



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# THE BHAGAVAD GITA : Guide to Eternal Message of Spiritual Wisdom and Life-Lessons

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### Introduction

*Bhagavad Gita* is the sacred *song of God* composed about 200 BC and forms a section of the sixth book of the Mahabharata, an important Sanskrit epic in the Hindu tradition that recounts a lengthy struggle and brief war between two sides of the Bharata family, the Pandavas and the Kauravas over their kingdom of Hastinapura. Incorporated into Mahabharata and contains a discussion between Krishna and the epic's hero Arjuna on human nature and the purpose of life.

*Bhagavad Gita* is a well-known gospel. Bhagavad Gita presents a synthesis of Hindu ideas about dharma, theistic bhakti, and the yogic ideals of moksha. The text covers jnana, bhakti, karma, and Raja Yoga (spoken of in the 6th chapter) incorporating ideas from the Samkhya-Yoga philosophy.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a divine song sung by Lord Krishna. The Gita gives you the unique way of life that eases off your tension and you enjoy a happy life. Gita, apart from being a religious scripture, is a scripture of life as well. It is a way of life based on faith and devotion. The moral message of Bhagavad Gita is that, either you can perform your actions with attachment thinking that you are the doer or you can perform the same without attachment by thinking that God/ Nature (Prakriti) is performing the actions. Considered to be a doctrine of universal truth, Bhagavad Gita has long been influencing people not only in India but around the world also. The Bhagavad Gita teaches us various important principles that relate to work, life, religion, philosophy and spirituality.

Very few might have not heard the name, Bhagavad Gita, for it is almost universally accepted as a scripture, not merely in a sense of holiness or sanctity from the point of view of a religious outlook, but as what has been regarded as a guide in our day-to-day life, which need not necessarily mean a so-called religious attitude of any particular denomination. The Bhagavad Gita is also considered as an essence of all the scriptures - *Sarva-Sastramayi Gita*. It is said many a time that all the Sastras, all the lessons that we can have anywhere can be found here in some form. Bhagavad Gita should be taken as Rajaji said, as a scripture of Hinduism complete in itself and not as a mere episode in Kurukshetra Battle in Mahabharata. The divine message of Bhagavad Gita is universal. Its inspiring appeal is to all humanity.

Bhagavad Gita says that one need not worry about the future nor should pay attention to the past. It says that one has

control only over the present and so, should live the present to the fullest. Bhagavad Gita is such an important scripture that it can help us to get out of the cycle of birth and death. Anyone who recites Bhagavad Gita with devotion will go to the spiritual world at the time of death. ... The Bhagavad Gita is so powerful that even by repeating half a sloka, one can go to the spiritual world.

### Importance of Bhagavad Gita in This Day and Age

Bhagavad Gita gives timeless wisdom as it relates to the challenges, trials and tribulations one faces in one's own life, so that one can live a life that is fearless, full of purpose and deep happiness. The eternal wisdom of Bhagavad Gita covers areas like, Peace, Freedom, Happiness, Love, Destiny, Fearlessness, Being Spiritual but not Religious and on Karma.

**On Peace:** We all want peace in the world, in our community and in our family and we have all heard that peace begins with each one of us. But we do not know how we embody that peace we seek. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna directly speaks about the need for peace, saying clearly that there is no happiness without peace. He also, lays out the path of attaining that supreme, spiritual peace that we long for.

**On Freedom:** We read about freedom, we dream of freedom, hope for freedom, we may even fight for freedom but do not understand what freedom really is? Why is it that even when we free ourselves from one form of oppression, we simultaneously entrap ourselves in another one of bondage? Can we ever actually free ourselves? In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna examines the bonds that enslave the soul and shines a light on achieving ultimate freedom by living a spiritually inspired life through its wisdom.

**On Happiness:** Everyone naturally desires happiness and to be happy is part of our intrinsic nature, yet it seems that we cannot have happiness without distress. We regularly experience that there is no pleasure without pain. Any happiness that comes our way also seems fleeting, dissolving like mist as we grasp it. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna offers a unique perspective on happiness, illuminating the path to living a life full of deep, transcendental joy.



**On Love:** Love is the topic of endless, movies, poems, books and songs. It is our highest source of happiness and the cause of our deepest misery. We long for it, pursue it, hold it tightly and mourn in passing. It is our greatest need and it is at the very essence of who we are. Bhagavad Gita speaks of a love that never withers with the passing of the time, that endures beyond death itself. In Bhagavad Gita, we uncover the secret of the greatest love of all.

**On Destiny:** What is my destiny? Is it controlled by the stars? Is it divinely ordered? Or is it simply an arbitrary course of events? Furthermore, is destiny set in stone; a fixed series of events that are inevitable, or do we play a role in determining our future and can we change our destiny? In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna examines the natural laws that determine destiny, and uncovers the keys that allow each person to break free from fate and set their personal course for freedom.

