



Bhagavat- Gita Dham

*A SPIRITUAL CENTER FOR
HOLISTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*



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ABOUT

BHARATIYA CHETNA KENDRA TRUST

Bharatiya Chetna Kendra is a Trust established in 2009. Its main object is to promote and preserve what is the best in the Indian culture and civilization, and to create holistic models of development based on indigenous ideas. The Trust, to achieve its objects, has established several units. One of them is Bhagavat-Gita Dham and another, Bhagavat-Gita Prakashan. Through Bhagavat-Gita Dham, it seeks to establish a Gita-Dham in every State and Gita-Kunj, which is a truncated version of the Gita Dham, in every village-panchayat to harness the power of spirituality inherent in the Gita—the holy book of the majority of Indians—to promote holistic development which includes poverty alleviation, total education, health care and cultural revival. Through Bhagavat-Gita Prakashan, which is a publishing house, it is publishing books on spirituality, more specifically on the Bhagavat-Gita. It has already published ‘Gita Ki Kahani’ (The Story of the Gita) which seeks to simplify the ideas of the Gita for the common man. A basic edition of the Gita in Hindi, which explains the verses of the Gita in simple modern language with profuse explanatory foot-notes, is also under publication for free distribution. The Bhagavat-Gita Prakashan intends to bring the Holy Gita to 200 million Indian homes and 1000 million other homes all over the world.

This Information booklet seeks to outline the contours of the Bhagavat-Gita Dham, which is a holistic development center.

KRISHNA IS CALLING..



GITA-DHAM IN A NUTSHELL

A) Significance of the name: ‘Gita’ is the short form of the the Bhagwat-Gita, the Holy Book which is above any particular Faith and is often called ‘The Bible of Humanity’. ‘Dham’ means ‘a sacred place’. The ‘Gita-Dham’ therefore means a sacred place where the activities will be carried out in accordance with the ideology and prescriptions of the Bhagavat-Gita.

B) Mission of the Gita-Dham and Gita Gram Kendra:

Creation of a center in every Panchayat or village for cleansing the Indian civilization by shifting the focus from external rituals to the inner values of the Bhagavat-Gita; to produce enlightened and integral human beings; and to create a model of holistic development around the Gita-Dham in every village or Panchayat that will have zero-incidence of poverty and total education for all the regular visitors as its principal goals, without discriminating between communities. While a Gita-Dham will be a major brick-and-cement structure in the cities, its miniature and simpler form in the villages made with locally available material with all the essential components and functionalities will be known as **Gita Gram Kendra**.

C) Minimum physical Infrastructure at a Gita-Dham/ Gita Gram Kendra in the first phase:

- a) **Gita Temple and Spiritual Center:** The main Gita Temple for meditation, devotional dances and spiritual congregations.
- b) **Devalaya:** A small devalaya (a temple for traditional worship)
- c) **Total Education Center and Auditorium:** An auditorium for imparting multi-dimensional education through movies, most of them specially produced for the purpose.
- d) **Livelihood Center:** A livelihood center which will also act as a production center for cottage industry goods to be produced jointly by villagers;
- e) **Library;**

f) **Health Clinic**

g) **Culture Center with an open-air theatre**

h) **Sports Center**

i) Light and Sound Show

j) Accommodation for key full-time management staff;

k) A kitchen and dining space;

l) A few store rooms;

m) Washrooms;

n) A barbed wire or other fencing.

D) Mode of start-up: The relatively smaller Gita Gram Kendra in villages will be built by the local people from their own land and other resources, and will be self-sustaining. The larger Gita-Dhams in cities will also be built primarily through local resources of the concerned cities. However, in the beginning, a few larger Gita-Dham Centers may be constructed to provide a model, and to train the human resource of the village centers by obtaining external funding.

