

## THE GITA: SERMON ON THE BATTLEFIELD

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The Gita is an extremely important spiritual document that represents dialogue between Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna. It is important from three angles. First, it is unique as it was uttered when two rival armies stood against one another, ready to fire the first shot. The Gita was preached by Lord Krishna who is considered as an incarnation of sixteen powers.

Secondly, the Gita is unique because it stresses peace and disregards war; as war can achieve nothing. People can only progress in peace. Men become mosquitoes by killing each other.

Thirdly, the Gita is unique because it mentions that knowledge (Gyan) and work (Karma) are not two straight lines that do not meet; but they are two arcs of a circle. The Devotion (Bhakti) is the third aspect that loudly exclaims that without devotion neither knowledge nor work attains permanence, durability and innate force.

The Gita has 18 chapters each explaining and expounding special aspects of life. Mahatma Gandhi used to say “The Gita is my infallible guide” Thomas Henry III use to start his day by reading the Gita. Wilhelm Von Humboldt praises the Gita as the most, perhaps the only pure Philosophical song existing in any known language.

The Gita is a small part of 700 slokas that appear in the Mahabharata that contained nearly 80,000 Slokas. But it is so important that seers have called it as “Upanishad”. The Upanishadas are important part of Vedas that are made up of samhita, brahman, aranyak and upnishad.

Indian Spiritual Literature has deep symbolism. It expresses the truth with the help of short stories to make deep impression on non-elite readers. The deep thought content is presented in language which is clear and concise but flowery, full of images and colours.

It will be instructive for all people if they read the Gita, a symphony of knowledge and work, irrespective of their location, colour and caste. It would be especially good for readers to read the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter. It lists virtues and vices. If one makes self-evaluation one can find out how many vices he has and how many virtues. Self-evaluation of oneself on these two scales will help one to make corrective attempts to raise oneself socially, morally and ethically.

Let me close this note by mentioning that the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the Gita, at the end mentions qualities of a man of wisdom (Pargya Purush). This part was included in the evening prayers of Mahatma Gandhi.

Reading of the Gita points out the goal of life and different strategies to achieve the goal. The Gita gives us a clean mirror in which we can see our face. The Gita boldly says to reject hierarchy, arrogance and self-conceit. Reject anger, sensuous desires and greed. They are the doors of hell. The Gita asserts that all individuals ought to be fearless, steadfast in knowledge. All persons must learn to give alms as giving (whatever you can) is one’s duty. The wise like to read the Gita and the fools neglect it.

### References

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