

From Darkness to Light The Guru Gita: The Song of the Guru

The *Guru Gita* reveals the inner workings of spiritual apprenticeship. It presents the guru/disciple relationship as a dynamic path that leads to a fulfilling life as well as Self-realization.

This unique text presents us with life's most fundamental paradox, the riddle we must solve if our goal is to realize the unshakable peace of our True Self:

*How can Infinite Spirit and finite matter fully exist in the same space and time, in the same individual? How can we be fully human **and** fully divine?*

The *Guru Gita* stands firmly at the crossroads of the Infinite and finite and speaks to us from that point of intersection. It invites us to pause and reflect at the core of a riddle that can't be solved by the mind. It opens the heart and stills the restless chatter of the mind through soaring poetic language, imagery, and striking symbolism. We come to realize that the answer to the riddle, and the peace we seek, doesn't come through philosophizing, but through dedication, selfless love, and meditation.

The Guru/Disciple Relationship

The *Guru Gita* offers guidance on how to meditate on the mystery of the guru's role and nature, how to cultivate loving devotion to the teacher and teachings, and how the personal growth gained through this relationship leads to Self-realization and service to all beings.

At first glance, this *seems* to summarize the *Gita's* content. In reality, it goes far beyond this. The *Guru Gita* pays homage to the spiritual potential in us all. Yes, the *Guru Gita* says, the guru is God . . . but the same text also declares that, you too, are Divine. The transformative power of these teachings - that which gives it extraordinary vibrancy - is *not* that the guru has attained an enlightened state unreachable by us. The teachings of the *Guru Gita* have the power to inspire and transform precisely because the guru is a human being like us, and because we all have the same spiritual potential within, waiting to unfold. It is the guru within us that recognizes the guru without. In fact, the guru within and the guru without, are one.

From time immemorial, the path to enlightenment has essentially been the same: Those that have experienced the Truth, the enlightened, are lit candles that show the way. Seekers of light, not yet realizing that what they seek is within, find a lit candle that stirs buried memories of their own Inner Light. The powerful devotional aspect of the *Guru Gita* is the unlit candle snuggling up close to the lit one to learn its secrets to success, to emulate it, form a relationship to it, and to serve and revere it. Most importantly, the unlit candle strives to catch a spark of light from its fully lit master, to become enlightened by a flame that has passed from master to disciple from time immemorial. The guru/disciple relationship is really between a seeker and the Divine Light.

Guru Gita: 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.

"O, My Lord, You are the teacher of the entire world, the one Supreme Being. You are fit above all to receive prostrations. To whom do You bow? I am amazed at this. Please, enlighten me!"

The great Lord's response was simple, direct, and startling:

"It is to the Guru I bow."

Hearing this, Parvati asked Siva to explain the nature of the guru, and for the sake of humanity, to reveal the path by which seekers can unite with the Absolute. In response to Her request, Lord Siva sang the *Guru Gita*.

The Translation

The *Guru Gita* lifts us into a world of celestial beings, of sacred mountains, rivers, and streams, of holy trees, herbs, and of mantras and mandalas that have the power to bring knowledge and peace to dedicated seekers. It is a glorious world, but it can be a bit dizzying without knowing the meaning of its symbols.

I have done my best to clarify the many symbols used in the text. In part, I've done this by minimizing the use of Sanskrit. Another goal of this translation was to integrate the inner meaning of the symbolic and cultural references into the translation so that the listener wouldn't need to resort to an encyclopedia to understand the intent of a verse.

I have also rendered the text gender neutral. Although there are, and have been, many great female gurus, the image most have of a guru is male. I didn't want to reinforce that image. The guru is neither male nor female. The guru is the Light.

Study Hints

Disciples of any guru can use the *Guru Gita* to reflect on the incredible vibrancy of the relationship they have entered. It awakens and strengthens love and devotion; it helps overcome fear, brings peace and joy, and breaks the bonds of ignorance.

The *Guru Gita* is a song (*gita*). Some of the repetition of ideas encountered may not just be for emphasis. Maybe, like choruses in our favorite songs, these refrains return us to the theme of the song. Also, songs are sung often and with feeling. They are companions in our lives. They mark significant events and evoke strong memories. They inspire, bring joy, and flourish in communal settings.

The wisdom imbedded in this text will bloom with repeated listening and reading. Allow the images to enter your heart and awaken you from within.