E) A General background note: It is very unwise to ignore the power of religious faith in bringing social and economic transformation, where people are still rooted in religion. The Gita-Dham is an attempt to harness this power to create a center for total development in every Panchayat (A Panchayat is the lowest administrative unit of self-governance in India, consisting of a few villages), and in due course in every village. The Gita-Dham Center will have the first four main structures given in the list above in the first phase. These Centers will translate into reality the age-old Indian idea of a life in which the four main life-values of prosperity, a pious life, fulfilment of worldly desires and spiritual liberation (artha-dharma-kaama-moksha) are evenly balanced. **The Gita-Dham will not just have a spiritual mandate:** it will be equally responsible for bringing an economic transformation in the lives of all people coming to it; and for taking care of all their basic educational needs for their total development. As the name Gita-Dham might suggest, these may be centers dear to a particular community—the majority community in India. Even if this were the case,



THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION CENTER

Every Gita Dham (or its truncated version in each village called Gita-Kunj) has to compulsorily have a poverty alleviation center known as Livelihood Center or Aajivika Kendra. It will have facilities for career counseling for the youth. It will provide to students guidance, and forms for applying for admissions to appropriate educational institutions. It will find job-vacancies in the private and government sectors, and guide and coach the candidates suitably so that they can make best use of employment opportunities in India and abroad. It will also have some training facilities of vocations like plumbers, masons, electricians etc. Above all, it will have farming training facilities for those who own land for agriculture or horticulture to turn them into Kheti-se-Lakhpatri (millionaires from farming). This Livelihood Center is backed up by appropriate research and a 300-page project report. There is also a series of films titled Kheti-se-Lakhpatri ready to train farmers to earn better profit from agriculture.

attempt to transform of the lives of eighty per cent of the people of India will itself be a great endeavor. However, these centers will do more than what first meets the eyes: they will be open to all communities who want to avail of the benefits of educational and employment programs being run at the center, irrespective of whether or not they wish to fully avail of the spiritual benefits at the Center. In other words, these centers are not meant to transform the lives of only one section of the society. The Gita treats all humans—in fact all living beings—equally as fractions of the divinity. And this is the philosophy that is going to be preached and practised at the Gita-Dham Centers everywhere. The Gita-Dham will seek to bring out this divinity in each human being in its vicinity. The Gita-Dham has been conceived based on the assumption that without creating reasonably good and integral human beings with spiritual orientation, the goal of poverty alleviation and a harmonious and peaceful society may be very difficult to achieve. At the moment, the poverty alleviation programs are failing also because the people have developed a begging mentality, and expect all freebies, reluctant to work even for their own prosperity in a sustained and planned manner even if guidance is made available to them. **Therefore, the Gita-Dham plans to first create out of them focused individuals willing to work towards prosperity.**

F) A special philosophical background note for the curious mind on the Indian civilization and the place of the Gita in It: The Indian civilization is the oldest living civilization which has survived the vicissitudes of history for over ten thousand years. Other ancient civilizations like those of Greece, Rome and Egypt withered away midway after a grand beginning. The Indian civilization is not only the oldest living civilization; it is also one which has given birth to two of the major religions of the world: the Sanatan Dharma, popularly known as Hinduism, and Buddhism, apart from several other beautiful faiths which also have followings running into millions, like Sikhism and Jainism. But that is not all: the Indian civilization has produced such exalted ideas and existential concepts as remain absolutely unique in the world even today. If the entire world were to follow some of the ideals crafted by this civilization, the world would be an entirely different place to live in, and the developmental paradigm would radically change: terrorism and intolerance

will lose their existence, mutual accommodation and harmony will gain ground, spiritual and material progress will go hand in hand without one uprooting the other, and self-alienation caused by the nuclear individualism of the West will melt away making way for closely knit families and communities full of love, mutual respect and understanding—like the ones depicted in the Ramayana, which remains the unparalleled saga of human relationships and a model of truly civilized individual, social and political human conduct.