**On Fearlessness:** What are we afraid of? We have so many fears, large and small. Fear of the dark, fear of loss, fear of death. The crippling shadow of fear follows us through life, sometimes lurking at the edge of our consciousness completely overwhelming us. Fear holds us back from living a full and happy life. Is there a way to live fearlessly? Like a beacon shining in a dark night, Bhagavad Gita illuminates the path to freedom from the most dangerous fear.

**On Being Spiritual but not Religious:** In the world today, many people have rejected religious dogma and organized belief systems. Yet we find ourselves with a God-shaped hole in our hearts and a longing for connection with something or someone greater than ourselves. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna speaks to this modern dilemma. Unlike religion, which involves belief in a particular faith, the process of yoga as taught in Gita, requires a person to embark on a

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personal spiritual voyage of discovery and experience direct perception of the truth.

**On Karma:** Most people have at least a passing understanding of the concept of karma. The idea that what you do to others will come back to you, may have encouraged you to modify your behaviour with the idea of attracting more good karma than bad karma. But did you know that even “good karma” has a serious downside? If even good karma is not desirable, how can we live in this world without creating karma? In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna teaches the yogic path of Karma yoga, also known as the “art of all work”, whereby you can achieve complete freedom from all karma.

One legend says that the famous 18 steps leading to the sanctum sanctorum of the famous Sabari Ayyappan temple represents the 18 chapters of Bhagavad Gita. The final 18 steps leading to the sanctum sanctorum rightly making it the Moksha Sanyaasa. Given below are some of the notable verses of this sacred hymn of spiritual wisdom and life-lessons.

#### Chapt. 2 - Verse 12:

*Na Tvevham Jatu nasam Na Tvam Neme Janadihipah  
Na Caiva Na Bavisyamha  
Sarve Vayam Atah Param*

Certainly, never at any time, did I **NOT** exist, Nor you, Nor all these kings. And Certainly Never, **shall** we cease to exist in the future. (God and all of us existed all the time and will exist for ever. The Spirit or **Atma** is permanent, much different from the body).

#### Chapt. 2 - Verse 38:

*Sukha dukkhe Same krutva  
Labhalabhau JayaJayau*

*Tato Yuddhaya Yujuyasva Naivam  
Papam Avapsyasi*

Being equally poised in happiness and unhappiness, Profit and loss, victory and defeat;

Thereafter prepare to battle and in this manner, you will not incur sinful reaction. (Don't get over excited in happiness, profits or victory; or dejected on loss or defeat. Face life in a poised way).

#### Chapt. 2 - Verse 47:

*Karmanya Evadikaras te ma phaleshu  
Kadachana*

*Ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma sango  
stva akarman*

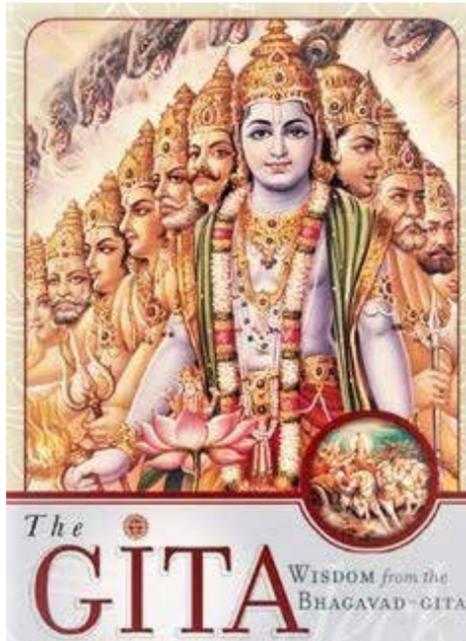
You certainly have the right for prescribed activities; but never at anytime in their results. You should never be motivated by the results of the actions, nor should there be any attachment in not doing your prescribed activities.

#### Chapt. 4 - Verse 7:

*Yada hi Dharmasya glanir bhavati  
bharata*

*Abhyukthanam adharmasya  
tadatmanam Srujami aham*

Whenever and wherever a decline of righteousness and predominance of unrighteousness prevail, at That Time **I MANIFEST** Myself personally, O descendant of Bharata!! Says God Krishna!!!



#### Chapt. 4 – Verse 8:

*Paritrnaya Sadhunam vinasaya Cha  
Dushkrutam*

*Dharma-Samsthapanarthaya  
Sambhavami Yuge*

For the protection of good persons (devotees) and annihilation of miscreants and to fully establish righteousness, I appear in millennium after millennium.

#### Chapt. 9 – Verse 26:

*Patram Pushpam Phalam Thoyam yo  
me bhaktya prayachati*

*Tad Aham bhakti-upahrutam asnami  
prayatatmanaha*

Whoever with loving devotion offers unto me, a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I affectionately accept that devotional offering from that pure hearted being. (simple but loving offerings please me).

