

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Short Summary

वन्दे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथम् ।

*Salutations to Vishnu the Lord of the Universe
by whose grace one is freed from the fear
of the Cycle of Birth and Death.*

Dr. Kirit C. Vyas

Srimad Bhagvad Gita

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Essence of the Gita

Hindu scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Darshan Shastra, etc. contain spiritual gems of incalculable values. It is an ocean of the ulterior secret of knowledge and wisdom. Ved Vyas dived deep into its depths with sincere attitude of reverence and faith to extract its spiritual pearls for the benefit of human beings, so that they can comprehend its infinitely profound and subtle teachings. It is the immortal celestial fruits of the Upanishads and other scriptures. The **Gita is a unique book for all ages**. It is the immortal song of the soul, which bespeaks of the glory of life. Teachings given by Lord Krishna are for the whole world. It is a standard book on yoga for all mankind and shows paths of success for all levels of people, for all kind of problems. **Each human is in search of eternal peace** and he sees only problems everywhere, but finds no solutions anywhere. He does not know which way to turn, what course to adopt. Consequently, his life is filled with restlessness, unhappiness and complication. The Gita **has explained beautifully how to see rays of hopes and success** in the midst of failure. The Gita contains words of wisdom and practical teaching for a successful bright future. The Gita has a solution for each and every individual, to help him solve the vexing problems of life. It is not ritualistic, but intellectual. It is actually Divine wisdom addressed to mankind for all times, in order to help human beings face and solve the ever-present problems of birth, death, pain, suffering, fear, bondage, love and hate. Teachings of the Gita are broad, universal and sublime. They do not belong to any cult, sect, creed, age or country. The Gita is a gospel for the whole world and meant for the generality of mankind.

The Gita is not an independent scripture. It is a **dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna**, narrated in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata. It comprises of **eighteen chapters** containing about **700 verses**. It is believed that Mahabharata is a historical

book, rather than a fiction based on imaginations. Ved Vyas has proved in Mahabharata, that any war is useless and showed that even the victorious were unhappy and repented the outcome of war. [The Gita does not advocate war or violence](#), but on the contrary, [it gives more importance to detachment and stable wisdom](#). It urges every human being to live in the world like water on a lotus leaf. He who performs actions, offering them to God and abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin; as a lotus leaf by water.

Later, the Gita became an independent scripture for the Hindus, based on its profound wisdom and the simplicity of its presentation. It is the great spiritual classic in a language that is simple, lucid and intelligible even to ordinary readers. Needless to say, its power to purify the hearts and the lives of the devotees has few parallels. Even ordinary laborers are able to find solace and peace therein. [The Gita has solutions to all the problems of life](#). Ved Vyas has presented all the verses in a musical form. Numerous commentaries have been presented at the present time by learned scholars on the subject. Considering the depth of wisdom presented in the Gita, the Hindus believe that Lord Krishna is an incarnation of God and He is worshipped as the Guru of the world. The knowledge is great and it is inevitable that the deliverer of this knowledge has to be great. Considering the profound wisdom of the Gita there is no exaggeration in believing Him to be God.

[Regardless](#) of the Mahabharata's physical war, [the world is one huge battlefield](#). [The real Kurukshetra is within each human](#). The battle of Mahabharata is continuously raging within. Ignorance is Dhritarashtra; the individual soul is Arjuna; the indweller spirit is Lord Krishna, the charioteer; the body is the chariot; the senses are the five horses; deluded mind, egoism, sensual desires, cravings, likes and dislikes, lust, jealousy, greed, pride and hypocrisy are dire enemies. Deep within every individual there is an impulse towards Divinity, but it has been overlain and overruled by a multitude of