Dedication

I have come to this understanding of the guru: God comes to us in many forms, not only the images we see in temples, churches, and other places of worship, but as the people and events of our lives. God appears to us as the remover of obstacles, as family and friends, food, challenge – whatever we need at any time for our growth.

The guru is God coming to us in the form of mercy. It is the form that God takes when we have seen the limitations of expecting the world to deliver what it cannot: unshakable peace. It is at that time, the ancient saying comes to life: *When the student is ready, the teacher appears.*

This humble translation is dedicated to my revered Guru,
Sri Swami Satchidananda Maharaj, who introduced us to this text many years ago. The
embodiment of unconditional love, He has stood, and continues to stand, alongside
devotees, offering unfailing guidance out of the darkness of ignorance and into the Light.

May this Gita be a blessing to all who hear it.

Yours,

Reverend Jaganath Carrera

Reverend Jaganath Carrera

The Guru Gita

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 stabile 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 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.

10. For the embodied soul, knowledge of the Self is veiled by a false perception of the world born of ignorance. The one by whose light Self-realization arises is known by the name, 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.

19. The Supreme Knowledge that resides in the mouth of the Guru can be attained by the Guru's grace alone. Keep your Guru ever present in your heart, just as a devoted wife keeps her husband there.

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.

21. It is true that those who direct all thoughts to Me alone achieve the highest state. This supreme state can also be attained by whole-hearted worship of the Guru - who is Siva manifest in human form.

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.

24. *Gu* is the symbol for ignorance born of misperception; *Ru* is the Supreme Knowledge that destroys ignorance.

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 (28) 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.

30. O beautiful One! Do not hesitate to live for the sake of the Guru and the teachings. Those who live for the pursuit of pleasures, should remember that the body is transitory, the residence of germs, foul waste, toxins, and phlegm - and is reduced to ashes in the end.

31. Those who venture onto the tree of this fleeting world of change sink into the ocean of torment at the end of their lives. Salutations to the Guru, who surely saves all devotees from this fate.

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.

33. The Guru is the cause of the universe, the bridge to cross over the ocean of change, and the source of all knowledge. Salutations to the Guru who is Siva.

34. Salutations to the Guru, who with the poultice of knowledge opens the eyes of one who is blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

35. The Guru, who is the father, mother, family and Divine Light of devotees, bestows realization of the limitations of worldly existence. Salutations to the Guru.

36. My reverent salutations to the Guru who is the embodiment of the Absolute Truth, the *Light* by which that Truth is perceived, and whose *Bliss* reveals joy to all.

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.

38. Salutations to the Guru, by whom this world is illumined, who perceives all states of consciousness - waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep - but who cannot be perceived by the mind.

39. Salutations to the Guru who is Truth, whose knowledge of the universe sees through the illusory divisions that split it into fragments, and who perceives no distinction between the universe and the Self.

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.

41. Salutations to the Guru, who is the cause of the universe although appearing as an effect. In truth, the Guru is both the cause and effect.

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.

45. I offer my reverent praise and honor to the Guru's radiant feet, where devotees' speech, mind, and intellect dwell, and which are the supreme manifestations of Spirit and Nature.

46. The syllable 'gu' is that which is beyond the *gunas* – the subtle forces of Creation. 'Ru' is that which is beyond *rupa* – all forms in Creation. The One who bestows the state beyond all forces and forms is said to be 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 folded 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.

50. O Dear One! Everyday and with all devotion, one should offer full prostrations in the direction where the holy feet of the Guru abide.

51. O Noble One! The wise and the learned always offer handfuls of the sweetest, most fragrant flowers in the direction of the revered and blessed one - the Guru - who is free, fully awakened, and the witness to the eternal drama of the creation and dissolution of the universe.

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.

54. To contemplate the form of your Guru is to contemplate infinite Siva. Truly, whenever you utter your Guru's name, it is the same as chanting the name of Lord Siva.

55. Even a few of the smallest specks of dust from the Guru's feet form a bridge strong enough to cross the ocean of fleeting worldly existence. That Supreme Guru we honor, serve, and worship.

56. Upon receiving the Guru's benevolent grace, one should turn away from the ways born of ignorance, and humbly open one's heart to the Highest Master to attain the most valued of wishes - Self-realization.

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.

58. Reflect on the Guru as seated in the center of a thousand petaled-lotus at the heart of a sacred triangle. The mantras of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva ring out from its corners; that of the Transcendent Self, on either side.

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!