When some of the ideas of the Indian civilization were presented in English language by Swami Vivekananda in 1893 at the Chicago Parliament of World Religions, the entire parliament exploded in applause and admiration. When the ideas of non-violence and truth crafted by the Indian civilization were presented by Mahatma Gandhi before the world towards the end of the 19th century in South Africa and then in the first-half of the 20th century in India while fighting for Indian independence against the British, the entire world watched the spectacle in complete awe as such a thing had been heard or seen never before in human history elsewhere in the world. **But what Vivekananda and Gandhi presented before the world were a mere fraction of what the great Indian civilization has in store for humanity.** If one were to turn the pages of the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavat Purana, the Bhagavat-Gita, one would encounter such lofty peaks of human thought and conduct as would make high achievements of the modern era look dwarfed and superfluous. A time may come when these lofty and noble ideas would unfold themselves on the world stage in a manner that would convince human conscience everywhere—which will by that time have been immensely tormented by the grossly materialistic and individualistic civilization of the West on the one hand and the blood-thirsty civilization of intolerance, violence and terrorism on the other—that the Indian civilization is the one that can provide the core values for reconstruction of a new human ethos all over the world. The ancient Indian civilization is, therefore, the future of the world¹.

¹ There is a need for caution here. Not all ideas and practices produced by the Indian civilization were completely unsullied. The major example of such an aberration is that edition of the caste system that bred contempt for certain sections of the society called the 'shudras', making the Indian society 'hierarchical'. However,

The Bhagavat-Gita contains, along with the Ramcharitmanas and Bhagavat Puran, what is the best in the Indian Civilization. The three together represent the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

But how will this light spread across the world when its sources are getting buried in India itself? The youth of this generation have not seen the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavatam and the Gita, which are fast vanishing from the Indian homes. The Indian civilization signifies what is taught in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavatam and the Gita—and that also includes economic prosperity. All along, it clearly emphasized need for a balance between money, a pious life, carnal desires, and spiritual liberation—*artha-dharma-kaama-moksha*—placing money and worldly desires below human duties (*dharma*) and spiritual liberation (*moksha*). Let us not forget that the Indian civilization has been the most prosperous civilization in the world in the ancient and medieval periods. Therefore, a true Indian civilization does not make sense without elements of prosperity.

Some people treat Ram-Rajya as a historical fact while many others treat it as a poetic creation based on history, which means a mix-of-history-and-mythology. There are still others who tend to treat it as complete myth, and a utopia. Even if the Rama-Rajya or the kingdom of Rama were a utopia, it would not diminish the value of the ideals that find a place in the descriptions of the Ram-Rajya. We know that utopias are often necessary to be built to inspire us to move towards certain lofty ideals that do not exist on ground today, but may perhaps be brought into being tomorrow through sustained efforts. The state withering away one day is one such lofty ideal that belongs to the realm of utopia, and which we do not discard just because it exists nowhere today, or because it never existed before in history. We consider the ideal still worthy of pursuit. Here we do not want to enter into the controversy of whether Ram-Rajya is history or myth, utopia or something that existed in the past. We only know that over a billion people can be easily inspired to strive for a higher level of

the practice has been outlawed, and is on the wane, and it may be history soon. Among the scriptures of the Hindu faith, the Gita pleads for an egalitarian society advocating equality among all, and the concept of Ram-Rajya too, as found in the Ramcharitmanas, eliminates all inequality in no uncertain terms.

human existence that the Ram-Rajya represents. It is interesting to bear in mind that this state of human existence does not call for annihilation of other civilizations. It does not even entail or imply military expansionism, since the ideal of Ram-Rajya is that one should only aim at victory over hearts, and not over territories.

The Bharatiya Chetna Kendra has resolved to revive these forceful ideas of the Indian civilization.