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impulses to delusion. So they both fight with each other, often on the subconscious level. In a normal situation, bad virtues are overwhelming compared to the good virtues. Depending on the situation and under the influence of delusion one accepts or tolerates unrighteousness (adharma), which brings restlessness and agitation in life. To overcome misery and unhappiness, humans end up by selecting wrong, unrighteous path and make life vain. Lord Krishna explains that under such situations, if one does not give up the fight, but **sticks to truth and righteousness and fights** with daring and fearlessness, then **success will definitely be his**. The central teaching of the Gita is the attainment of eternal freedom by constantly performing the prescribed duty efficiently and without attachment. For this, one has to be vigilant all the time and cultivate discriminative intellectual power. These virtues will make him pious and virtuous and he will not harm others. The difference between thought and action will be reduced and hypocrisy will vanish from life. As a result, automatically, one would be intuitively exposed to the spiritual secrets.

The main objective of human birth is to attain self-realization, i.e. moksha. For the attainment of the goal, the Gita discusses in detail various aspects of life, which should be understood; which should be experienced and put into practice. In the Gita, Krishna has **discussed four paths for self-realization** or to realize the Supreme. **They are Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Raj yoga and yoga of Knowledge.** The first six chapters deal with the path of action, namely, Karma yoga; the next six chapters deal with the path of devotion namely, Bhakti yoga; and last six chapters deal with the path of knowledge, namely, yoga of Knowledge. Humans are a composite of three fundamental factors: determination (will), feeling and knowledge. **There are three kinds of temperaments: the active, the emotional and the rational.** Karma yoga is for a person of action; Bhakti yoga is for a person with emotional temperament; and yoga of Knowledge is for a person of

enquiry and rationality. All these paths are complementary to one another and must be harmoniously blended if one wishes to attain perfection. One, who applies himself perfectly to one of these paths, achieves the results of all the four paths. All the paths more or less require a combination of karma, meditation, deep thinking and wisdom (knowledge). Without faith one cannot make progress on any of the paths. No path is completely independent; all are inter-dependent on each other.

In the Gita, Krishna discusses the entire process of self-realization, from the beginning, to clear Arjuna's doubts. Here all aspects of life have been discussed. **It starts with the techniques of Karma yoga and renunciation of the fruits of actions; then the methods of controlling the senses and the mind and practicing concentration and meditation;** the various manifestations of the Lord and the magnificent Cosmic Vision; the knowledge of the field and the Knower of the field, the three Gunas; and **finally the highest knowledge of the Purushottama (Supreme God) yoga.** It concludes with an explanation of the divine attributes; the three kinds of faith and the essence of the yoga of renunciation. A sincere devotee can ascend the ladder of yoga from one rung to the next and eventually attain the highest rung which is attainment of the supreme knowledge of the Self. **At the end, Arjuna exclaimed with joy and told Krishna that he has attained knowledge through His Grace.** He is now firm and all his doubts have been vanished. He assures that he will act according to His command.

A person with a physical body cannot refrain from doing something, not even for a moment. He can be bound by the defects of his karma. Krishna has given clear precepts regarding nishkam-karma, which is based on the fact that one **has the right to perform his prescribed duty, but not entitled to the fruits of action.** Never consider oneself as the cause of the results of his karma, and **never be attached to inaction.** This

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is not easy as one has to go through rigorous spiritual practice, deep contemplation and cultivate strength for relinquishment. The Gita wants a person **to cultivate virtues for renunciation of the fruits of karma and does not approve renunciation of karma by itself** or mere change of the outward appearance. The Gita was communicated on the battlefield. As per the Gita, to fight with detachment, unrighteousness and injustice, is not considered as violence. Any karma done with skill and perfection without having desire of the fruits thereof is Samtva yoga. Samtva yoga means having a balanced mind in all conditions. Performing ones duty equipoised, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga. A person, who performs karma without expecting the rewards, will not engage in violence or unrighteous action. It sincerely advocates non-violence, but does not approve timidity and fearfulness. The Gita clearly clarifies that it is **not enough to understand and respect scripture, but it has to be implemented through action**, in everyday life. It does not approve any hypocrisy in religious philosophy and conduct.