61. O dear Parvati, I consider the word "Guru" to be the king of all mantras. Pure as gold refined in fire, it has been thoroughly confirmed by reason, meditation, prayer, and intellect. It protects one from death day and night.

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

63. Know that this is the consciousness the Guru experiences:

"I have no birth, I am ageless, without beginning or end. I am endless Consciousness and Bliss. I am smaller than the smallest, larger than the largest."

64. *"I am the supreme unseen primal cause, eternal, self-luminous, without taint and craving. I exist beyond the limitations of space: immovable, blissful, imperishable."*

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.

66. O great soul Parvati! Seeing that holiness resides in You, I will speak to You now of the nature of the Guru, upon which one should always reflect.

67. Salutations to the Guru, who reveals this sacred universe in its fullness, permeated by all animate and inanimate objects.

68. Salutations to the Guru whose lotus feet are adorned with the most splendid jewels of wisdom from the highest scriptures; who is the sun whose light causes the lotus of knowledge to bloom into Self-realization.

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.

70. Salutations to the Guru, who is pure eternal consciousness and peace, who is without flaw, beyond the limitations of space and time, who is the primordial sound and the source of creation.

71. Truly, the Guru pervades all that changes and all that does not; all that is animate and all that is not. Salutations to that 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.

73. Salutations to the Guru who incinerates the karma of countless lives through the power of Self-realization.

74. Salutations to the Guru. There is no truth greater than the Guru. There is no path of self-discipline greater than service to the Guru; no knowledge higher than knowledge of the Guru.

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.

77. Salutations to the Guru who has no beginning but is the origin of all - the supreme transcendent deity. There is nothing higher than the Guru.

78. The merit gained through baths and other sacred activities in the holy waters of the seven seas can easily be attained in one-thousandth of a drop of water from the Guru's feet.

79. If you alienate Siva - who is the remover of faults and ignorance - by your mistakes, the Guru will save you, but if you are alienated from the Guru, no one can save you. Therefore, with all effort, take refuge in the Guru.

80. There is nothing higher than the Guru. Indeed, the Guru is the entire universe comprised of the qualities of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Therefore, one should worship the Guru.

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.

82. Nothing exists which is higher than the Guru. Indeed, the scriptures proclaim that if the mind meticulously analyzes every particle of Creation, it can never fathom the fullness of the Guru. Truly, one should always venerate the Guru with thought and speech.

83. It is purely by the Guru's grace that Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva gain the capacity to guide the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. Perfection comes by serving the Guru.

84. Sages, Gods, demigods, celestial musicians, spirits of the ancestors of the human race, sprites that attend the gods, and spirit-beings who exist to praise the gods do not know the proper manner of serving the Guru.

85. Like pots on a potter's wheel, even ascetics, renunciates, and those with profound knowledge and self-discipline continue to spin in the emptiness of the world of change.

86. Departed spirits of ancestors, great heroes, seers, adepts who possess supernatural powers or who have achieved mastery over the senses and their objects - even gods, demigods and the celestial musicians who attend them, cannot be free from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth if they turn their faces from serving the Guru.

87. O Supreme Goddess! Listen to the method of meditating on the Guru who bestows all joys, grants all pleasures and all worldly fulfillment, as well as liberation:

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.

90. I bow to the Guru who is Brahman, eternal and pure, who is beyond perception and form and without taint, who is infinite knowledge, consciousness, and bliss.

91. Meditate on the divine form of the Guru, seated on a throne in the center of the lotus of the heart. Here, at the axis of the womb of countless universes, the Guru, adorned with the jewel of Transcendental Consciousness, shines like the crescent moon dripping the nectar of immortality, and fulfills all righteous requests.

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.

93. I always bow to the Guru, who exudes bliss, who is pure and bright, whose nature is knowledge, and who is awake to the true Self. Lord of Yogis, adorable and worthy of worship, the Guru is the physician who cures the disease of the countless cycles of birth, death, and rebirth.

94. I bow to the Guru in whom the eternal cosmic processes of creation, sustenance, dissolution, regulation, and grace are present.

95. As you arise each morning, repeat the Guru's mantra with your mind fixed at the crown of your head. There, the Guru, the two-eyed, two-armed god of peace abides, seated on a white lotus, granting the boon of fearlessness.

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.

101. O Great Goddess! Those who scorn the Guru even after hearing these teachings go to a place of dreadful torment for as long as the sun and moon exist.

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.