As indicated, one of the great ideas produced by the Indian civilization is Ram-Rajya. The ideas of Ram-Rajya, or the Government of Rama are very ancient, and yet extremely modern. Rama was an ancient Indian king with a very lofty and lovable character, who is often worshiped as an incarnation of God in India. The description of what kind of a State Rama's kingdom was can be found in the epic Ramayana authored by the ancient sage Valmiki, who was a contemporary of Lord Rama, and similar descriptions, can be found in many other literary and historical works on the life of Lord Rama. Most recently, about 500 years back, the poet-sage Tulasidasa also beautifully depicted what the kingdom of Rama was like.

G) Objects of the Gita-Dham

1. It will seek to improve the mind-set of the people, and to turn the focus of the people's mind from the ritualistic periphery of religion to its ethical and spiritual core, i.e. from religion to spirituality;
2. To create holistic models of development based on indigenous Indian ideas that seek to improve the standard of life as much as the standard of living.
3. To ensure that the Gita and the (revised editions of) the Ramcharitmanas reach every home in the neighborhood which wants to have them;
4. To publish special editions of the Gita in various languages and to make them reach twenty crore homes of India and another 100 crore homes in other countries;
5. To translate into reality the ideals of the Ram Rajya in the

concerned village-Panchayat.

6. To rid its hinterland-villages of unemployment, underemployment and poverty;
7. To promote total education for both young and the old; to help children and youth to develop their entire personality and to give them a bright future; to ensure that they are able to speak their mother tongue as well as English with equal confidence and fluency.
8. To bring cultural revival of the neighboring areas through promotion of fine arts, dance, drama and theatre.
9. To run a wellness center for preventive and primary health care;
10. To have cottages for people over 60 years of age who wish to dedicate themselves entirely to the quest of God and Self-realization by truly entering the 'sannyas ashram'.

H) The main temple structure

In the matter of architectural design, the Main temple and spiritual center, which is placed on the adjoining page, is significantly different from the temples of most faiths, including the Hindu faith. This architecture indicates that this temple houses a faith which, in practice, is different from other faiths, including the popular Hindu faith. Not only the main temple at the Gita-Dham is very different, the entire Gita-Dham complex is different from the places of worship of all other faiths in that the Gita-Dham integrates a Livelihood Center for poverty alleviation and a Total Education Center for spreading high quality education of all sorts. There is, also, always a small health clinic to be found in a Gita-Dham. A view of the entire Gita-Dham complex in daylight as also its night-view can be found on the page-spreads of this booklet. The entire design has been prepared by a leading architectural firm of India which designs even cities and malls. A few interesting things about this temple and the temple complex are mentioned below.

- a) In the temple, the Mother Gita (गीता माता) will be installed on a high pedestal, encased in a glass case. The inside space of



A view of the Devalaya in a corner of the Gita Dham Complex for traditional worship. To reduce idol-worship, there is to be only one idol for traditional worship, which is to be of the local deity to be known as the Protector Deity or Rakshak Dev of the Gita Dham.



One of the main causes of degeneration of our religion is lack of knowledgeable and enlightened spiritual counsellors and priests. Our priests in the temples know little today. The Gita Dham will be a kind of factory for producing spiritual counselors and priests who will know the Gita fully well, and will also memorize the whole of the Gita. They will also be trained in poverty alleviation and total education regimes to be implemented at Gita-Kunj Centers in villages. The spiritual counsellors produced by the Gita Dham will not only know about the Gita, they will also know about the main precepts of all religions.

the temple will be conducive to meditation, devotional-dances and spiritual congregations. The traditional worship modes like offering water or milk or sweets to the deity will not be allowed inside the Main Gita Temple. The small Devalaya (temple) in one corner of the complex will be there for traditional modes of worship.

