

Evolutionary History of the Bhagavad Gita
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Undoubtedly the Bhagavad Gita (Gita) is the greatest book ever written. It is a true classic; no one really reads it and everyone talks about it. It is true even with the greatest minds of Hindus including Adi Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva.

The beauty of the Gita is that it can be interpreted in many ways, always to expound righteousness. The Indian subcontinent went through many changes over centuries and each generation gave a new interpretation to the same Gita to match the prevailing social conditions. Constant interpretations make it Great. The Gita looks different to different people depending on their enlightenment. It is a mirror to reflect one's own enlightenment. Adi Shankara gave his interpretation of the Gita. His disciples gave their own versions. Ramanuja and Madhva gave their interpretations that disagree with Adi Shankara. The most recent interpretations are by Mahatma Gandhi and former president of India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

To a student of modern science of Newton and Einstein, the Gita offers yet another interpretation. It is a logic of discovery. Modern science is based on hypothesis testing, which is different from the logic of Deduction and Induction. The Gita was the first treatise on the Logic of Hypothesis Testing.

What follows is a systematic trace of evolution of the Gita, from archeological evidence, to understand why and how it invented its logic of discovery. The evidence was supplied in the original Gita that no one reads. Reading Gita tells us nothing. We have to see what was behind the words, which can be obtained only by studying its evolutionary history.

To grasp the logic of the Gita we need to start at the beginning and arrange events in a proper time sequence. First and foremost, we have to shed religious sentiments.

The genesis of the Gita was a scholarly work by a Vasudeva Krishna (600 BCE). The names Vasudeva and Krishna were immortalized when the epic Mahabharata generously incorporated the author along with most of his work. (See "The Cultural Heritage of India", Ramakrishna Mission, Vol 4, 1956, pg 37, 42.) Vasudeva Krishna was actually a School of Thought, contributed by many scholars. Most likely, it was started by a person with that name. Ishvara Krishna, of the same school, composed a treatise on Empiricism called Sankhya Karika.

The Rig Veda is the earliest extant source of Hindu heritage dated around 2000 BCE. Vedas are the starting point of the Indian thought process.

Vedas were intellectually very demanding and were accessible only to the best of best minds who were honored with the title Veda Vyasa.

Vedas were converted into Mantra (sloka, verse) to make them less demanding and easy to memorize so more people could have access to them. A book of Mantras was called a Samhita. The extant Rig Veda was a Samhita (verse). Most likely, the Rig Veda was versified around 1500 BCE.

Samhita were literary in nature. They needed considerable brain power and heavy investment in technical skills. For day to day use by less skilled people, a new version called Brahmana was developed in prose, around 1000 BCE. Brahmana were operations manuals for daily household rituals that required only basic reading skills.

People who recited Brahmana, for a fee, were called Brahmin. They had basic reading skills in Sanskrit. They had no intellect or critical thinking skills. Over time, they were unionized. They restricted entry to protect their income stream.

Rishi were scholars, with intellect, who mastered logic. They were in pursuit of knowledge, not money. They were an open society. Anyone with intellect could become a Rishi by mastering logic. Vasudeva Krishna was a Rishi. In the epic he was portrayed as a Rajan Rishi.

At this point, intellectual endeavor was split into two areas of specialization: Karma (applied) and Jnana (theory). Karma was the material and practical side practiced by Brahmin. Jnana was the abstract logical side developed by Rishi.

There was a popular misconception that everyone read the same Vedas, as in the Abrahamic religions (Bible, Koran). In fact, academic freedom was supported and people were encouraged to express views critical of anything, including Vedas. The greatest strength of Hindus was unconditional freedom of speech, without intimidation or persecution. Debates were civil. People traveled all over India to engage in public debates. Some of the well known debaters were women. Ubhaya Bharati was a judge. She challenged Adi Shankara to a public debate. Gargi Vachaknavi was a Rishi. She challenged Yajnavalkya to a public debate in the court of Janaka.

Rishi developed logics of discovery, called Upanishads.

Literary output was classified into different categories for easy identification.