107. O Goddess! The two-syllable word, 'Guru' is the king of all mantras. It is the essence of the highest scriptures and sacred wisdom, and leads to the highest state.

108. Indeed, those who are devoted servants of the Guru can be regarded as true renunciates even if they are ignorant of the scriptures. All others are merely wearing renunciates' robes.

109. Just as one lamp lights another, the Guru awakens knowledge of the eternal imperceptible Brahman, who appears as everything in creation, but is itself without form or attributes.

110. Perceive the joyous Self through the gift of the Guru's grace. Knowledge of the Self arises through this path.

111. I bow to the Guru who is the creative power of the universe and who permeates the entire the universe - all that moves and that is unmoving - from a blade of grass to the highest Self.

112. I always bow to the Guru who is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, who is beyond all multiplicity, eternal, complete, without form, without attributes, and who abides in the Self.

113. Meditate on the Guru, who is beyond all beyonds and the bestower of bliss, as residing in the center of your heart, pure and bright as crystal.

114. Have no doubt that as the image of a crystal is reflected in a mirror, so also, reflected in a tranquil, clear, and one-pointed mind is the bliss of the Self. Experience this as, "*That Supreme Bliss I am.*"

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.

117. As the fragrance of flowers and camphor is natural to them, as cold and heat are natural phenomena, so is eternity natural to Brahman.

118. Having become one with Brahman, one may abide anywhere, firm in that realization. Just as larvae unfold their true nature as bees by incessantly meditating on the nature of a bee, one who meditates on the Guru as Brahman becomes Brahman.

119. Meditating on the Guru in this manner, the disciple becomes one with Brahman, and is liberated from *pinda*, *pada*, and *rupa*: the force of creation, the movement of the life force, and matter. There is no doubt about this.

120. *Parvati then asked:*

O Great Lord, please further define for me *pinda*, *pada*, and *rupa*. And what is beyond *rupa*? Please explain this to me, O Great Lord, Source of Bliss.

121. *Siva said:*

Pinda is the latent power of evolution within; *pada*, is breath and the life force; and *rupa* is the subtle cause of all physical forms. Beyond *rupa* is Brahman, the Pure.

122. O beautiful One! One experiences liberation when the Divine creative power within is fully awakened, when the life force becomes utterly still, and when one can hear within the mantra of the transcendent Self – *Hamsa* - repeating by itself. One no

longer identifies with the physical form and is liberated. But those who go beyond even all these are truly free.

123. Having become one with all there is, one can perceive the highest Truth. There is nothing greater than the highest. All that exists has no other abode.

124. On having caught sight of the Highest Truth by the Guru's grace, one should resolutely continue, maintain a tranquil, balanced mind, and completely let go of all cravings and attachments.

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.

126. The awakened ones say that having attained the all-knowing state, the embodied soul becomes one with everything. Ever blissful and tranquil, such a one rejoices everywhere.

127. Moreover, wherever the knower of Brahman lives, that place becomes a vessel for all that is auspicious, good, and holy. O Goddess! Thus I have described to you the characteristics of a liberated being.

128. I have also explained to you the proper course for knowing the true nature of the Guru. And I have fully explained how devotion to, and meditation on, the Guru bestows liberation.

129. O Great Self! I shall now speak of what can be accomplished by recitation of the Guru Gita. This song is not meant for obtaining fleeting, worldly gains, but to bring the highest benefit to all beings in all the worlds.

130. Those who strive for worldly gain and who lack insight sink into the ocean of worldly limitations and transitory existence, but knowers of the Highest Truth are not bound by their actions, whatever they may be.

131. But 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.

132. O Goddess, I have revealed to you the Song of the Guru, the essence of Pure Truth. Without a doubt, regular repetition of this song destroys the disease of transitory existence.

133. Repeat the Guru Gita in which every letter, every sound, every syllable is imperishable, radiant, and powerful. It is the highest of all mantras. All other mantras are not worth even one-sixteenth part of one letter of the Guru Gita.

134. Infinite and endless are the rewards obtained by repeating the Guru Gita. Bondage from all past wrongdoings is destroyed and all hardships come to an end. There is no doubt about this.

135. It removes the fears of time and death, and all misfortune. It erases the fear of ghosts, demons, evil spirits, thieves, and wild beasts.

136. It destroys powerful, resistant diseases, bestows all prosperity and makes perfection possible. More importantly, it subdues ignorance. Repeat it always.