- b) In the Devalaya (smaller temple), an image of the locally influential deity, who will be the Protector Deity of the Gita-Dham, will be installed. The deity may be, for example, Ganpati in Maharashtra, Kartikeya in Kerala and Hanuman in Bihar and UP, and Kali in West Bengal. Who will be the protector deity will be decided by the local people. There will also be a Shiv-Lingam (symbol of Lord Shiva) in the Devalaya.
- c) The audio of the Gita, the Ramcharitmanas and the Bhagwat Puran will be constantly played in low volume in the temple complex, except at the time of mediation.
- d) In the temple campus there will be several shila-patts or stone-tablets on which will be inscribed the main teachings of the Gita.

I) Other parts of the Gita-Dham in the first phase

1. An auditorium with a seating capacity of 200 to 500 people with a 48" LED TV, a DVD player, a sound amplification system, an inverter to provide power backup, or where no electricity is available to recharge the inverter, a generator. This auditorium will be used for training and education of all sorts including training for self-employment, career stream selection, farming, Physics, Chemistry, Sanskrit, English and many other subjects with the help of video CDs. Villagers will themselves construct the auditorium with local material and resources, maybe even bamboo;
2. A similar separate construction to serve as production center for cottage industry goods, and for livelihood counseling;
3. There will be store rooms;
4. There will be cottages for the management staff at the Center including the priests, monks (धर्मसंघी) and nuns (धर्मसंघिनी);



This a close view of the main temple—the Gita Temple and Spiritual Center—at the center of the Gita-Dham, inside which is installed the Hoy Gita as the Master-Scripture or the Guru-Granth, with a large picture of original Guru Lord Krishna behind Her. There is no idol in this temple, and the hall of the temple is meant to serve as a meditation center, spiritual congregation center and a devotional dance center.

5. For community lunch and dinner, there will be an appropriate place along with a large kitchen for cooking mass dinners;
7. Lavatories and washrooms for the priests monks and nuns;
8. Washrooms for visitors.
9. Orchards, Tulasi garden and garden of other herbs for producing herbal medicines.

J) Human resource for the Gita-Dham

1. The Gita-Dham will mobilize monks (संन्यासी) and half-monks (अर्द्ध-संन्यासी या वानप्रस्थी) from the neighboring villages who will form the core of the human resource for religious, spiritual, economic and cultural activities of the Center. They will be both men and women. At first, people above 50 years of age will be picked up as half-monks, who will live in their homes with their families, and will spend four to 10 hours in the temple complex in



This the view of an Open-Air Theatre at the Gita-Dham. Behind it is the regular indoor auditorium of the Total Education Center, which also has a stage for performing arts. The two together can effectively facilitate the cultural revival of the neighboring areas.

the prescribed uniform as half-monks. On finishing their work at the temple complex, they may return to their homes, after changing their half-monk clothes. Later on, full time monks will be picked up from among these half-monks. They will be trained thoroughly in the Bhagavat-Gita and the philosophy of religion encompassing all religions of the world, to expand their mental horizons. The poverty-alleviation programs will also be run by training some of these half-monks. It may be relevant to mention here that the President of the institution has, after a good deal of research, evolved a poverty alleviation regime which has even been presented before the Planning Commission of India.

2. The Gita-Dham in each Panchayat will be managed by a local committee.

K) Financial resources for the Center

1. All the household in the Panchayat, who feel like supporting the Gita-Dham—which arguably they will—contribute at least three rupees daily, and will put that in the **Dharm Kosh** of

the temple on the first day of the month. In a state where one Panchayat has an average population of 7500, there will be about 1350 households, and a minimum contribution of Rs. 121,500 a month will be generated for maintenance. It may even be more because the well-to-do will contribute much more.

2. Everybody will observe fast on his or her chosen day, and will contribute the grains and vegetables saved through fasting to the Anna Kosh (grain-bank) of the temple. The temple complex will have five big containers – one for rice, one for pulses, one for wheat flour, one for vegetables and one for fruits. The farmers will contribute a good deal of grains. This will take care of the lunch and dinner requirements of the management staff including the priests and monks and nuns in the temple complex. The surplus food will be used towards mass dinners called Hari-bhoj or God's Dinner.
3. The Gita-Dham will run a production center by forming local cooperatives. A part of the profit from the sale of the products will come to the Gita-Dham as well.
4. The Gita Gram Kendra Centers in villages will be self-sustaining and self-dependent. They will mostly be built by the villagers with local resources. Architectural models for village Gita Gram Kendra Centers have also been developed by accom-

The Open Air Theatre will also serve as free marriage venue for those who want it.



