

**BHAGAVAD GITA AND INDIAN ETHICS PREACHING OF  
GREAT PHILOSOPHER ADI SANKARA**

**EDITORS**

Dr I Parvin Banu

Dr R Sivaramakrishnan

Mr D Nanee

Dr T Kanimozhi

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**Editor(s):**

Dr I Parvin Banu

Dr R Sivaramakrishnan

Mr D Nanee

Dr T Kanimozhi

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**Registered Address**

3, Karichankadu, Attanur, Thengalpalayam post, Rasipuram TK,

Namakkal DT, 636 301, Tamil Nadu, India.

Email: [stanzaleafpublication@gmail.com](mailto:stanzaleafpublication@gmail.com)

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## **10. Navigating the Modern World: “Wisdom from the Bhagavad Gita and IKS”**

Dr. B. Saranya

Associate Professor & Head

Department of Commerce (Foreign Trade)

PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore – 641 014.

Email- [saransambavi@gmail.com](mailto:saransambavi@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

One of the oldest and most varied knowledge systems in the world is the Indian one. It includes a wide range of academic fields. Over the ages, it has also had a significant influence on human ideals. The rich philosophical, spiritual, and scientific traditions of Indian civilization have influenced people's values and ways of thinking all across the world. The Bhagavad Gita is a timeless scripture that offers profound insights into various aspects of life, spirituality, duty, and the path to liberation.

### **Introduction**

#### **Foundations of Indian Knowledge System**

The Vedas, which are regarded as the founding books of Indian civilization, were compiled during the Vedic period (c. 1500–500 BCE), which is when the IKS first emerged. Numerous facets of life are covered by the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. The Upanishads and other supplemental works explore the nature of the ego (Atman) and ultimate reality (Brahman), delving into metaphysics. The Indian Knowledge System refers to beliefs, practices and wisdom developed by human civilization over several millennia. The elements of IKS includes Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Heritage, Governance and Policy, Economic Systems, Health Care and medicine, environment and sustainability, Information and Communication, Social Systems

#### **Epics and Classical Texts**

In addition to being epic stories, the Ramayana and Mahabharata also contain moral and ethical teachings. Part of the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita is a philosophical book that still motivates academics and professionals around the world. Classical texts that stress literature and holistic well-being include Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and Kalidasa's Shakuntala.

#### **Key Principles from the Bhagavad Gita for Holistic Education and Personal Development**

The principles from the Bhagavad Gītā provide a framework for holistic education, emphasizing ethical values, personal growth, and intellectual development, which can be integrated into educational curricula to nurture well-rounded individuals. A few important principles are

summarized below - The Principle of Dharma (Duty and Righteousness) – Krishna Says, "It is better to live your destiny imperfectly than to live an imitation of somebody else's life with perfection. This principle encourages students to understand and follow their path and responsibilities, fostering a sense of purpose and ethical conduct in their educational journey.

➤ **The Principle of Karma Yoga (Selfless Action)**

"You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions." It teaches students to focus on their duties and efforts without attachment to outcomes, promoting diligence and perseverance in learning.

➤ **The Principle of Jnana Yoga (Path of Knowledge)**

"The wise see that there is action amid inaction and inaction in action."<sup>3</sup> It encourages critical thinking and self-reflection, helping students to discern more profound meanings and truths in their studies.

➤ **The Principle of Equanimity (Mental Balance)**

"Perform all actions, being established in union with the Divine, renouncing attachment, and balanced in success and failure. "This principle promotes emotional stability and resilience, helping students manage stress and focus amidst challenges.

➤ **The Principle of Detachment (Non-Attachment)**

"He who is unattached, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, and who works for the sake of sacrifice, all his actions dissolve away." It teaches students to detach from distractions and focus on their academic and personal growth.

**The Principle of Self-Discipline and Control**

"One must deliver himself with the help of his mind, and not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well." This principle encourages self-regulation and discipline, which are essential for academic success and personal development.

➤ **The Principle of Mindfulness and Meditation**

"When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering like the flame of a lamp in a windless place." It promotes concentration and mindfulness, aiding students in achieving mental clarity and focus in their studies.

## **The Bhagavad Gita: A Cornerstone of Hindu Philosophy and Spirituality**



The Bhagavad Gita is regarded as one of the most venerated and important scriptures in Hinduism. It forms part of the Mahabharata, an epic narrative that recounts a monumental conflict between two clans. Situated in the sixth section of the Mahabharata, known as the Bhishma Parva, it is thought to have been composed between the 5th and 2nd centuries BCE, during a significant period of cultural and spiritual transformation in India.