137. Repeating it while seated on cloth brings lack; on stone, disease; on the earth, unhappiness; and on wood, it becomes useless.

138. Repeating it while seated on a black deerskin, one attains knowledge; while on a tiger skin, the treasure of liberation. Sitting on sacred kusha grass brings wisdom, and a seat of wool brings all attainments.

139. O Goddess, repeat this song with a one-pointed mind on an auspicious seat covered with a pure, spotless, wool blanket.

140. O Beloved, one should use a white seat for attaining peace, a red one for self control, a black one to eliminate malevolent spirits, and a yellow one to attract wealth.

141. Repeat the Guru Gita facing North to attain peace, East for self-control. Face South to destroy all adversities, West to attain prosperity.

142. The Guru Gita has the power to enthrall all creatures, and to liberate them from bondage. One becomes the beloved of gods and rulers. All planes of existence become one's dominion.

143. It has the power to subdue harmful attributes while increasing beneficial ones; destroy the fruits of pain-bearing deeds while bringing forth the fruits of deeds that are painless.

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.

147. Even if she repeats it while harboring desire, she obtains non-widowhood in the next birth. All fears, suffering, and obstacles will be destroyed. All malicious interference will be removed.

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.

149. The Guru Gita is the Wish-fulfilling Cow for those who desire objects, the Wish-fulfilling Tree for those who cherish all that can be imagined, and the Wish-fulfilling Gem for those disturbed by anxious thoughts. The Guru Gita creates auspiciousness in every way, and for everyone.

150. For those whose goal is liberation, who repeat it daily, the radiance of liberation will be attained. Those who repeat it desiring enjoyments will no doubt also attain the fruits of their desires.

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.

152. O beautiful One! Now I shall describe the places to repeat it to achieve that which is longed for: at the sea, a riverbank, or in a temple of Lord Vishnu or Lord Siva. . .

153. Or in a temple devoted to the Divine Mother, in any place made holy by worship of the Divine, in an ashram, where cows reside, under the holy banyan or gooseberry trees, in a garden of holy basil plants . . .

154. Or in any pure, clean place, repeat the Guru Gita regularly with your mind focused and at peace.

155. By reciting this Guru Gita in a cremation ground or other places that inspire fear in most people, or near the root of a banyan or thorn-apple tree, or close to a mango tree, one gains success.

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.

160. Recite the Guru Gita while seated in a meditation posture, while lying down, walking, standing, speaking, riding a horse or elephant, whether attentive and with devotion, or distracted and without feeling.

161. One who always repeats the Guru Gita is pure of mind and wise. By merely seeing such a one, rebirth is overcome.

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.

163. In this manner, the individual self of the wise one merges with the Supreme Self. Day and night, and in every location, the wise one delights in Oneness.

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

165. O Parvati, all doubts are left behind. Such a one, truly free, experiences both liberation and delight in this world. The Goddess of Speech and Learning resides on the tip of the tongue of the realized soul.

166. There is no doubt that anyone who repeats the Guru Gita will attain all spiritual accomplishments, as well as worldly pleasures and liberation.

167. All I have said is the truth: the knowledge I have revealed is real and worthy of being followed. O beautiful One, all I have said is true. There is nothing like the Guru Gita. Nothing like the Guru Gita.

168. In all sacred traditions, God, the Absolute Reality, is One. And to be steadfast in living a righteous life is one. To faithfully live by these truths is the highest self-discipline. But there is nothing higher than the Guru – no reality, no teaching, higher than the Guru.

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.

172. Those who do not serve the Guru are unfortunate even with knowledge and powers gained through rigorous disciplines. O beautiful One! This is the truth.

173. Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, divine seers, ancestors, and celestial musicians, singers of praise, and protectors of wealth . . . even realized beings and great sages - none can succeed without the grace attained by serving the Guru.

174. Those who constantly abide in devotion to the Guru have reached the highest place of pilgrimage. Without such devotion, traveling to sacred sites serves no purpose. O Goddess, all places of pilgrimage reside in the big toe of the Guru's foot.

175. Abandon all unprincipled places, and all actions that do not bring spiritual growth, and recite the Guru Gita. One attains endless rewards and spiritual victory.

176. It is not conducive to success to repeat this hymn in an environment that is inappropriate. One attains inferior fruits. By reciting the Guru Gita when undertaking a journey, or when facing danger from an enemy in battle, one attains success.

177. At death, it brings liberation. For the devoted disciple, every endeavor at every location is completed.

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.