PROJECT COST BREAK UP OF A STATE-LEVEL GITA DHAM CENTRE

| | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|------|----------------|
| Central Temple Complex with Gita Temple and water bodies | Cost for Built Up area calculated @ Rs 2100/ sqft for | 52,744 | sqft | ₹ 110,762,400 |
| Devalaya Complex with open-air meditation/Local Deity/ Havan/Shiv-Lingam | Cost for Built Up area calculated @ Rs 2100/ sqft for | 4,790 | sqft | ₹ 98,70,000 |
| Kitchen Dining Langar area/Sales Shop/adjacent public canteen | Cost for Built Up area calculated @ Rs 2100/ sqft for | 5,732 | sqft | ₹ 1,20,37,200 |
| Monks' Residences/Dormitories for 300 trainees | Cost for Built Up area calculated @ Rs 2100/ sqft for | 13,373 | sqft | ₹ 2,80,83,300 |
| Livelihood/Culture/Education/ Health & auditorium Complex | Cost for Built Up area calculated @ Rs 2100/ sqft for | 11517 | sqft | ₹ 2,41,85,700 |
| | | 88,156 | sqft | ₹ 18,51,27,600 |
| Total Cost for Landscape & External Development @ Rs. 350 /sqft for | | 116088 | sqft | ₹ 4,06,30,914 |
| Total Comprehensive Architectural Design + Management Services Fee | | ₹ 1,54,80,020 | | |
| Total Cost | | ₹ 25,00,00,000 Approx. | | |

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE 'BUILT UP' COST OF Rs. 2100 / SQFT INCLUDES ALL BASIC ELECTRIC AND SANITARY FITTINGS, WATER HARVESTING, SEWERAGE, DRAINAGE ETC.

The Main temple presents an image of Sri-Yantra from above. From front too it looks like half of the Sri-Yantra.



HOW TO BE OF HELP

- 1. Dedicate your life to the service of the Lord to work as full-time leader-worker for the spread of the Bhagavat-Dharma (The dharma founded by Lord Krishna).*
- 2. One state-level Gita Dham will need minimum 7 acres of land, but 10 acres will be optimum. The first model is to be built at or near a major city or on the highway near a major pilgrimage place like Vrindavan, Haridwar, Kurukshetra or Delhi etc. Donate a piece of such land.*
- 3. Fund a component of the Gita Dham complex. You may directly pay to the contractor of the agency executing the work, or construct it yourself according to laid down specifications.*
- 4. You may get printed a certain number of copies of the new rational-critical edition of the Bhagavat-Gita for free distribution/ distribution at actual cost through popular offline or online distributors like Amazon/Flipcart etc. in any country of your choice, since we aim to spread the great message of the Gita to at least twenty crore homes in India and another 100 crore homes in other parts of the world.*

All donations to Bharatiya Chetna Kendra Trust and its units are entitled to income tax relief under section 80 (G) of Income Tax Act. All The following three accounts belong to Bharatiya Chetna Kendra Trust, and one may contribute to any of these, depending on the purpose one wishes to donate for:

Bharatiya Chetna Kendra: Acct. No. 30806794346

(For general support in various philanthropic activities)

