

Bhagavad Gītā Chanting Guidelines (Chpt 17)

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

1. श्लोकः (ślokaḥ) : A stanza or verse
2. पादः (pādaḥ): A quarter of a verse
3. विसर्गः (visargaḥ): A symbol in writing, representing a distinct hard aspiration and marked by two perpendicular dots (:) in देवनागरी (devanāgarī) script as found in the ending of the words like कृष्णः (Kṛṣṇaḥ) and रामः (Rāmaḥ)
4. **Aspiration:** It means to pronounce with a puff or breath.
5. वर्गः (vargaḥ): A class or series of consonants in the alphabet.
Example, क वर्ग (ka varga) is क् ख् ग् घ् ङ् (k kh g gh ṅ)
6. अल्पप्राणः (alpaprāṇaḥ): A non-aspirated consonant is called अल्पप्राणः alpaprāṇaḥ. For example, क् k is non-aspirate
7. महाप्राणः (mahāprāṇaḥ): An aspirate consonant is called महाप्राणः (mahāprāṇaḥ). For example, ख् (kh) is aspirated
8. अनुस्वारः (anusvāraḥ): This is nasalization and is represented by a dot above a letter as in फलं (phalaṁ)

GUIDELINES FOR CORRECT PRONUNCIATION:

1. The distinction between अल्पप्राणः (alpaprāṇaḥ) and महाप्राणः (mahāprāṇaḥ) must be scrupulously maintained. Care should also be taken for maintaining clarity of pronunciation of the letters.

For example, महाप्राणः (mahāprāṇaḥ) in the word निष्ठा (niṣṭhā) (Chpt 17, V 1) should not be pronounced as अल्पप्राणः (alpaprāṇaḥ) निष्ठा (nistā); and the महाप्राणः (mahāprāṇaḥ) in the word शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य (śāstravidhimutsrjya) (Chpt 17, VI) should not be pronounced as अल्पप्राणः (alpaprāṇaḥ) शास्त्रविदिमुत्सृज्य (śāstravidimusrjya).

The following letters are to be chanted with clear distinction from each other:

क (ka) versus ख (kha), ग (ga) versus घ (gha), त (ta) versus थ (tha), द (da) versus ध (dha)

Example: घोरे (ghore), गीता (gītā), निष्ठा (niṣṭhā), बुद्धि (buddhi)

2. Sibilants: All स (sa), ष (ṣa) श (śa) sounds to be clearly pronounced.
3. Avagrahas are not to be chanted (letter ‘s’ in Saṁskṛta shlokas and ‘.a’ in English transliteration)
4. Nasal sounds – न (na), ण (ṇa) – to be clearly and distinctly chanted.

Example: मूढग्राहेणात्मनः (mūdhagrāheṇātmanah) , पुनः (punah)

5. A श्लोकः (ślokaḥ) or a verse is divided into four पादाः (pādāḥ, quarters) while

reciting. Take for example the श्लोकः (ślokaḥ) verse no. 7 in Chapter XVII

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥ ७ ॥

āhārastvapi sarvasya trividho bhavati priyaḥ ।
yajñastapastathā dānaṁ teṣāṁ bhedamimaṁ śṛṇu ॥ 7 ॥

This verse is divided while chanting into four पादाः (pādāḥ, quarters)

Quarter 1:	आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य	āhārastvapi sarvasya
Quarter 2:	त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।	trividho bhavati priyaḥ ।
Quarter 3:	यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं	yajñastapastathā dānaṁ
Quarter 4:	तेषां भेदमिमं शृणु ॥	teṣāṁ bhedamimaṁ śṛṇu

The division into four quarters is only to enable easy chanting.

6. The aspiration of the विसर्गः (**visargaḥ**) followed by क् (k), ख् (kh), प् (p), फ् (ph), should be distinctly audible.

a. A विसर्गः (**visargaḥ**) should be pronounced fully only when applicable- (typically at the end of a पादः (pādaḥ) i.e. at the 8th syllable or at the end of a line).

Example: प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः (pravartante vidhānoktāḥ),
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः (dānakriyāśca vividhāḥ)

b. विसर्गः (**visargaḥ**) should be chanted only partially in the middle of the line.