Knowledge cannot be acquired without having faith.

Everyone is endowed with some kind of faith and without it, it is impossible to lead a good life. Initially, everyone performs karma only on the basis of faith. After attaining success, one develops confidence. Confidence develops with experience. However, one cannot reach that stage without faith. Faith provides the needed direction, zeal and determination to attain the goal. **The essential condition for attaining the goal is to have faith and intellect work in the same direction.** Even a person having intellect and knowledge cannot achieve anything in life without having faith. Faith is an independent strength. To coordinate karma, meditation, contemplation and knowledge, one has to have un-wavering faith. Faith is also a form of devotion. To acquire knowledge, one has to have pure devotion. A true devotee is not envious; rather he is a kind and compassionate friend to all living entities. His mind is not

disturbed even amidst miseries or elation; when there is happiness; and he is free from attachment, fear and anger and does not get perturbed by the pairs of opposites. He is forgiving and has surrendered himself to God with the mind and intellect. To progress [on the path of self-realization one has to have a combination of both, knowledge and devotion](#). As per the Gita, any karma performed with the spirit of sacrifice and dedication for the benefit of others and society is yajna. Karma performed any other way creates bondage. All karma performed in life should be with the spirit of yajna.

The Gita does not convey truth offensively and also does not convey popular agreeable thoughts that are untruthful. At the end, Krishna advises all to ponder on this profound wisdom and leaves a person free to do whatever he wishes to do. Further, He says that, [if this path is acceptable, then follow this path with faith and surrender to Him unconditionally](#). The Gita is a gift given by Lord Krishna to human beings in the form of nectar of spiritual knowledge. [Krishna is with all of us in all the adverse conditions to show us the right path in the form of the Gita](#).

[One can become a liberated sage by annihilating the ego and the currents of likes and dislikes; by annihilating desires and cravings; and destroying residual potencies](#). Thus, he can rest in his true essential nature as Existence-knowledge-absolute Bliss and at the same time still be active in the affairs of the world. Now he will not be bound by his actions, since the idea of doer-ship has been destroyed by the attainment of knowledge of the Self. This is the essence of the Gita.

The main objective of this writing is to understand the subtle spiritual wisdom and to bring out the quintessential message of this great spiritual book, the Gita; and present a short summary in a simple, lucid and intelligible language. [The purpose is to provide reflections on the essence of every chapter, rather than being concerned with the literal meaning of each verses](#). The present younger generation is moving away

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from the spiritual scriptures due to difficulties in comprehending the essence and lack of time. The purpose of this short summary will be accomplished, if it helps in developing interest and love for the Gita in the younger generation. I sincerely hope that this publication will help in illuminating the spiritual culture in some way.

When one is struggling for life in a flooded river, will it do, if he thinks of the pleasures awaiting him on the bank? At that time, all the attention should be riveted on swimming; all the strength should be applied to inch towards the bank. The spiritual practice should be carried to the end; the ocean should be crossed, and one will find moksha waiting for him there. [When a person attains perfection and forgets moksha, then moksha will itself be attracted to him.](#) When the spiritual practice reaches its zenith, the moment of fulfillment comes.

At the end Sanjay says that wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of yoga and knowledge and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme example of devotion and love, there will certainly be prosperity, happiness, victory and unfailing righteousness, such is his conviction.

Again I repeat, the Gita is a gift given by Lord Krishna to human beings in the form of nectar of spiritual knowledge. Thus, Lord Krishna is with us in all adverse conditions to show us the right path in the form of the Gita.

* * *

हरिः ॐ तत्सत्।
ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय। ॐ तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।
ॐ मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय। ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः॥

*O Lord
From Ignorance, Lead me to Truth;
From Darkness, Lead me to Light;
From Death, Lead me to Immortality
Om Bliss, Bliss, Bliss*



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