As Arjuna prepares to engage in battle against his relatives, he is struck by feelings of uncertainty and despair. He starts to contemplate the significance of life and the rationale behind his actions. At this moment, Krishna, an avatar of the deity Vishnu, manifests before Arjuna and shares the profound teachings of the Gita. The doctrines contained within the Gita have undergone various interpretations throughout the ages, sparking extensive discourse and analysis. Some interpret it as a sacred scripture, while others perceive it as a philosophical exploration of existence.

### **Importance of Bhagavad Gita in today's scenario**

At its essence, the Bhagavad Gita presents a number of fundamental lessons that continue to hold significance and influence in the modern world. Among its most prominent messages is the notion of dharma. While the word "dharma" is challenging to render precisely in English, it typically encompasses the ethical and moral codes that underpin the order of existence. Within the Gita, Krishna instructs Arjuna that his duty as a warrior obligates him to participate in the conflict, even if this requires opposing his own relatives. Throughout history, interpretations of dharma have varied widely, but it is most often regarded as an imperative to act with integrity and righteousness, regardless of how difficult or painful the circumstances may be.

Karma is another crucial lesson from the Gita. The concept of karma states that our deeds have repercussions in this life as well as in subsequent ones. In the Gita, Krishna advises Arjuna to focus on carrying out his job and to act without regard for the outcome of his acts. This concept of distancing ourselves from the outcomes of our activities has been interpreted as a call to self-

awareness and mindfulness, urging people to behave with intention and purpose and to concentrate on the here and now.

### **Mental Peace and Stress Management**

- In a fast-paced world filled with anxiety, depression, and stress, the Gita teaches inner calm, emotional balance, and detachment from outcomes.
- It promotes equanimity (samattvam yoga uchyate) – staying stable in success and failure.

### **Ethical Leadership and Decision Making**

- In politics, business, and governance, where dilemmas are common, the Gita provides clarity on righteous action (Dharma) and selfless leadership.
- It emphasizes integrity, accountability, and purpose-driven action.

### **Self-Realization and Personal Growth**

- The Gita encourages introspection and discovering one’s true nature (Atman).
- It promotes self-discipline, self-confidence, and resilience – qualities vital in personal and professional life.

### **Bhagavad Gita in Decision Making**

The Bhagavad Gita serves as a timeless guide for decision-making, offering clarity, focus, and moral grounding in complex situations. One of its core teachings is detachment from the outcome—Krishna advises Arjuna to perform his duty (karma) without attachment to success or failure. This helps leaders and individuals make unbiased, ethical choices without fear or greed clouding their judgment. The Gita also emphasizes self-awareness and inner peace, encouraging decision-makers to act based on dharma (righteousness) rather than personal gain. By fostering qualities like courage, discipline, and balanced thinking, the Gita empowers individuals to make thoughtful, value-based decisions even in high-pressure environments.

### **Wisdom from the Bhagavad Gita**

The Bhagavad Gita, a sacred dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, is a timeless source of wisdom that transcends religion, offering guidance on life, duty, and inner peace. One of its key teachings is the importance of performing one’s duty (dharma) without attachment to the outcome “Karmanye vadhikaraste, ma phaleshu kadachana” reminding us to focus on effort rather than result. It teaches the value of self-discipline, inner balance, and clarity of mind, especially in times of confusion or emotional distress. The Gita emphasizes self-knowledge (atma-jnana) as the highest form of wisdom, encouraging individuals to understand their true nature beyond the ego. It introduces different paths—Karma Yoga (path of action), Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion), and Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge) each offering a way to attain spiritual growth and mental clarity. Its lessons nurture emotional resilience, ethical decision-making, and fearless living. In today’s

world of stress and uncertainty, the Bhagavad Gita serves as a guide for inner strength, purpose, and peace, helping individuals navigate life's challenges with wisdom and grace.

### **Conclusion**

The Bhagavad Gita is a sacred textual content of Hinduism that has had a profound affect on Indian subculture and philosophy. Its teachings on dharma, karma, and devotion have been interpreted in many special approaches over the centuries, however they stay applicable and impactful today. The Gita has been used in a range of contexts, from yoga and spirituality to philosophy and literature. Despite being over two thousand years old, the Bhagavad Gita continues to encourage and affect humans of all backgrounds and religions. Its teachings on mindfulness, self-awareness, and the significance of doing what is proper and simple continue to be as applicable these days as they had been when the textual content used to be written. In today's world wisdom from Gita is very much essential to the younger generation.

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