Example: सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते (sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate) (V 26)
मनःप्रसादः (manaḥprasādaḥ) (Chpt 17, V 16)
विहिताः पुरा (vihitāḥ purā) (Chpt 17, V 23)

7. अनुस्वारः (**anusvāraḥ**) followed by any consonant may be pronounced in tune with the 5th nasal letter of the वर्गः (**vargaḥ**) to which the consonant belongs.

For example:

Verse Number	Word	Should be pronounced as
5	दम्भाहंकारसंयुक्ताः dambhāhaṅkārasamyuktāḥ	दम्भाहङ्कारसंयुक्ताः dambhāhaṅkārasamyuktāḥ
28	तपस्तप्तन् कृतन् च यत्। tapastaptan krūtaṅca yat	तपस्तप्तं कृतञ्च यत्। tapastaptaṅ kṛtañca yat

8. ऋ ṛ should not be pronounced as रि (ri) or रु (ru).

Example: कृष्णः (kṛṣṇaḥ) should not be pronounced as क्रिष्णः (kriṣṇaḥ) or क्रुष्णः (kruṣṇaḥ) (V 1).

कृतं (kṛtaṁ) should not be pronounced as कितं (kritaṁ) or कृतं (krūtaṁ) (V 28)

9. सन्धि विच्छेदः (Sandhi vicchedaḥ) is to be done only at the end of the first पादाः (pādāḥ, quarters); not anywhere else.

10. Halant should be chanted properly.

11. दीर्घ (dīrgha- long sounds) ह्रस्व (hrasva- short sounds):

अ (a) इ (i) उ (u) ऋ (ṛ) - these are the ह्रस्व (hrasva, short) sounds, to be pronounced short.

आ (ā); ई (ī); ऊ (ū); ऋ (ṛ); ए (e); ऐ (ai); ओ (o); औ (au); अं (am); अः (aḥ) – are दीर्घ (dīrgha, long) sounds, to be pronounced long.

A दीर्घ (dīrgha) or prolonged sound should be generally chanted twice as long as the hrasva or short sound.

Example:

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

(**dātavyamiti yaddānaṁ dīyate'nupakāriṇe**) (bolded prolonged sounds)

dātavyamiti yaddānaṁ dīyate'nupakāriṇe| (bolded short sounds)

12. Colophon: ॐ तत्सदिति (Om tatsaditi) or

ॐ तत्सत् ॥ इति श्रीमद् ... (Om tatsat ॥ iti śrīmad...)

Bhagavad Gītā Judging Guidelines

Judges' scoring Rules

Please note: Chanting will be judged based on the coaching in the Chinmaya Mission.

1. **Completeness of Chanting:** (Total points = Number of verses x 5). (14 x 5 = 70)
 - a. The verses are to be chanted in correct order and fully.
 - b. Five points for each fully and completely chanted verse.
 - c. Prompting: One prompt will be allowed with no deduction of a point. No second prompting.
 - d. Missed verse: 5 points to be deducted for each missed verse: for example,
 - Any verse missed partially or completely;
 - Inserting the missed verse anywhere out of sequence
 - Mixing lines of different verses.
 - e. The introduction (atha saptadaṣo) and the ending (i.e. śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu) do not count toward completeness and must not affect the scoring.
 - f. However, the student **must** chant (Śrī Bhagavāna uvāca or Arjuna uvāca) as appropriate before chanting the shloka to receive five allotted points for that shloka.
 - g. If the participant corrects his/her own mistake and proceeds to chant, no points are deducted in this category. However, note that this may affect the subjective score for 'Confidence' and/or 'Ease of chanting' categories.
2. **Clarity of Chanting :** Total of 10 points
 - a. Diction: crisp
 - b. Tone: Continuous and smooth
 - c. Flow: in **Anuṣṭhupa chandaḥ** (i.e. break after the 8th syllable). For example: 'praśaste karmaṇi tathā' ..BREAK.. 'sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate
3. **'Confidence and Ease of Chanting:** Total of 10 points
 - a. Poise: Composure, absence of distracting habits
 - b. Presentation: Verses chanted in correct order, without interruptions, fumbling or need for prompting.
4. **Pronunciations:** Minus one point for each incorrect pronunciation.
A participant repeating the same mistake shall be penalized only once.