Some texts were composed as collections of Sutra (aphorism) for technical efficiency. A Sutra was a one liner, highly compact in information density.

Rishi systematized their knowledge acquisition process in a scientific manner and composed the Brahma Sutra (logic of Brahman). The Brahma Sutra was the essence of Upanishads.

A well constructed sentence was called a Proposition (Adhikarana). A proposition might be true, false, or nonsense. A proposition was considered knowledge only if it could be proved to be true or false by evidence (Pramana).

The Brahma Sutra identified six major Pramanas as correct means of accurate knowledge: (1) Pratyaksha (Perception), (2) Anumana (Inference, infer fire from smoke), (3) Upamana (Comparison and analogy), (4) Arthapatti (Postulation, derivation from circumstances), (5) Anupalabdi (Non-perception, non-existent or impossible), and (6) Sabda (Word, testimony of past or present reliable experts).

There was a lot of disagreement among Hindu schools of logic on which of the six Pramanas were valid. Each school posted a list of Pramanas that were valid in its logic. A posted list of valid Pramanas of a school was called its Epistemology.

Vasudeva Krishna and Ishvara Krishna belonged to a school called Sankhya which had the Epistemology of [1, 2, 6] Perception, Inference, and Sabda. They did not accept any other form of evidence as valid.

By now we are around 600 BCE. Vasudeva Krishna wrote books about his logic of discovery and started an intellectual movement called Bhagavata or Bhagavad.

Many intellectual movements were started in those days by different Hindu schools of logic. Founders of major movements, such as Mahavira (Jainism), Siddhartha (Buddhism), Ajatashatru (Monoism), and Vasudeva Krishna (Bhagavad) were contemporary Rajan Rishi of adjacent kingdoms, near Banaras. There was no religion in those days. Religion was invented by latter-day Brahmin to fleece Hindus.

Mahavira, Ajatashatru, Siddhartha, and Vasudeva Krishna were all Rajan Rishi, men of means and leisure. They had no need for money.

Brahmin had no independent means. They invented God to extort money.

Let us pause and try to understand the social climate of the time of Vasudeva Krishna.

Vedic-Gods were nature worship, nothing to do with the extortion Gods invented by Brahmin. Upanishads were about Brahman, pure logic. Brahma Sutra had no God.

There was Jainism. They had no respect for Vedas or God.

There was Carvaka. They had no respect for Vedas or God. Their Epistemology included only Pramana [1] Perception.

There was Buddha. It was a system of logic. It had nothing to do with Buddhism. They had no respect for Vedas or God. Their Epistemology included only Pramanas [1, 2] Perception and Inference.

Vasudeva Krishna belonged to Sankhya school. Sankhya Epistemology included Pramanas [1, 2, 6] Perception, Inference, and Sabda. The difference between Buddha and Sankhya was Pramana [6] Sabda, testimony by other Rishi (Rig Veda). Otherwise, they were the same. Sankhya respected the Rig Veda. They had no respect for God.

Only the Rig Veda of pure logic, composed by Rishi, was valid in Sabda Pramana. The other Vedas were composed by Brahmin. They were devoid of logic. They were naked prejudices of Brahmin. They were not allowed in logic.

Rishi were logic; Brahmin were ignorance. Rishi were Hinduism; Brahmin were Brahminism. Rishi were an open society of open minds; Brahmin were a closed society of closed minds. Rishi were the exact opposite of Brahmin.

Vasudeva Krishna school was a branch of Sankhya. It developed a logic of discovery used in modern science. We are interested in knowing why and how.

A new branch of knowledge called Agama (Revelation) was introduced to try to answer the question, "What is God?" The question was not new, it had been tossed around. It was being exploited by Brahmin to earn money. A systematic approach to answer the question was new. God was not logic; it was not covered by the Brahma Sutra.

Discussions on which of the names, in or out of Vedas, qualify for God status produced numerous candidates.

What are the qualifications of a God to deserve worship? He or She must meet two basic conditions: (1) Punish bad behavior and reward good behavior (Dusta sikshana sista rakshana), and (2) Adapt to changing social conditions (Dharma samstapanardhaya sambhava yuge yuge). God is social engineering, nothing to do with logic.