Bhagvad Gita Dham: Acct. No. 30754831938

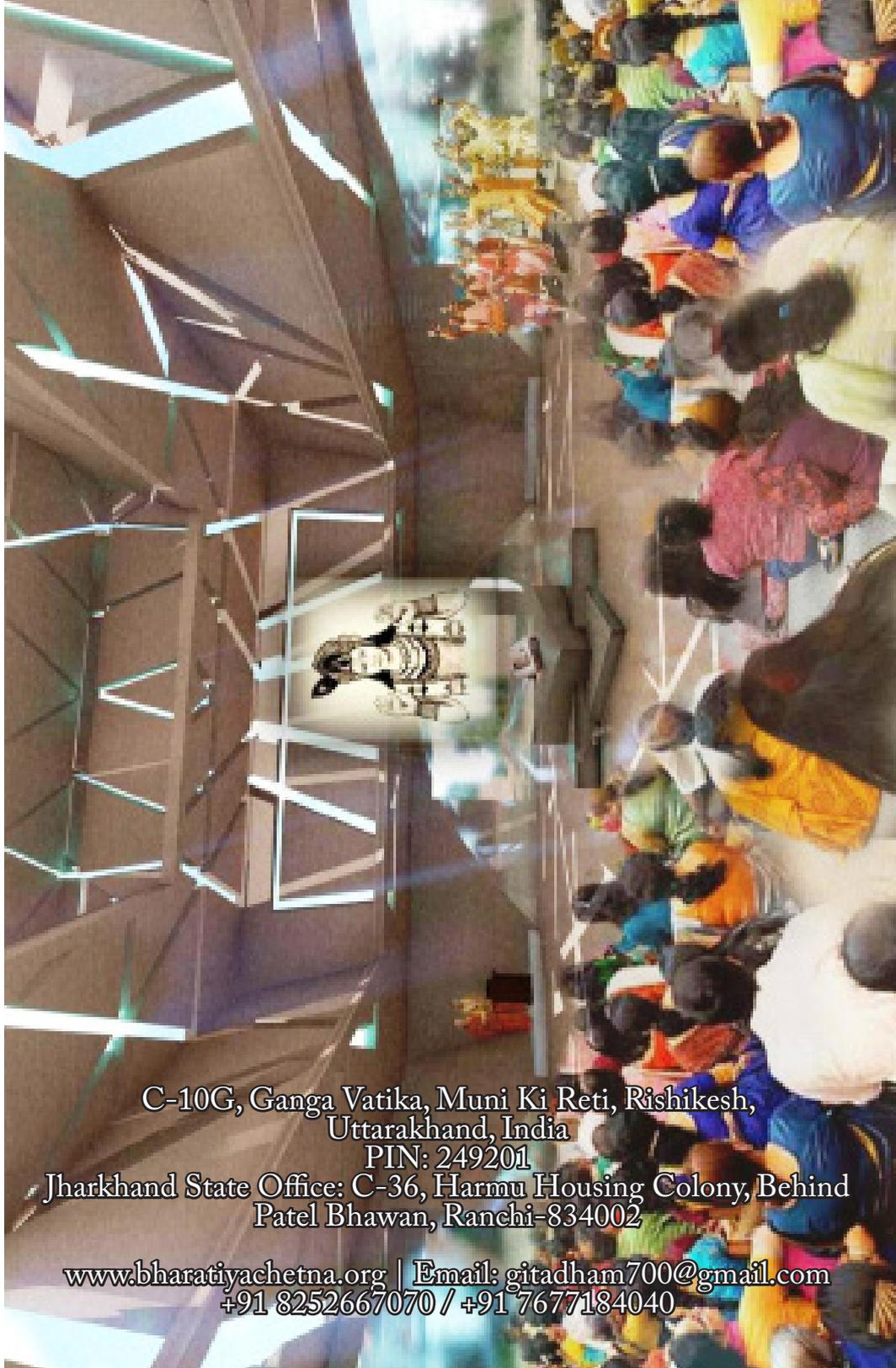
(For constructing a Gita Dham or Gita Gram Kendra)

Bhagvad Gita Prakashan: Acct. No. 36914806212

(For printing and publication of the Gita)

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