of the guru. Thus, the embodied soul becomes one with the Supreme. Have no doubt - the words I speak to you are true and carry the *grace* that liberates one from ignorance and suffering.

12. To obtain all the benefits of bathing in all places of pilgrimage, sprinkle pure water on your head with your mind focused on the guru's lotus feet.

13. Water from the ceremonial bathing of the guru's feet dries the mire of sins, brings forth the radiance of intuitive insight, and perfectly delivers one across the ocean of worldly illusion.

14. It washes away ignorance and puts an end to rebirth and karmas. Therefore, one should drink the water of the guru's feet to obtain nonattachment and Self-realization.

15. Drink the holy water of the guru's feet; take the food that the guru leaves to eat. Always meditate on the guru's form; constantly repeat the mantra the guru has given.

16. Any place where the guru dwells is the holy land of Kashi; the water that washes the guru's feet is the Ganges. The guru is the Lord of the Universe perceptible to the eyes. Indeed, the guru is Brahma, the Savior.

17. Water that has been poured over the guru's feet is the pilgrimage site, *Gaya*. It is the holy banyan tree, it is *Akshaya*, and *Prayag*, the meeting place of the sacred Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati Rivers. Salutations again and again to the guru.

18. Always lovingly recollect the guru's divine form, constantly repeat the mantra the guru has given. Follow the guru's guidance with your mind absorbed on nothing other than the guru.

20. With your heart absorbed in nothing but the guru, let go of attachments to your status as student, spouse, parent, and to your social standing, fame, and cravings for accumulating wealth.

22. From every corner of the universe, declarations of knowledge burst forth from gods, their rivals, or from departed souls, but Supreme Knowledge resides on the tongue of the guru, and through devotion to the guru it is obtained.

23. *Gu* is the symbol for darkness; *Ru*, the remover of darkness. The guru is Supreme Knowledge indeed, the swallower of darkness.

25. Thus, the feet of the guru are the highest goal, even difficult for the gods to attain. Indeed, even celestial musicians and their followers worship the guru's feet.

26. For them and for everyone, there is surely no truth higher than the guru. Therefore, the seeker of truth should offer seats, beds, clothes, ornaments, vehicles, and other things the guru needs.

27. Offer anything that pleases the guru. More than that, offer your life by continually serving the guru in thought, word, and deed. Prostrate fully in front of the guru without the least reservation.

29. Dedicate your body, senses, and life force to the guru. When you consecrate everything you call yours - even your spouse and your very self - in the name of the guru, it is blessed.

32. The guru is Brahma, the guru is Vishnu, the guru is Siva. Indeed, the guru is the Supreme Absolute. To that guru I offer my reverent salutations.

37. Salutations to the guru, whose existence brings truth to all beings, through whose form the Divine light - like the light of the sun - shines on everyone, and in whose unconditional love, we come to love our family and all beings more and more.

40. Those who say they don't know the Absolute, know it. Those who say they know the Absolute, know it not. Salutations to the guru whose mind is ever absorbed in the Absolute.

42. Salutations to the guru who reveals that this universe of countless forms is in fact, one undifferentiated whole - a play of cause and effect in which cause and effect are one.

43. Prostrations to the guru whose lotus feet eradicate the suffering brought by duality and who always protects seekers from all misfortunes and calamities.

44. If Siva is angry with you, the guru can save you, but if the guru becomes angry with you, even Siva cannot save you. Therefore, by all means, take refuge in the guru.

47. O Dear One! Though without three eyes, the guru is Lord Siva, the witness of all. Though without four arms, the guru is Lord Vishnu, the Preserver. Though without four faces, the guru is Lord Brahma, the Creator. This the scriptures declare.

48. I make these salutations with joined palms, to immerse myself in the ocean of mercy that is the guru, because it is by the guru's grace that a being is liberated from this universe of ceaseless change and the ever turning wheel of birth and death.

49. The supreme form of the guru is the *nectar of immortality* to one who has eyes of discrimination. But, like the blind who cannot see the sunrise . . . those who are idle, sluggish, or indifferent are unfortunate for they cannot perceive this Divine form.

52. The guru resides in the center of a sacred mandala surrounded by:

- the guru's spiritual lineage
- Siva, lord of the demi-gods and dissolver of the universe
- the three holy mountains where reside the essence of the Divine Mother
- the two principle qualities of the Supreme Lord: the power of manifestation and the power of self-awareness
- the goddesses who destroy intolerance, limitation, selfishness, and ignorance
- perfected saints and sages

- the great heroes and heroines of renown:
 - who are triumphant in battle over evil
 - who lend their protection in the performance of sacred ritual
 - and who help overcome fear
- the sounds that have the power to create
- and the highest mantras.

Salutations to all those luminaries who attend the guru.