Brahma was the creator who gave life, like a mother. Mothers could not punish a child. So Brahma was disqualified for worship.

Both Shiva and Vishnu of Brahmin were qualified.

To make a long story short, Brahmin were split and war broke out between the two camps. They developed their own independent Agamas. Agamas were devoid of logic.

Agama was a Brahmin invention to rob people in the name of Agamic-God.

Vishnu and Shiva were Agamic-Gods of rival Brahmin groups competing for market share to rob people.

Unlike Rishi, Brahmin were ignorant of logic. They knew Sanskrit grammar. Their books were wishful thinking, fiction. They were educated in Sanskrit, but functionally illiterate. They actively promoted ignorance.

Vasudeva Krishna, Mahavira, Ajatashatru, and Siddhartha were Rajan Rishi, not Brahmin. They had no respect for Brahmin or Agamic-Gods. Rishi were logic. Brahmin were ignorance.

Vasudeva Krishna was the first one ever to attempt to integrate Vedanta, Sankhya, and Agama (non-God part) into a unified system. He used a Vishnu as the center piece to produce the Gita. His Vishnu was Vedic-Vishnu (Brahman), not Agamic-Vishnu (God).

The Gita was a system of logic to combine all branches of knowledge Vedanta (Upanishads), Epistemology (Science), and Agama (Revelation) to produce an intellectual Stew. It was pure logic.

The Gita had Purusha and Prakriti, the trademark of Sankhya. It had testimony from Rishi of the Rig Veda. It had Ishvar (“it”) of triple Tatvas (Chit, Achit, Ishvar) of Agama. It did not have Agamic-God. It had a single Brahman of Vedanta, dual Prakriti and Purusha of Sankhya, and triple Tatvas of Agama. It had an abstract Thing-Vishnu that existed beyond Brahman, a super Brahman. Brahman as the ultimate with nothing beyond, no super Brahman, was a later development; the trademark of Adi Shankara.

The intellectual Stew of Vasudeva Krishna, called Bhagavad, was only a sample to demonstrate the logic of combining several branches of knowledge into a unified system. The Gita was a logical process, to distill knowledge. It was a process, not a product. It was a logic of discovery.

The Gita introduced a new form of logic that was dynamic. It was structurally different from Deduction and Induction. Modern science was dynamic. Both Newton and Einstein were different interpretations of the Gita logic. Both used the same logic of discovery as the Gita. The Gita invented the concept of Science. Newton and Einstein perfected it.

Vasudeva Krishna was unique in the history of science. The Brahma Sutra was the essence of Upanishads (Brahman). The Gita logic extended the scope of Brahman to include Science. Science was beyond Brahman. Science was not super Brahman. Science and Brahman were two faces (as of a coin) of the same Ishvar, Order in the Universe.

The Gita was an instant success with all branches of knowledge. As all branches of knowledge advanced with time, the same logic of discovery was used to produce new interpretations of the Gita. The substance of the Gita was its logic of discovery.

Each generation produced its own interpretation of the Gita. Only Rishi of logic could see the logic in the Gita. Brahmin were ignorant of logic. Rishi and Brahmin were state of mind, nothing to do with birth. Interpretations by Rishi survived, the rest perished.

When intellectual leaders came up with a new idea they produced their own interpretation of the Gita, using their magic ingredient. Gandhi successfully marketed the nonviolence movement with his own interpretation of the Gita. When India was looking for a high profile figure for president, they selected a professor at Oxford University who produced his interpretation of the Gita, dedicated to Gandhi. Both interpretations survived.

Another school with a Narayana as the center piece was developed in parallel at the same time as the Gita. They were working with the group writing the epic Mahabharata to package their Narayaniyam with the Mahabharata. Popularity of the Gita was overwhelming. Brahmin of the Vishnu sect proposed a corporate merger between the two schools to replace Vedic-Vishnu of the Gita with Agamic-Narayana and package the Gita also with the Mahabharata. To sweeten the deal the name Krishna was retained as the author of the Gita. The character of Krishna was incorporated as a Rajan Rishi. He

was introduced at the wedding of Arjuna to Draupati. The Gita was retained as a stand alone piece, as a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. It is interesting to note that of all the characters in the epic only Krishna is worshiped as a God. The current lore of Krishna was invented centuries later, in a Brahmin Purana called Harivamsa. It was fiction. It was marketed as a part of the epic.