#### Chapt. 18 – Verse 66:

*Sarva Dharman Parityajya Mam ekam  
Saranam vraja*

*Aham tvam sarva-papebhyo  
mokshayisami ma suchah*

Give up all kinds of righteousness and surrender unto me exclusively; I will deliver you from all sinful reactions; don't worry in despair. (In essence, no need to confuse over which path of righteousness to choose etc., and just surrender unto me totally. I will protect you from all, including your predisposition).

**This is what the world-renowned intellectuals of varied fields had said about BHAGAVAD GITA**

#### Lord Warren Hastings

(1754-1826)

First Governor General of the British India  
I do not hesitate to pronounce the GITA as a performance of great originality, of sublimity of conception, reasoning and diction almost unequalled; and a single exception amongst all known religions of mankind.

#### Wilhelm von Humboldt

(1767-1835)

Minister of Education and the founder of the Science of Linguistics The GITA,

the most beautiful, perhaps the only time philosophical song existing in any known tongue – the deepest and loftiest thing the world has to show.

#### Ralph Waldo Emerson

(1803-1882)

Greatest Amer. Author, Essayist, Lecturer and an Unitarian Minister  
BHAGAVAD GITA was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us ... the voice of an old intelligence, which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.

#### Henry David Thoreau

(1817-1862)

Greatest American Philosopher, Writer and a Social Critic  
In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonic philosophy of the BHAGAVAD GITA, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial ... even our Shakespeare seems sometimes youthfully green and practical merely!

#### Swami Vivekananda

(1863-1902)

Great Yogi, Philosopher and a charismatic orator  
BHAGAVAD GITA is a bouquet composed of the beautiful flowers of spiritual truths, collected from the Vedas and the Upanishads.

#### A.G. George Russell

(1867-1935)

Eminent Poet, Artist and a leading figure in the Irish Literary Renaissance  
The BHAGAVAD GITA and the UPANISHADS contain such god like fullness of wisdom on all things that I feel, the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strife for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things which the soul feels to be sure.

#### Mahatma Gandhi

(1869-1948)

Father of Indian Nation, Philosopher and Writer  
The BHAGAVAD GITA calls on humanity to dedicate body, mind and soul to pure duty and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of random desires and undisciplined impulses.

#### Swami Aurobindo

(1872-1950)

A Yogi and a Great Philosopher  
BHAGAVAD GITA is a true scripture of the human race, a living creation rather than a book, with a new message for every age and a new meaning for every civilization.

#### Hermam Hesse

(1877-1962)

German Poet and Novelist and a winner of Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946  
The marvel of BHAGAVAD GITA is its true beautiful revelation of life's wisdom, which enables philosophy to blossom into religion.

#### Albert Einstein

(1879-1955)

Greatest Scientist, Philosopher & Nobel Prize for his Theory of Relativity  
When I read BHAGAVAD GITA and reflect about how God created this universe, everything else seems so superfluous.

#### Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan

(1888-1975)

Philosopher, Educationist and President of the Republic of India  
The chief problem facing us today is the reconciliation of mankind. BHAGAVAD GITA is specially studied for this purpose, as it attempts to reconcile varied and apparently antithetical forms of the religious consciousness and emphasizes the root conceptions, which are neither ancient nor modern, but belong to the very flesh of humanity, past, present and future.

#### Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

(1889-1964)

First Prime Minister of India  
BHAGAVAD GITA deals essentially with the spiritual foundation of human existence. It is a call to meet the obligations and duties of life; yet keeping in view the spiritual nature and grander purpose of the universe.

#### Aldous Huxley

(1894-1963)

Noted English Novelist, Critic and Philosopher  
BHAGAVAD GITA is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. It is one of the most clear and comprehensive summaries of perennial philosophy ever revealed. Hence its enduring value is subject not only to India but to all humanity.

#### Juan Mascara

(1897-1987)

Eminent Scholar and taught at Oxford University  
The greatness of BHAGAVAD GITA is the greatness of the universe, but even as the wonder of the stars in heaven only reveal itself in the silence of the night, the wonder of this great poem only reveals itself in the silence of the soul.

#### Julius R. Openheimer

(1904-1967)

World's greatest Physicist & known as Father of the Atom Bomb  
The juxtaposition of western civilization's most terrifying scientific achievements with the most dazzling description of the mystical experience is given to us by BHAGAVAD GITA, India's greatest literary monument.

#### Robert-Pol Droit

(1949- ...)

Eminent French Writer and Philosopher  
The Greeks loved Indian Philosophy so much that Demetrios Galionos even translated BHAGAVAD GITA. There is absolutely not a shadow of doubt that the Greek knew all about Indian Philosophy.