



The Bhagavad Gita

Eknath Easwaran (Introduction)

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The Bhagavad Gita, “The Song of the Lord,” is probably the best known of all the Indian scriptures, and Easwaran’s clear, accessible translation is the best-selling edition. The Gita opens dramatically, with prince Arjuna collapsing in anguish on the brink of a war that he doesn’t want to fight. Arjuna has lost his way on the battlefield of life, and turns to his spiritual guide, Sri Krishna, the Lord himself. Krishna replies in 700 verses of sublime instruction on living and dying, loving and working, and the nature of the soul.

This book includes an extensive and very readable introduction, which places the Gita in its historical setting, explains the key concepts, and brings out the universality of its teachings. Individual chapter introductions prepare the reader for the main themes, and notes, a Sanskrit glossary, and an index are included.

Although the battlefield is a perfect backdrop, for Easwaran the Gita’s subject is the war within, the struggle for self-mastery that every human being must wage. Arjuna’s dilemma is acutely modern, and the Gita’s message remains as relevant for us now as it was for ancient India.

The Bhagavad Gita Details

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From Reader Review The Bhagavad Gita for online ebook

Alex says

Hermoso, profundo, un portento de conocimiento, sabiduría y espiritualidad. No leerlo, perderse la oportunidad de descubrir y descifrar su mensaje, equivaldría a desperdiciar la vida misma. ?

KC says

Truly a remarkable, moving, and compelling volume of scripture. Arjuna and Krishna's discussion delves into human nature, philosophy, society, cosmology, and theology.

Easwaran's translation is accessible and beautifully crafted.

As a non-Hindu, I was particularly interested to learn about the idea of reincarnation as it appears in the text. While it is often characterized as coming back to life as another creature (and that may be how many believe it) the text presents it more in the context of the eternal nature of the soul, and phases of existence that reach before and after our current incarnation (an idea integral to Christian theology as well.) Beyond that, there were intriguing parallels to the ideas of rebirth (being born-again) which have obvious Christian parallels.

The cosmic vision in which Arjuna beholds Krishna's transcendental nature was magnificent in scope and beauty. I was repeatedly reminded of the theophanies described in Moses 1 and Ether 3, and found many parallels between them. I was pleased to find a scholarly comparative treatment of some of it, and look forward to exploring this further.

I will have to come back to this text. Its profundity and relevance requires more than a passing read. I've got some additional translations and commentaries lined up, and I'll get them them at some point.

Mario C says

One of the best books I have ever read. It's like finding a long lost best friend and picking up right where you left off

Sandra says

It seems rather presumptuous to "review" writings acknowledged by 1 billion people (15%) to be scripture. I will say it was impressive, and although I only read a small amount at a time I was fascinated and even inspired; the helpful introductions to each section were great at giving context and defining unfamiliar terms.

There are, of course, many, many verses I could quote, but I think that will have to wait until I read it a second time.

All that said, I did not expect that reading the Bhagavad Gita would give me the sense that all religions are ultimately seeking the same thing: knowledge of God, of divinity, of the part of ourselves that is the divine spark given to us by God. And, despite the discomfort it would cause many/most Christians to hear this, it seems to me that we are all seeking the same ultimate reality, which has been revealed to us in different ways. For me, that revelation comes through Jesus Christ. In the Bhagavad Gita, what seemed apparent to me was the profound search for the very same thing I seek as a Christian: knowledge and love of God (and for me, of Jesus, the unique revelation of God).

The Hindu pantheon is complex and confusing for those accustomed to a strict monotheism, and yet after reading the Bhagavad Gita (which, admittedly, is a teensy tiny bit of the Hindu scriptures) it seems clear that the Hindu is also a monotheist -- a believer in one ultimate reality, which is manifested in many ways but which is, ultimately One.

Ha. I thought I wouldn't say much at all. Fooled me!

Marco says

The translation is practical, friendly, and modern usage of the words (No Old-English embellishments). This is not the complete Bhagavad Gita, but the selection of chapters, picked by the translator, are enough to give you a good general sense of what the Bhagavad Gita is about. The translator also offers an introduction to each chapter that helps to set the original text in the right context.

I enjoyed all of Eknath Easwaran's translations. Yet, I wish one day I could be able to read them in their original text. They are not only masterpieces of spirituality guidance, but they are also written in a beautiful poetry format.

This "opus" deserves more than just 5 stars.

Philipp says

The Bhagavad Gita (1985 translation), (5th to 2nd century BCE)

Eknath Easwaran, transl. and intr. (1910-1999), perhaps the compiler sage Ved Vyasa

Religious writing, commentary, notes (294 pp.), (700 verses)

Eve of Kurukshetra War (6000 BCE or 500 BCE, depending); on battlefield of Kurukshetra

Prince Arjuna questions charioteer (Krishna in human form) about going to battle and essentially murdering relatives. Krishna elaborates on karma and dharma, the actions of the Self and the underlying Unity (or laws).

Semi-Random Semi-Representative Sample:

In this world there are two orders of being: the perishable, separate creatures and the changeless spirit. But beyond these there is another, the supreme Self, the eternal Lord, who enters into the entire cosmos and supports it from within.

Bookstore Cat Sample:

Under my watchful eye the laws of nature take their course.

Reminds me of: Other religious writings. It's amazing how similar they get in their broad strokes. The specific terminology may differ, but the way the details interact seems to power the same machine.

Other: Love it. Introduction is nice, focuses on Gandhi quite a bit. Gandhi's a good guy, so why not.