The Vishnu sect wanted both the Gita and the Mahabharata as a double barrel gun to fight its war with the Shiva sect. Shiva and Vishnu were rival Agamic-Gods of Brahmin, at war for market share to rob people of their hard earned money.

The success of Krishna as a hero led to many spin-off religious schools, most important of them being the Bhakti (devotion, theism). The bhakti cult added new features to Agama: Temple, Murti (idolatry), and Worship (offerings). They were Nile beliefs, imported by Greek invaders (200 BCE) who occupied all of West Indus. Greeks used them to rob people in the Nile. A new form of Agama evolved. It was a Brahmin version of Greek robbery. Religion was born. Brahmin who never had logic or intellect misinterpreted the entire Hindu history as rooted in Religion. An ignorant's version of Hindu history started only after the Greeks. Extant versions of Agamas were composed in the age of Agama (200 BCE to 200 CE), the period of Greek occupation of West Indus. Puranas were composed in the age of Puranas (200 CE to 1200 CE). Agamas and Puranas were treatises on ignorance, to rob people. They were devoid of logic.

The bhakti cult opened its doors to all Castes, to expand its tax base. Offerings (voluntary tax) were pocketed as profits. Murti (idolatry) was a commercial success. To get around social barriers they encouraged people to have their own private temples at home. They marketed Temples, Murtis (idols), Worship paraphernalia, and Gita (Bible). Gita was a part of the package. Everyone had a copy, no one read it.

Since Krishna of the Mahabharata met the basic conditions for worship he was qualified to become a God. Brahmin invented God Gopala-Krishna in the Bhagavata Purana (500 CE) and God Radha-Krishna in the Brahma Vivarta Purana (700 CE). The Krishna cult rolled Vasudeva Krishna, Gopala-Krishna, and Radha-Krishna into a single Murti.

By 1000 CE some religious leaders concluded that the Krishna Gods were unworthy of God status. They started a search for a new God. Since Rama met the basic conditions for worship, he was qualified to become a God.

Rama was absent in Vedas, Panini, Upanishads, and Puranas. The almost forgotten Valmiki Ramayana (400 BCE) received new interest. The first chapter (Bala Kanda)

was revised and the last chapter (Uttara Kanda) was added to bestow divinity on Rama as an incarnation of Agamic-Vishnu. (Ramakrishna Mission, Vol 4, pg 43.)

The revised and enlarged Ramayana was translated by dozens, each with its own religious fervor and embellishments. The Tulsidas translation (1574 CE), in which both Rama and Sita worshiped Shiva and Parvati, won the popularity contest. Rama was firmly established as the new God.

Unlike Krishna, Rama was hijacked by both the Vishnu and Shiva sects. Krishna was a God of the Vishnu sect. Vishnu and Shiva were always at war. Rama is Universal God, for all people.

Ramanuja (1100 CE) and Madhva (1200 CE) successfully marketed the idea of Universal God by producing their own interpretations of the Gita. Their interpretation of the Gita (Dvaita, dual) was the exact opposite of that of Adi Shankara (Advaita, mono).

The Gita was a mirror to reflect one's own enlightenment. It was composed by a Rishi of logic. It was a form of logic to discover Truth. It was the essence of Upanishads.

It is Advaita to Adi Shankara, Vishista-Advaita to Ramanuja, and Dvaita to Madhva.

It is the nonviolence movement to Gandhi.

It is a Logic of Scientific Discovery to a student of modern science.

The Brahma Sutra is the logic of Brahman. The Gita is a logic of discovery. Both are distilled essence of Upanishads, the Scientific Method of Hinduism.

Science and Brahman are two faces of the same Ishvar, Order in the Universe.

The Gita is the greatest book ever written. It reflects one's own enlightenment.

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