53. What is the use of undeveloped seekers spending so much time practicing hundreds of rounds of long deep breaths in order to regulate the life force? These exercises can be uncomfortable and are difficult to master. Indeed, such unguided practice can disperse the life force, causing disorders. Instead, just serve your guru constantly and you will attain mastery over the life force naturally and spontaneously. It will become regulated of its own accord.

57. At the crown of the head - the gateway to Brahman - in the center of a bright lotus, illumined by a circle of moonlight, are the lotus feet of the guru, which destroy the raging fires of worldly existence.

59. The guru's glance creates all the worlds, makes everything flourish completely, and perceives the essence of all Holy Scriptures. It perceives that wealth does not lead to liberation, and it purifies devotees of all deficiencies. The guru's vision beholds the Self in the midst of ever-changing Nature and illumines the path to liberation.

60. The guru's glance is the pillar that supports the stage where all worlds are exhibited; it showers the nectar of compassion. It is the sum total of creation, evolution, and dissolution. The guru's glance creates past, present, and future, and bestows the vision of sat - chit - ananda: truth, knowledge, bliss absolute. May the guru's Divine grace always be on me!

62. The guru moves, but is ever still; is far away, yet near; both inside as well as outside of all things.

65. Gain knowledge of the guru's divine nature through the revealed wisdom of the scriptures, direct perception born of a clear, focused mind, the revered teachings passed on by tradition, and by inference. And by always being mindful of the guru's guidance.

69. By even a moment of loving remembrance of the guru, wisdom arises spontaneously. Without doubt, loving recollection of the guru fulfills all goals. Salutations to the guru.

72. Salutations to the guru, who, adorned with the garland of the Highest Truth, rides the power of knowledge, and brings enjoyment in this life as well as liberation.

75. Cherish these thoughts while offering salutations to the guru: *My guru is the support and protector of the universe and master of every plane of existence; my Self is the Self of all beings.*

76. The root of meditation is the guru's form; the root of worship, the guru's feet; the root of mantra, the guru's word; the root of freedom, the guru's grace.

81. There is nothing higher than the guru. Through devotion to the guru one attains knowledge as well as the wisdom that liberates. Therefore, for those who tread the path of devotion, the guru is the perfect object of contemplation.

88. I remember the guru, who is Supreme Brahman. I speak of the guru, who is Supreme Brahman. I bow to the guru, who is Supreme Brahman. I serve the guru, who is Supreme Brahman.

89. I bow to the Truth-bearing guru, who is the bliss of Brahman; who bestows the highest joy; who is one without a second; the embodiment of wisdom, beyond duality; who is infinite like the sky; who exemplifies the great Vedantic proclamations, such as 'Thou art That;' who is One, Eternal, Pure, Unshakable; the witness of all minds, beyond all changes; and who is free from the bonds of nature.

92. Visualize the guru in white garments, anointed with pure fragrant ointment, and adorned with flowers and pearls. With eyes that radiate joy, the guru's gentle smile is a treasure house overflowing with grace. To the left, the Goddess Shakti abides. Seated close by, her garment gently touches the guru.

96. There is nothing greater than the guru, nothing greater than the guru, nothing greater than the guru. There is nothing greater than the guru. This is the doctrine of Siva, the teaching of Siva, the declaration of Siva. This is the solemn word of Siva.

97. The guru is Siva. Without a doubt, the guru is Siva. The guru truly is Siva. Be assured, the guru is Siva. By my authority I proclaim this. This is my teaching. This is my doctrine. This is my creed.

98. By meditating on the guru in this manner, supreme knowledge bursts forth spontaneously. Therefore, one should cultivate this understanding, *"I am liberated by the grace of the guru."*

99. One should purify the mind by following the path shown by the guru. Do not cling to things that are transient, which you have imagined to be qualities of the Self.

100. The *essential nature* of objects, and the *knower* of objects - the mind - are worthy of being known. One should reflect on the truth that *objects of awareness* and *awareness* are identical. There is no other way to liberation.

102. Keep the guru's mantra, teachings, and spiritual presence in mind through the duration of every birth; indeed, until creation's end. One should never forget the guru, even if one attains Self-realization.

103. Wise disciples should never utter what is not completely true or speak discourteously or with disrespect in front of the guru.

104. Those who speak to the guru with egoism or anger, or engage in arguments with the guru, will lose what wisdom they have gained. They will be reborn in a waterless land with no interest in the highest Truth, or as spirits who oppose the Truth or, who are adversaries of humanity.

105. O Parvati! The guru protects one from malicious interference from envious ascetics, heretics, and even gods. The guru also safeguards one from fear at the time of death.

106. Even the gods, ascetics, and other beings that have the power to curse are powerless in the presence of the guru. There is no doubt that their malicious interference ends and they soon perish by the intervention of the guru.

115. Listen as I describe the state that arises when meditating on the Self. Reflect on it as all pervading knowledge and light, the size of a thumb, residing in the heart.

116. *'I am beyond any efforts at conceptualization, I am not attainable by the mind, I am without name, form, and sound.'* O Parvati, know this as Brahman, one's true nature.

125. Whatever you acquire or do not acquire, whether it is great or small, enjoy it with a mind that is contented and without cravings.

131. If one reads or hears this *Guru Gita* with an attitude of devotion; or if one even makes a copy of it and offers it to another, it produces all fruits.

144. It brings to perfection all righteous acts. It removes the fear of the influences of the planets, destroys bad dreams and makes good dreams come true.

145. It bestows the highest peace under all circumstances, grants righteous children to the barren, averts widowhood, and brings good fortune.

146. It grants long life, good health, wealth, children, and grandchildren. A widow who repeats the *Guru Gita* without selfish desire gains liberation.

148. It brings tranquility where obstacles and torment once prevailed. It grants prosperity, the fulfillment of virtuous desires, righteousness, and liberation. Without a doubt, one definitely obtains all that one could desire.

151. The *Guru Gita* is repeated by devotees of the Divine Mother, the Sun-God, Lord Ganesha, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Siva. O Goddess, it brings all attainments. Without a doubt, this is the truth. What I say is true.

156. As children are cherished by their parents, so too are disciples loved and cared for by the guru. Even those who are ignorant or dull reach perfection in all righteous actions, initiations, vows, and challenging disciplines. Others cannot.

157. The wise, who understand the nature of life, always bathe in the waters of the *Guru Gita* to wash away the impurities of this fleeting world of sense objects and desires, and to become free from the endless cycles of rebirth.

158. The one whose knowledge of the Absolute Truth is constant and complete is truly the guru. There is no doubt that wherever the guru dwells becomes a holy place.

159. The guru remains pure, holy, and immersed in Self-realization in every place. Without a doubt, wherever the guru stays, the multitude of gods also dwell.

162. Just as the water of a river merges with the water of the ocean, as milk perfectly merges with milk, clarified butter with clarified butter, the space within a pot with the space outside it, so too, the individual self merges with the Supreme Self.

164. Thus, the Awakened One always dwells in Supreme Freedom, existing as the embodiment of devotion, and *servng all*.

169. Fortunate is the mother of one who has devotion to the guru, fortunate is the father, and fortunate are the family and ancestors. Blessed, too is the earth where the guru dwells. O Goddess, such devotion is truly rare.

170. The body, senses, vital life force, wealth, close and distant relatives, mother, father, family - O Goddess, have no doubt, the guru is *all* these.

171. O Goddess! Mantra repetition, vows, and rigorous disciplines practiced through millions of births since the beginning of creation, only bear fruit the moment the guru is satisfied.

178. This doctrine -- mysterious, subtle, and hidden -- that I have revealed to You, should not be disclosed casually to just anyone. Protect it with every effort. I have revealed it to You because you are dear to Me.

179. Our own divine sons, the gods, Lord Vishnu and others – they keep this in their minds but do not speak it aloud. What I have taught you is true. This teaching is true.

180. This doctrine should only be revealed to one whose mind is matured and fully ready to hear the truth. O beloved, my very Self, impart this doctrine only to one who is endowed with faith and devotion.

181. Never even think to impart the *Guru Gita* to one without devotion, a cheat, a rogue, a hypocrite, or one who lacks belief.

182. The *Guru Gita* can rescue seekers from the constant flux of worldly illusion. This mantra is without fault, and is worshipped by Brahma and the other gods. It eradicates adversity, pain, and the disease of endless rebirths. I bow to the highest mantra, the *Guru Gita*, which erases the greatest fear.

Thus ends the *Guru Gita*, which occurs as a dialog between Lord Siva and the Goddess Parvati in the latter portion of the *Skanda Purana*.

It is offered at the holy feet of the Revered Giver of Light, the guru.

The Guru:

Interesting Quotes

Let each person take the path according to their capacity, understanding and temperament. Their true guru will meet them along that path.

— Swami [Sivananda Saraswati](#)

Let no one in the world live in delusion. Without a guru none can cross over to the other shore.

--- Guru Nanak

100% of a guru's marketing plan depends on you holding the belief that you are not enough; that you were created less equipped than necessary to fulfill your purpose. What if you let go of that belief and connected with the truth of your innate power to change and shape your life? You ARE enough. You CAN change and shape your own life. Anyone who tells you different is simply lying. Your life has immeasurable potentiality for greatness; act accordingly.

— [Steve Maraboli, Unapologetically You: Reflections on Life and the Human Experience](#)

